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**Prosopography of Teachers' Roles as Change Agents in Riau in the Twentieth Century**

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## PROSOPOGRAPHY OF TEACHERS' ROLES AS CHANGE AGENTS IN RIAU IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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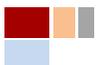
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### Abstract

*This article analyzes the factors that have contributed to developing teachers' roles as agents of change in Riau in the 20th century. Teachers have played a strategic role in the past and have become an essential group in social and political life. Using the Historical Method and the prosopography approach, 25 biographies of Riau Province figures and the results of interviews with four informants were collected, evaluated, and analyzed. The research findings indicated that the role of teachers in Riau in the 20th century was crucial, and teachers were a productive group that gained trust, recognition, and respect during various periods of struggle in Indonesia. Teachers were able to maximize their role as agents of change due to the following factors: (1) their presence had become an integral part of the cultural and historical journey of Riau society; (2) teachers succeeded in developing their social competence, and their social role became ingrained in the collective memory of society; (3) teachers were intellectual elites with better family backgrounds, education, and experience than the general population; and (4) the dedication, altruistic attitude, and willingness of teachers were reflected in their personalities.*

**Keywords:** *Prosopography; the Role of the Teacher; Change Agent.*



## A. Introduction

Teachers in Indonesia in the twentieth century were an educated and dignified group known as the Modern Indonesian Elite (van Niel, 2009). The teacher initiated a hardship organization during the national awakening and national movement. They established organizations, such as Muhammadiyah (Farid, 2014; Lenggono, 2018), Taman Siswa (Purwoko, 1994; Riyanti et al., 2022), and instill awareness of nationalism and the essence of autonomy through education (Najib, 2020). Teachers established schools and invented figures for the dissemination of anti-colonial nationalism. According to Anhar Gonggong (2008), education and teachers are media in the founding of Indonesian nationalism today.

Teachers have received special recognition from the government for their significant historical role in Indonesian history. Through Presidential Decree No. 78/1994, the government designated November 25, 1945, as National Teacher's Day (Kosasi, 2016). The existence of award rules, teacher certification, and the creation of the Guru Hymn all acknowledge the role of teachers and peerless services (Latiana, 2019). With a background in education, the Governor of Riau appointed a Riau female figure in 2007 and a regional warrior figure from 2016 to 2022. What factors contributed to the importance of the teacher's role? According to the Research and Development Ministry of Education and Culture, teachers are no longer prestigious, and interest in teaching is declining today (17/05/2019). There were cases of teachers being mistreated by students and parents, and 8000 honorary teachers in Riau were restless and needed the government's attention due to the policy plan to eliminate honorary teachers in 2023 (Riau Pos, 8/8/2022), demonstrating a social shift towards the role of the teacher (Komara, 2016).

According to previous research, the teacher's role can be divided into three categories. First, consider the role of teachers in instilling nationalism and national identity in an age of globalization. According to Jaskulowski's (2018) research, history teachers in Poland "force" their students' understanding and ideas on nationalism. The teachers also need

to see the contradiction between history as an objective science and history as a tool for nationalization. According to Vurgun (2021), the role of teachers in Turkey is not only to instill historical values and nationalism but also to become a driving force in the struggle for independence. During the colonial period and the war for independence in Indonesia, many teachers instilled nationalism and fought against the invaders (Nursamsi & Jumardi, 2022). Second, the teacher's professional role is linked to competence and learning issues and related to teacher competence studies based on Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers with pedagogic, social, personality, and professional competencies (Mulyani, 2009).

Meanwhile, Juhji (2016) describes several critical roles for teachers to play to achieve educational goals and progress toward professionalism. According to the findings of Alamsyah (2016) and Hamid (2017), to become an expert or professional teacher, a teacher must prioritize not only pedagogic and professional aspects but also social and personality aspects, as well as several other requirements. Third, teachers with broad social role competencies drive societal development dynamics during war and peace (Hidayat & Saraswati, 2020; Pangestu, 2022). Teachers have been trailblazers, maximizing their social role. Based on these three trends, research on the role of teachers is almost always viewed as "objective," while teachers' "subjective" perspectives are ignored.

This study aims to fill the gaps left by previous studies that ignored the teacher's subjective viewpoint. This study aims to compile the general background characteristics of teachers based on their experiences, as well as to analyze the factors that contributed to the rise of the role of teachers in Riau in the 20th century. A prosopographic study can initiate such a study (Stone, 1971). This goal will provide an in-depth understanding of the critical factors in the role of teachers in Riau during the 20th century. These teachers' essential and prestigious role is a social role that existed before and continued after independence. A prosopographic study of teachers' background characteristics can justify why teachers are agents of societal change in the 20th century in Riau.



## B. Method

The subjective experience of the teachers was extracted from a collection of biographies or so-called prosopography of the figures determined by the Governor of Riau in 2007 and the years 2016-2022, totaling 110 biographies. Using the historical method and the study of prosopography or collective biographies, this research attempts to find the general background characteristics as defined by Keits-Rohan (2007); prosopography is the collaborative study of the lives of individuals in various analyses. Zbróg studied prosopography to re-explore educational research issues (2016).

The Historical Method is an effort to discover information about the past through critical stages of interpretation and historiography. These stages are carried out simultaneously and in conjunction, without waiting for one stage to be completed before moving on to the next. Meanwhile, the prosopography approach is a desk review to approach more historical questions and combine all relevant biographical data. The method involves: (1) incorporating the 110 biographies collected in the heuristic process to reduce data based on the figures' background and generate the collective biography characteristics. (2) The characteristics are teachers with a professional background as stated in Law No. 14 of 2005 about Teachers and Lecturers and teachers in the broad sense, meaning individuals who provide education in certain places, not necessarily in formal educational institutions, but also in places of worship (Maya, 2013). Teachers like this are also professional (Alamsyah, 2016; Hamid, 2017). (3) The reduced biographies of teachers are examined based on their family background, education, region of origin, and gender.

This research begins with a review desk to map relevant issues related to the role of teachers in Riau in the 20th century, which is categorized into three contexts of the struggle period, namely the colonial or pre-independence period, the struggle period in the war of independence, and the post-war. The 110 biographies of Riau regional figures are reduced by categorizing them into one relevant group, namely figures who have served as teachers or in the world of formal, informal, or non-formal education, either throughout their lives or as a part of their lives. Found 25 biographies,



which became the source of data for this study. Other data sources come from four chosen informants because they have a close relationship. They are Suwardi MS (Informant 1) is the head of the Riau Regional Title Research and Review Team (TP2GD), Rustam Effendi (Informant 2) is the Daily Secretary of the Regional Struggle of 1945, O.K. Nizami Jamil (Informant 3) is a Riau Malay community and customary leader and former head of the Riau Province Education and Culture office in the 1980s. Azaly Djohan (Informant 4) is the Chairman. The reduced data is then tabulated in the general context characteristics to find the same trend pattern. Furthermore, the interpretation process employs analysis and synthesis with various sources to determine the meanings communicated in the data on each statement of the figures.

## C. Result and Discussion

### 1. Result

#### a. Characteristics of Teachers' Background

In the heuristic stage, data were collected from (1) Pusdatin Puanri (Riau Women's Data Center) (2007) and (2) the Riau Provincial Social Service Data on Riau Freedom Fighters (2016-2022). Both datasets contain 110 brief biographies of Riau Province figures. The next stage was to examine all biographies and reduce the data while also carrying out the critical stage of the Historical Method. The data (1) result is ten figures who were teachers before independence, during the war, or after. From data (2), 19 figures were obtained who had a background or worked as teachers. There are similarities between the figures in data (1) and (2), Riau women figures are also designated as Riau warrior figures, namely Syarifah Latifah, Chadijah Ali, and Roslaini Ismail Suko, and these three figures are included in data (2), resulting in a total of 25 biographies of characters from the data source (1).

*Table 1. Teachers' general background characteristics*

Year	Name (Year of Birth-Death)	Origin	Education	Parents Background
2007	1. Azizah Ali (1945-...)	Indragiri Hulu	Gadjah University	Mada Indragiri Kingdom Official



Year	Name (Year of Birth-Death)	Origin	Education	Parents Background
	2. Encik Hasnah (1938-...)	Siak	Sekolah Rendah, Kursus keterampilan	Scholar, Siak Kingdom Official
	3. Fatimah Hadi (1927-2007)	Kuantan Singingi	Mecca, IAIN Susqa Pekanbaru	Scholars, Merchants
	4. Maemanah Umar (1937-2019)	Kampar	Diniyah Putri P. Panjang IAIN Sunan Kalijaga	Bridal Makeup
	5. Misbah Jalila (1926-2007)	Siak	Diniyah Putri P. Panjang	Siak Kingdom Official
	6. Rosnaniar (1942-...)	Kampar	PGA Tanjungpinang, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, IAIN Susqa Pekanbaru	Tradesman
2016	7. Syarifah Latifah (1896-1929)	Siak	Sekolah Istana Langkat	Siak Royal Family
	8. Chadjah Ali (1925-1986)	Pekanbaru	Diniyah Putri P. Panjang	Tradesman
	9. Ma'rifat Mardjani (1917-1989)	Kuantan Singingi	PGA Bukittinggi	Farmer
	10. Syekh Abdurrahman Siddiq (1857-1930)	Indragiri Hilir	Mecca	Nobles, Scholar
	11. Tenas Effendi (1936-2015)	Pelalawan	SPG at Bengkalis	Pelalawan Kingdom official, farmer
2017	-	-	-	-
2018	12. Syarifah Fadlun (1909-1988)	Siak	Sekolah istana Langkat	Siak Royal Family
2019	13. Syekh Abdul Wahab Rokan (1811-1926)	Rokan Hilir	Malaysia and Mekah	Nobles, scholar
	14. Mahmud Marzuki (1915-1946)	Kampar	Darun Nadwah, Lucknow India	Trader
2020	15. H. Zaini Kunin (1922-1994)	Rokan Hulu	Pesantren di Sumbar	Scholars
	16. H. Ibnoe Abbas (1920-2002)	Kuantan Singingi	Thawalib P. Panjang, IAIN Susqa Pekanbaru	Scholars
	17. K.H. Muhammad Ichsan (1899-1988)	Bengkalis	Ponpes di P. Jawa dan Muar Malaysia	Scholars
2021	18. Buya Mansyur Abdul Jabbar (1919-1994)	Kampar	Thawalib School di Bukittinggi; kursus guru di Airtiris	Health Officer
	19. K.H. Bustani Qadri (1921-2003)	Indragiri Hilir	Darul Ulum Mekah	Farmer, Trader
	20. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Lutfi (1936-1993)	Kuantan Singingi	Program Doktor IKIP Bandung	Enterpriser
	21. H. Said Oemar Al-Jufri (1912-1996)	Pelalawan	Sekolah Istana Pelalawan	Tradesman
2022	22. Hj. Roslaimi Ismail Suko (1938-2021)	Rokan Hulu	Diniyah Putri P. Panjang	Enterpriser
	23. Syekh Abdurrahman Yaqub (1912-1970)	Indragiri Hilir	Darul Ulum Mekah	Scholars
	24. Syekh Umar (1869-1960)	Dumai	Basilam Langkat	Unknown
	25. K.H. Imam Bulqin (1881-1974)	Bengkalis	Ponpes Tebu Ireng Jombang	Scholars

Source: Data from the riau province social service and the riau women's data and information center were processed



According to Table 1, Kuantan Singingi, Indragiri Hilir, and Siak have more teacher figures than other areas in Riau. Many educational figures came from Kuantan Singingi, according to Informant 1. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Lutfi, appointed as a Riau warrior figure in 2021, was the first professor in Riau to come from Kuantan Singingi. Kuantan Singingi is geographically, historically, and culturally influenced by West Sumatra, so educational progress in the Minangkabau area affects Kuantan Singingi. The viewpoint of Informant 1 is appropriate with the findings of Wedayanti's (2019) research on the origins of Randai Kuantan art and culture in West Sumatra.

Meanwhile, the Indragiri Kingdom and the Siak Kingdom triumphed in Indragiri Hilir (along with Indragiri Hulu) (Srikandi et al., 2021). Because of this historical unity, the people of Indragiri Hulu claim the three figures from Indragiri Hilir. The four Siak figures are female and have kinship ties to the Siak Asseraya Palace. Siak has female figures because the Siak Kingdom was the first in all regions to educate women, which later became Riau Province (Wilaela, 2016). Meanwhile, two Pelalawan figures are competent humanists in Malay customs and have ties to the Kingdom of Pelalawan.

The figures are descended from (1) traditional elites such as nobles, royal family or relatives, and royal officials, (2) traders/ entrepreneurs and farmers, (3) ulama, (4) and others (such as health workers, bridal make-up). Most figures have good educational backgrounds and higher education levels except for Buya Abdul Jabbar and Encik Hasnah, who are in low school and studying related skills. Because of their royal family status, some received informal education at the palace and experienced the culture of seclusion, such as Syarifah Latifah and Syarifah Fadlun at the Langkat Palace and Said Oemar al-Jufri at the Pelalawan Palace (Informant 3). Most of the figures were educated from secondary to tertiary levels in Riau and elsewhere, including Padangpanjang, Bukittinggi, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Jombang, Baslam, Tanjungpinang, Malaysia, India, and Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Some studies general knowledge, religious education, and even universities in Pekanbaru and on the island of Java.



### b. The Socio-Political Role of Public Education in Transforming Society

Not all teachers participated in the three periods of struggle in the 20th century, namely the colonial or before independence, the war for independence, and the post-independence period. Because of their age differences, they have different periods. Some fought only during the colonial period and died before the Declaration of Independence in 1945. (2) some teachers were born near the end of the colonial period and were still children when the war for independence began (1945-1949), so they became the generation that filled independence through education.

Table 2: Change Agent Competencies and Roles for Teachers in Riau in the 20th Century

Illustration	Before Independence (< 1945)	War of Independence 1945-1949	Post-Independence War (1950-1999)
Establishing a General /Religious Educational Institution	7, 10, 12	-	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 15, 22, 23.
Empowering Women, Children, and Youth of Indigenous Tribes/dropout Poor	7, 12	8	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 22.
Fighters in the War of Independence	13	3, 5, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 25	-
Teachers in public and private education institutions.	5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25.	5, 14, 15, 17, 19.	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 15, 19, 20
People's Representatives (Members of DPR/DPRD/DPD)	-	-	4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16.
Pioneers of Village/Plantation Opening, Farmers, Traders	10, 13, 17, 25	-	19
Royal Advisor to the Malay Indigenous Government, Official, Penghulu, Village Head/KUA	10, 21	8, 21	11, 16, 18, 21
Religion teacher/Ulama, tarekat teacher/martial arts teacher	10, 12, 13, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25	14, 17, 23, 25	9, 11, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 25.

Source: Processed data from the Riau Women's Data and Information Center (2007) and the Riau Province Social Service (2016-2022).

Table 2 points to how teachers can improve their social competence during the three stages of struggle and through various forms of actualization. Misbah Jalila, Zaini Kunin, Ibnoe Abbas, Buya Mansyur Abdul Jabbar, and Said Oemar al-Jufri are among the educators who have taught formal education in schools or madrasas since the days of the Dutch East Indies. Most teachers founded or managed schools at the time. They

are Syarifah Latifah, Syarifah Fadlun, Sheikh Abdurrahman Siddiq; Sheikh Abdul Wahab Rokan, Mahmud Marzuki, Ibnu Abbas, H. Zaini Kunin, K.H. Muhammad Ichsan, Buya Mansyur Abdul Jabbar, K.H. Bustani Qadri, Oemar al-Jufri, Sheikh Abdurrahman Yaqub, Sheikh Umar and K.H. Imam Bulqin. They clear forests and establish new settlements while nurturing the community through recitation or community education activities in mosques or mushalla. They still teach traditional education, which is known as *kuttab* education.

Teachers, in a narrow or broad sense, were critics during the colonial period and the war for independence but instead became a source of information for the community about nationalism and anti-colonial attitudes. They secretly teach science, religion, and life skills and instill a sense of nationalism in students and the general public through religious recitation activities in mosques or prayer rooms. Imam Bulqin also taught martial arts, which was helpful during wartime because Imam Bulqin and his students formed a people's army and fought alongside the national army. Some of these educational institutions are still in operation today. Because of their education, teachers, according to Informant 2, became opponents of the resistance—groups whom teachers and literature have enlightened in schools. Teachers are at the forefront of mobilizing resistance.

Teachers remained an essential group in the development of education after the War of Independence (1945-1949), in the 1950s and after (1) establishing formal educational institutions (schools or madrasas), with those who became professional teachers or receive government salaries as a result of their work as teachers; (2) establishing non-formal education institutions to develop local weaving skills and establishing orphanages, shelter houses, weaving houses, or training centers for the empowerment of homemakers and youth from indigenous tribes, youth who have dropped out of school; (3) as religious educators, religious leaders, or clerics, *Erekat* instructors, or martial arts instructors Teachers are groups of teachers who provide education to the broader community without receiving a fixed



salary, and who are housed in houses of worship, mosques, and prayer rooms that they have established. (4) Some work in the government sector after or before becoming teachers, such as administrative officials or members of the People's representative council at various levels. According to Informant 1, teachers could play the most crucial role after the war because they were a well-educated group; their education was high because teacher schools were established during the colonial period, and the voting community received the majority of their education from these teachers.

## 2. Discussion

There has been a shift in the role of teachers, from being agents of change in the 20th century to becoming a secondary group in the present time. In the past century, teachers developed all aspects as expert teachers (Alamsyah, 2016) or professional teachers with social and political roles and personality aspects recognized by society (Hamid, 2017). Therefore, the position of teachers became important beyond their professional duties. Nowadays, teachers focus on their professionalism and tend to be overwhelmed with various administrative tasks. As a result, their social and political roles need to be included. Prosopography studies can reveal teachers' subjective and personal backgrounds related to factors that maximize their roles.

Teachers' most apparent social competence is seen in their involvement in the three periods of the Indonesian struggle in the 20th century. The actualization of their involvement took various forms. Teachers in Riau became an essential group in the 20th century, acting as agents of community change because the ability to manage and develop competence was more comprehensive than pedagogics and professionals. Teachers instilled nationalism in students and the surrounding community during the colonial period. They are active outside of school by secretly incorporating teachings of love for the homeland into mosque lecture material, and some even train their students in self-defense during the independence war. Teachers were directly involved in the actions of the

struggle during the war for independence. The teacher was a Modern Indonesian Elite during the struggle, which took the traditional elite's role away from the palace environment (van Niel, 2009). As shown in Table 1, some teachers in Riau come from traditional elite backgrounds, such as relatives and court officials. However, their identity as teachers is considerably more prominent than their background.

During peace, teachers become bureaucrats or elected authorities elected and authorized as representatives of the people and community leaders. They continue to pursue education by instituting academic institutions on their waqf land and willfully becoming teachers. According to Informant 4, the teacher's personality as an agent of change is formed by his or her perception of the reward for service in the field of education. According to Badley (2006), the various arguments for change presented by teachers are beliefs held by teachers that blend well in practice. Change can also have meaning for the teacher if he recognizes what he needs to change. The personality of the teacher is crucial in sustaining educational change. This teacher's belief or personality was later referred to as a moral profession by Lukacs (2015). According to Informant 3, the community trusted the old teachers because they had played a role in the war. Meanwhile, new teachers are a group that benefits not only from their education but also from the community's positive perception of teachers as fighters and nationalists, and this group of teachers joins many ruling organizations such as the Karya due to the regulation on civil servants' mono loyalty (Farchan, 2022).

In the 20th century in Riau, the role of the teacher as an agent of change in the larger community was more prominent than in the classroom. This is attempting to increase the utilization of social competence and teacher personality competence as outlined in Law No. 14 of 2005 Concerning Teachers and Lecturers (Mulyani, 2009). The relevance of the teacher's role is inextricably linked to the Riau community's values, which regard teachers as part of religion. The teacher is an example, and what the teacher says and does become an example of receiving life's blessings



(Kandiri & Arfandi, 2021). Teachers also believe that imparting knowledge and teaching valuable life skills is worship. Consequently, the teacher is a moral work that is more generous and voluntary to increase the expectations and appreciation of society for teachers.

Among the Riau figures who received awards from the local government in 2007 and the 2016-2022 period were those who had been teachers. This shows that the role of teachers goes beyond their professionalism so that they become leaders for society at large, as researched by Alamsyah (2016) and Hamid (2017). The teachers have become a community group who have a high dedication to the country and society; they have brought about change for the independence and development of the country. The factors that make teachers in Riau respectable and their role significant are (1) Community dependence on teachers as ulama, mufti, or government/ government advisors. (2) Teachers as pioneers and drivers of progress and still have a long-lasting impact on the community. As village founders and pioneers of plantation business, they have become the main commodity until now (Husvina, 2021).

Teachers are also contributors (wakif) of land to establish madrasas or schools and mosques so that as long as the schools and mosques operate, the services of teachers are still commemorated. The community's collective memory of the services of these teachers is maintained because the community routinely commemorates or commemorates them on certain days or occasions. (3) The educational background and insight of the teachers are perfect; they migrate to other areas and become an elite group in society. Although some teachers could be more highly educated, these shortcomings are covered by skills, proficiency in good practice, and knowledge of Malay cultural heritage. So, the existence and role of the teacher have become part of the cultural history of the Riau people, becoming a living monument embedded in the collective memory of the community.

This research is under van Niel's (2009) research that teachers are Modern Indonesian Elites who brought change to Indonesian society in the 20th century. This study also sharpens the research results on teachers as



agents of change. Before influencing society, teachers make changes by increasing their social competence and personality through education, social generosity, and altruistic awareness. Religious teachings also influence teachers' personalities to serve voluntarily and assume that educational matters are more important than personal affairs (Hidayati, 2016). Their role is not only as professional educators in the classroom; their transformative role is more visible in social life because of the strong relationship between teachers and the community in the form of practicing religious values about the generosity and volunteerism of teachers with a tradition of respecting and commemorating their services. The community practices teacher services.

The position and role of teachers in Riau today are less important than in the past. The demands for pedagogic competence and professionalism make teachers more likely to play a narrow role as professional educators in schools while being preoccupied with administrative responsibilities. Teachers are one of many sources of knowledge and references for the community because of technology and information media development. In the rapidly changing dynamics of life, teachers struggle to adapt and try to focus on technological developments and increasing professionalism. Teaching today is not a prestigious profession. Creativity and achievement are needed for the teacher's role to survive as an agent of change, as research by Braund & Campbell (2010) shows that teachers can now shift standard teaching perceptions to creative efforts.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Teaching is a prestigious profession and a change agent in Riau in the 20th century. Teachers are not only professional educators in formal education or schools but have also maximized their socio-political role during colonial, war, and independence times. The factors that make teachers the most effective change agents are (1) Their existence has become part of the Riau people's historical, social, cultural, and religious journey; (2) the services of teachers are memorialized and embedded in the community's collective memory because they are immortalized through regular commemorations and celebrations; and (3) the teacher is also a guiding intellectual elite who



enters religious, political, and social organizations as a conduit in the teacher's cultural relationship with the public; (4) The teachers' personalities are altruistic, full of dedication and volunteerism. These factors make teaching a critical, prestigious profession with a significant sociopolitical role in Riau in the twentieth century.

The prosopography method examines the role of teachers from the standpoint of the teacher's subject or experience, as well as general background characteristics. The teachers came from various Riau regions, had good educational backgrounds, and were descended from noble parents or royal relatives, merchant groups or farmers, and teachers or religious leaders (ulama). Through prosopography, the teacher's role as a change agent is revealed to be a social role resulting from mutual respect between the community and the dedication of teachers who are full of volunteerism and social generosity and are thought to be of high moral value and worship.

In the study of prosopography, this study only explores the socio-political role of teachers in Riau in the 20th century, as well as the factors that cause teachers to utilize their role. The study's restriction is that it only represents the role of professionals and does not compare it to the current phenomenon of teachers' declining role.

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