POLICE (BAKSOS) AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC TRUST AMIDST THE CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY OF THE INDONESIAN REPUBLIC POLICE INSTITUTION

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the police outside the formalization of legal policies through interactive-humanist actions to overcome the crisis of institutional legitimacy of the Indonesian National Police (Polri). This article focuses on social services carried out by Polri members as an alternative to reconstructing public trust amidst the crisis of institutional legitimacy. By reducing various strategic policies and using philanthropic efforts through social services, the police can act humanely and avoid repressive actions to improve the image of the Polri. Social service police can be a new approach in the reconstruction of Police-Community relations that are carried out personally and informally, but still play a role in strengthening public trust in the image of the Polri socially through police-community involvement. By explaining the problems of public distrust and the Polri legitimacy crisis, and referring to the concept of legitimacy and various studies related to police issues, the main argument of this article is that social service police are not just a caricature mechanism or formal institutional policy - but rather a tactical effort based on the reconstruction of public trust to improve the legitimacy crisis due to the fading image of the Polri outside the formal mechanism through a soft power approach . nenwun

Keywords: Police Social Service, Public Distrust, Legitimacy Crisis, Reconstruction of Public Trust

Introduction

This study focuses on the role of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) through social services (baksos) as an alternative to reconstructing public trust amidst the institutional legitimacy crisis. This study analyzes whether the baksos police can be an ideal mechanism in maintaining the image of the Polri in the eyes of the public and reconstructing strategic police-community relations. Reconstruction of relations between the police and the community needs to be carried out because the level of public trust in the Polri institution is still at 65% according to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) until 2023. Meanwhile, in 2025, after 100 days of President Prabowo Subianto's administration, the level

of public trust in the Polri was the lowest, namely 71% compared to the Attorney General's Office 77%, the KPK 72%, and the Court 73%, according to the Executive Director of LSI. This percentage cannot be separated from the implementation of the Polri's responsibilities based on the Law which are often difficult to implement ideally, sometimes even some members take a stance that is contrary to the Law.

The involvement of the police in unlawful acts is the reason why the level of public trust in the institution is below other law enforcement institutions. Police institutions around the world do have a low level of trust due to public anxiety about law enforcement carried out by the institution, except in developed countries. Public distrust of the police institution can occur due to the condition of a divided society post-conflict, authoritarianism of law enforcement, socio-economic inequality, and illegal practices that are contrary to the law. Even the police institution sometimes tends to take an arbitrary and violent attitude. Based on journalistic reports, it shows that there is a growing discourse in Indonesia about public distrust of the issue of case manipulation, extortion, lack of neutrality, and police professionalism. Several public arguments that have developed into public opinion have spread in cyberspace with the hashtags #PercumaLaporPolisi, #NoViralNoJustice, and #1Hari1Oknum. This happens because the public is worried about the actions of the police that are contrary to the implementation of the law of Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police. Thus, public distrust of the police institution needs to be overcome with various strategic efforts to build a positive image of the Police based on constructive relations between the police and the community.

The community service program carried out by Polri members based on a non-formal approach has great potential to reconstruct public trust and overcome the legitimacy crisis. Case studies in several Polres reveal that social activities such as helping ODGJ and helping people with disabilities carried out by Aipda Purnomo from Polres Lamongan. Meanwhile, several policewomen from Polres Pesawaran collected personal funds for residents and provided basic food assistance to ease the burden on the underprivileged community - also played a role in strengthening the relationship between Polri and the community. Polres Metro Bekasi also carried out community service by providing basic food assistance to residents in great need. In addition, Polda South Sumatra also carried out community service activities by helping residents of the Musi River area, by distributing 200 solar power generating panels to 200 families, providing basic food packages, generators, and lights for fishing boats. In North Sulawesi, for example, Polres Minahasa carried out community service activities by providing basic food assistance, material assistance for underprivileged residents, house renovations as an implementation of the Polri program, and disaster preparedness involving personal assistance from Polri members. In general, the objectives of Polri's social services are similar, namely to build trust and closeness between the police and the community; although the implementation varies, depending on the needs and characteristics

of the community being helped. This means that the role of the police is not only limited to law enforcement, but also includes the construction of social relations.

Several previous studies have shown that the police have attempted to build the police image with strategic policies. Community policing is one of the important concepts of improving the police image through close police-community relations. Citizens are seen as coproducers of public safety, thus playing a role in building positive relations towards the provision of public services. In other words, the police as facilitators and the public as coproducers in an equal partnership relationship, through a democratic process, based on participation, transparency, public accountability, upholding human rights, based on statutory regulations, and contextual-synergistic in solving community problems for security purposes based on the police paradigm. However, the concept of Community Policing seems to have faded again when the police during the 2024 Presidential Election (Pilpres) and Regional Cadre Election (Pilkada) were accused of not being neutral and giving rise to satirical discourse about the "Brown Party." However, there has been no research that explores the forms of police involvement in these destructive efforts that have an impact on public distrust and the fading of the Community Policing paradigm. Several previous studies have also not examined the role of the police outside of formal legal policies that are strategic for the reconstruction of the image of the Police . Where the reconstruction efforts focus more on humanistic and interactive actions with the community and are based on empathy.

This article examines how the role of the police informally through interactive-humanist actions towards the community to strengthen public trust amidst the crisis of the legitimacy of the Polri institution. By reducing various strategic policies and using philanthropic efforts through social services, the police can act humanely and avoid repressive actions. Social services also do not become a demand for responsibility that can be tied to causal relationships and legal/social consequences that must be obeyed by the apparatus. Therefore, the police social services can be a new approach in the reconstruction of police-community relations that are carried out personally and informally, but still play a role in strengthening public trust in the Polri image socially through police-community involvement.

1. Police Legitimacy Crisis in Public Distrust Problems

The Indonesian National Police face quite a challenge related to the low level of public trust and negative issues spread on social media. Based on the results of a survey, the level of public trust in the Indonesian National Police is still at 65% according to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) until 2023. Then it increased to 73.1% in 2024 from the results of the Kompas Research and Development survey. Meanwhile, in 2025, after 100 days of President Prabowo Subianto's administration, the level of public trust in the Indonesian National Police is the lowest, namely 71% compared to the Attorney General's Office 77%, the Corruption Eradication Committee 72%, and the Court 73%, according to the Executive Director

of LSI. Fluctuations in public trust are influenced by various media information and developing public opinion, related to the performance and credibility of the police.

The police are considered as an apparatus that protects various extrajudicial, unprofessional, authoritarian actions, and are rumored to be non-neutral in the General Election (Pemilu). Public distrust of police performance is quite difficult to find in scientific journal research in Indonesia, but it is very easy to find in various journalistic reports and information on social media. Why is that? Is it difficult to find data related to the problems of the Police or is information about *public distrust* and the fundamental reasons behind the issue so closed? In various journalistic reports, there are various actions by the police involved in violations of the law, for example, there are around 97,000 members of the Police and TNI involved in online gambling. There are also police members involved in alleged drugs, illegal drugs in Indonesia. The BBC journalistic report also mentioned that bribery practices occur in almost all sectors of the police, from bribery, deposits, and extortion, - to corruption that implicates the names of police generals.

Not only in the economic sector, several other cases that went viral were police involvement in murder cases and the issue of police neutrality during the 2024 Election. In a journalistic report, the National Police Commission (Kompolnas) once responded to three murder cases that befell the Polri institution, namely police killing police, police committing suicide, and police killing their biological mothers. In these cases, there were two cases involving the illegal use of firearms by members. Even a case that went very viral in the public was the murder of a police member masterminded by a Police General as the mastermind behind the murder in 2022. Then the emergence of political issues related to the lack of police neutrality in the 2024 Election - with the allusion "Brown Party." The term Brown Party refers to the alleged involvement of police officers in the political process, especially the 2024 Pilkada. This name emerged because the police uniform is brown. Thus, the involvement of police officers from the lowest level to the ranks of generals is one of the references for the formation of negative public opinion towards the image of the Polri.

The involvement of extrajudicial actions by Polri members is further exacerbated by the difficulty of implementing police duties based on applicable laws. Based on the perspective of State Administrative Law and Criminal Procedure Law, Polri has public and executive authority, so that it can carry out different tasks within the scope of government. Article 2 of Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police, as last amended by Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2022 concerning Job Creation into Law, details the governmental duties that are the authority of the Polri, namely consisting of responsibility in the fields of public security and order, law enforcement, prote^ction, guardianship, and community service. In addition, the concept of community policing or community police (Polmas) has become the Polri's grand strategy in carrying out its main duties as protectors, guardians, servants of the community,

maintainers of public order and security, and law enforcement, so that it is implemented on the principles of democracy to uphold justice for the community.

The implementation regulations of the Police's duties and the Polmas concept which are quite difficult to implement are further exacerbated by the actions of several individuals who continue to damage the image of the police in the eyes of the public. In fact, the Polmas concept is seen as an effective reference for restoring the image of the Police in the eyes of the public, so that public trust is re-established. The actions of certain individuals from the National Police institution who legalize criminal acts or commit abuses based on the legitimacy of legal instruments have received strong criticism from the public. The viral hashtags #PercumaLaporPolisi, #NoViralNoJustice, and #1Hari1Oknum indicate a fundamental problem of public distrust of the police institution that is rampant among the Indonesian people. The hashtag #PercumaLaporPolisi is a phenomenon of public disappointment due to the slow handling of the police in resolving legal case reports. Likewise, #NoViralNoJustice refers to public distrust of the legal process which is considered selective. The hashtags #1Hari1Oknum and #PercumaLaporPolisi became trending in the community after the incident of Bripda RB, a suspect in the Novia Widyasari case who committed suicide and was found dead next to his father in Mojokerto, East Java. Thousands of netizens criticized the National Police institution because it turned out that there were so many police officers involved in criminal elements. Therefore, there are so many problems in the realm of the police institution, both abuse of authority in criminal practices and related to the involvement of certain police officers which further worsen the view of the professionalism of the Police in implementing the provisions of the Law and the policies they themselves make for the benefit of the Nation.

Behind the phenomenon of the public trust crisis in the image of the police related to professionalism, integrity, and implementation of the law - the Police still have one alternative instrument for reconstructing police -community relations, namely with the police community service. The role of community service carried out by the police is outside the main task of the Police as protectors and law enforcers. Polri with its existence just bring four role strategic, namely protection society, enforcement law, prevention violation law, and development security - order society. As set up in provisions of Law No. 2 of 2002 concerning Indonesian National Police in a way clear formulated that task main Indonesian National Police is enforcer law, protector, guardian and guide society especially in frame compliance and compliance with applicable laws. In terms of conditions Constitution there are two basic things task main Indonesian National Police as contained in Tribrata and also Chess Praise be to God Polri. Social service is an action outside the Law and policies related to the main duties of the police.

2. Bridging the Police Legitimacy Crisis through Public Trust Reconstruction Strategy

Police legitimacy is very significant, because it is a fundamental element in the stability of public order and security. Police legitimacy can occur through organizational support, public acceptance, and social interaction. Power holders who have legitimacy can effectively prevent and overcome social dangers, so they can assert power with the aim of gaining social influence through obedience, cooperation, and community support. Some also say that legitimacy requires legitimacy, shared values, and agreement. This is not an attempt by the panopticon to carry out full surveillance through the mechanism of power. Or what Zizek calls systemic violence, where the legal structure demands public compliance through coercive mechanisms that operate behind closed doors and are often not recognized by the object - in this context the object is society. Therefore, police legitimacy is often built on the basis of applicable legal rules and operates to demand community participation, without the need to be critical of the flow of law enforcement procedures whether they are fair or not. Is this kind of stability what is needed? Some experts certainly oppose it, because it contradicts the much better humanist view. Several studies have stated that legitimacy is not only a matter of obedience to power or the authority to exercise power, but needs to be based on dialogue between the police and the community.

The legitimacy of the police is not obedience through coercion based on the authority of power. However, sometimes the police use tactical strategies and actions to gain public compliance and this is contrary to the attitude of dialogue that provides a sense of security to the community that does not have legal apparatus. On the other hand, the police are also required to use their authority over the legal apparatus to take firm action and force criminals to submit to the power that guarantees social justice. However, this kind of authority is often not implemented properly and leads to a legitimacy crisis. The public will justify every action or step taken by the police. The phenomenon of abuse of power, corruption, collusion, nepotism, non-accountability, non-transparency, and discrimination in law enforcement that goes hand in hand with repressive actions by the apparatus is a crucial reason for the crisis.

The legitimacy crisis will increase if legal action is not in accordance with the public interest, because it is limited by repressive power tools. Reduced public compliance with regulations will go hand in hand with the public distrust that occurs. Legitimacy will decrease if the perception or assumption of the actions taken is considered inappropriate, inappropriate, not based on the legal framework and outside the applicable humanitarian values. Legitimacy is not only about formal authority, but also related to public trust and acceptance. When the police are repressive, unfair, and not based on law, the legitimacy of the police towards the community will be greatly weakened. There will be direct or indirect rejection by the community towards the police as law enforcers. Therefore, legal procedures need to be carried out transparently and humanely in order to build a sense of trust and security for the public as legal subjects - not objects of power based on law. Every community

lives in a social contract that is seen as guaranteeing their existence. The legitimacy crisis is the result of the fading of the community's social contract due to the inconsistency of the hopes and expectations contained in the social contract. The community feels that they have been betrayed by the police for actions that deny the capacity and responsibility given by the state. Or the police become an anomalous Leviathan apparatus – deviant in the various actions taken to repressively discipline the public.

In bridging the problematic of the police legitimacy crisis, there are several prominent concepts. The police need legitimacy that is not only sourced from regulatory or legal policies, but also from public trust. This can happen when the police are able to demonstrate transparency and fair actions in enforcing the law in society. In the concept of Procedural Justice, the police can build a cooperative relationship with the community, as long as the community agrees to "accept" the existence of the police as a legitimate party. This has an impact on the action of accepting every direction and decision of the police, thereby reducing the possibility of disobedience, rejection, and resistance from the community. However, people will be more likely to comply with agreements and follow the rules when they accept every decision and direction from law enforcement authorities. The term "accept" refers to the condition of the community who trusts the police in making legal decisions. However, Procedural Justice sometimes only becomes an arena for discourse that is often far from the reality of the police institution, because of the many anomalies in the power of law enforcement that occur. The community does not believe in the legal certainty provided by the police - this is a more fundamental problem, so it requires tactical actions such as direct involvement between the police and the community.

This involvement can reconstruct public trust in the police institution. Involvement that goes beyond dialogue between the police and the community as a form of positive and meaningful active interaction becomes an important reference. Positive relations between the police and the community can become social capital for reconstructing the image of the police in front of the public. In this context, the police must clean up internal deviations, admit various mistakes to the public, improve police performance mechanisms, build active policecommunity interactions, and create concrete steps based on law-based public safety and humanistic behavior. This will have an impact on public acceptance of the obligation to obey the directions of police officers, because they believe that the legal authority has the right to be obeyed. This sense of obligation is rooted in the general assessment that the police have legitimacy for legal authority - but this condition can be created if the public is aware that the police can provide legal certainty based on direct police involvement in community life that goes beyond the formalization of police regulations themselves. This article does not call it community policing which only emphasizes the regulative aspect in reconstructing the police image – so it still carries a "service" obligation that is sometimes tied to a causal relationship: between carrying out duties as an obligation and receiving rights by members of the

apparatus who have carried out their duties. This article calls it social police, a police involvement outside the regulative mechanism with an approach that maintains a distance from the power of the legal apparatus.

Community service police as an alternative approach outside the context of law and regulation enforcement, are expected to transform the image of the police from an institution that is seen as non-transparent, repressive, and unprofessional - to a community partner that continues to build positive interactions in social engagement. Community service has a strong influence to improve the image of the police, thus playing a role in removing the stigma of the police as an institution that only "takes action," but not "serves." By shifting the meaning of negative issues/sentiments towards the police, it can change into a positive perspective through a social approach that shows the caring side of the police that has so far been less in the public spotlight.

3. Police Social Services as a *Soft Power Approach*: Reconstructing *Public Trust Outside* of Regulatory Mechanisms

Public distrust towards the police institution is a global phenomenon that has an impact on the legitimacy crisis, thus affecting the policy-making of coercive power-based strategies that are based on law for social control. Public distrust also threatens the implementation of legal regulatory mechanisms, even if they are carried out well, because the public doubts the various actions taken by the police based on the law. The public feels that the police only give sanctions, without improving themselves or cleaning up and fixing the internal problems that have occurred in the law enforcement institution. Therefore, an alternative mechanism is needed to reduce police-community tensions with active police involvement in the social sector.

The concept of community service police is one way to reduce *public distrust* that has been rampant in society. Several positive police actions that have been in the public spotlight because of their actions outside their main duties, one of which is a video of a police officer from the Traffic Unit (Satlantas) of the Pasuruan Police, East Java, who was willing to lift a sack to help a grandmother cross the road. The police were not only tasked with guarding traffic, but were also directly involved with the community who needed humanitarian assistance. The police helping the grandmother then became a trending phenomenon, so that it spread on various social media to journalism about the story of the police helping the grandmother cross the road in various cities in Indonesia. Then the actions of a police officer named Aipda Purnomo who trended among the Indonesian people to help, care for, and foster hundreds of ODGJ - as well as people who were abandoned on the streets. The care carried out by Purnomo was provided free of charge to ODGJ, abandoned people, and people with disabilities. Purnomo's informal actions, or mechanisms of action outside the formal regulatory mechanisms that he carried out, had an impact on the police institution, because

Purnomo's actions were always claimed with the terms "good police" and "precision police helpers." With the Tiktok social media named @Purnomo Good Police, he always shares the hashtags #goodpolice and #precisionhelperspolice - this has an impact on the image of the Police in front of the public,

Community service is a strategy and tactical way for the police to build public trust. Several case studies reveal the involvement of police officers from various institutions who voluntarily help residents. Several policewomen from the Pesawaran Police collected personal funds for residents and provided basic food assistance to ease the burden on the underprivileged – also playing a role in strengthening the relationship between the Police and the community. The Bekasi Metro Police also carried out community service by providing basic food assistance to residents in dire need. In addition, the South Sumatra Police also carried out community service activities by helping residents in the Musi River area, by distributing 200 solar power generating panels to 200 families, providing basic food packages, generators, and lights for fishing boats. In North Sulawesi, for example, the Minahasa Police carried out community service activities by providing basic food assistance, material assistance for underprivileged residents, house renovations as an implementation of the Police program, and disaster preparedness involving personal assistance from Polri members. Community service carried out by police officers is a humanistic way taken by officers to help residents, while also building good relations between the police and the community.

The reconstruction of the image of the Police outside the formalization of law enforcement and policies is realized through the Police's social services, which are then implemented by members of the police - both personally and communally. One of them is a social humanitarian organization called the Good Police Foundation which was initiated and managed by young police officers, they manage the website www.polisibaik.id . This foundation is responsible for fundraising, organizing, and implementing, as well as reporting donations. Good Police helps bridge members of the Police who want to realize their dreams of solving social problems around them. Like the official Polri news portal website which often shares news about the actions of police members that go viral in the media. The actions of the members are humanistic, such as a police officer who was quick and responsive in helping a bakso seller whose cart overturned in West Jakarta. Not only did he help lift the cart, but the police also offered medical assistance. This action then went viral in the media and invited a positive public reaction, because of the quick action and concern of a police officer outside of his main duties. There are so many police actions that are published in the media or not, but are seen by the public directly. Social actions carried out by police officers actually provide strong penetration to restore the image of the Police which has been dimmed by various dramas of misappropriation. Stories and publications about social actions of police officers have become a counter narrative to negative issues about poor police performance, lack of transparency, and misappropriation/deviation outside the applicable law. As a result, these

positive actions, although not too influential, can be a companion to every policy and law for the public interest.

Actually, Good Police activities like this are also included in the community police policy, for example Bhabinkamtibmas. The implementation of Polmas has not yet provided a significant influence on the assessment of the image of the Police, because the various data above show that cases that hit the police agency also contributed to *public distrust*. Moreover, in the context of island communities, Polmas faces more significant challenges, due to issues of access to resources. Not a few implementations of Polmas in island areas experience obstacles when hampered by budget issues, access, and resources that are not very supportive. As a result, the image of the police then fades again. That is why, the community service police are an alternative offer or approach beyond the formal institutional policy for the reconstruction of the Polri image.

Proof that the police can be involved with conditions of social inequality and help the community is evidence of involvement outside the main police duties, but still affects the image of the police. Police actions outside their main duties, whether positive or negative, always affect the image of the institution. If personnel (individual) violations are associated with institutional errors, then the kindness of police personnel also contributes to the legitimacy of the institution's image. Therefore, the concept of soft power is an alternative to reconstruct public trust with a more humanistic mechanism through social service. Policecommunity involvement in public services, not only law, will create harmonious relationships and reduce the impact of the legitimacy crisis. The humanistic approach contributes to strengthening social capital and social networks to create a sense of mutual trust. Solidarity from social capital is further strengthened when officers show concern for the daily problems of the community. Police concern is a strengthening of social relations in active participation. Therefore, an alternative approach based on police involvement - not just repressive actions can reduce social tensions and the potential for wider public distrust. Therefore, police involvement outside their main duties in community problems can be a powerful mechanism in repairing the identity of the police which is often doubted by the community.

The police social service is not only a caricature mechanism, but also a tactical effort to improve the legitimacy crisis from the fading image of the police outside the formal mechanism. The police do not only provide direct assistance to the community, without leaving any traces of meaning. However, the personal actions of the police become a symbolic communication medium about the goodness of the police (institutionally) in the eyes of the public. The concern of police members outside their formal duties can balance public criticism and increase the legitimacy of the institution. Relationships based on feelings rather than structures are social capital.

The concept of community policing does not replace the significance of law enforcement or strategic policies through community policing (Polmas). However, law enforcement

still applies to prosecute every criminal crime that occurs in society by carrying out control, as the police take action based on the law - even criminal law. However, the police must take firm action against people who have violated the rules, even for those who seriously resist the authorities. In addition, the police are also expected to take preventive measures, such as the Polmas policy which prioritizes direct interaction between the police and the community. Polmas plays a role in maintaining public security and order - this is a legal policy for the benefit of social security. However, this article proposes an alternative outside of formal policies that can have an impact on the image of the Police, because the public distrust experienced by the police needs to be overcome with various mechanisms that support each other. The bakso police is a mechanism outside of formal policies, but is bound by the identity of the police, because it is carried out by members of the police force - although sometimes it is personal. Evaluation The Effectiveness of Social Service as Instrument Recovery Trust with confusing to ; (1) Impact of Community Service on Public Perception; (2) Advantages and Limitations Social Service Approach

Comprehensive Strategy Build Public Trust through Integration of Social Service with Structural Reform

Conclusion and Recommendations

In overcoming the legitimacy crisis due to the phenomenon of *public distrust* towards the Police, law enforcement and coercive police policies are no longer effective – even policies based on the concept of *community policing* are no longer effective. The public has become suspicious of every police effort that is considered negative, thus further damaging the image of the Police. A series of cases carried out by police officers from the lowest rank to the ranks of police generals further confirms the construction of public thinking, that the performance and transparency of the police are very bad and destructive. The police are no longer trusted by the public and this is further affirmed by various hashtags on social media and journalistic media, as well as stories circulating about the uselessness of reporting to the police. *Public distrust* has threatened the implementation of legal regulation mechanisms, even though they are carried out well, because the public is doubtful of the various actions taken by the police. The public feels that the police only impose sanctions, without first fixing the internal problems that have occurred so far. Therefore, an alternative mechanism is needed to reduce police-community tensions with active police involvement in the social sector.

In this context, an alternative approach needs to be developed to overcome the police legitimacy crisis. Social police are a tactical solution to reconstruct *public trust* outside the legal regulatory mechanism. The *soft power approach* outside the regulatory mechanism develops from humanistic social practices and emphasizes direct police-community involvement (social engagement). With this approach, a social and emotional relationship

between the police and the community can be constructed that influences the strengthening of the Polri image. Social police are an offer amidst the problems of coercive law enforcement and various deviations that have damaged the face of the Polri. The *soft power approach* can reduce the negative stigma that has been rooted in the identity of the police. However, the concept of social police does not mean replacing the significance of law enforcement or strategic police policies through *community policing* (Polmas) - but rather complementing the weaknesses of ineffective law and policy implementation in the public sphere.

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