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ECONOMIC GROWTH, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AND OPEN UNEMPLOYMENT AS DETERMINANTS OF POVERTY: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTH SULAWESI

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Abstract

Poverty remains one of the major development challenges in South Sulawesi, particularly in regencies with relatively high poverty rates. This study aims to examine the effects of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) growth, educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate on poverty across nine regencies in South Sulawesi during the 2016–2025 period. This research employed a quantitative approach using panel data obtained from the Statistics Indonesia. The research sample consisted of nine regencies that consistently recorded high poverty rates, namely Selayar Islands Regency, Jeneponto Regency, Pangkajene and Islands Regency, Bone Regency, Enrekang Regency, Luwu Regency, Tana Toraja Regency, North Luwu Regency, and North Toraja Regency. The analytical method applied was panel data regression using the Common Effect Model (CEM), Fixed Effect Model (FEM), and Random Effect Model (REM), with the optimal model selected through the Chow test and Hausman test. The findings reveal that GRDP growth has a negative effect on poverty, educational attainment has a negative and statistically significant effect on poverty, whereas the open unemployment rate has a positive effect on poverty. Simultaneously, GRDP growth, educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate significantly influence poverty in South Sulawesi. These findings suggest that poverty alleviation policies should prioritize equitable economic growth, improvements in educational quality, and the expansion of productive employment opportunities.

Keywords: *Poverty, Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP), Education, Unemployment, Panel Data*

1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the most pressing development challenges confronting the Indonesian government. Efforts to establish a prosperous and socially equitable society have been pursued through sustainable national development aimed at improving public welfare in a more inclusive and balanced manner. Consequently, the reduction of poverty rates has

become one of the principal indicators for evaluating the success of both national and regional development policies (Ramadani, 2024).

From a macroeconomic perspective, the success of regional development is commonly measured through the growth of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). GRDP reflects the value added generated by various economic sectors within a region over a specific period and therefore serves as a fundamental indicator of regional economic performance. Sustained economic growth is expected to expand employment opportunities, improve household income, and enhance social welfare, thereby contributing to poverty reduction (Mukti & Soraya, 2024).

Poverty is widely recognized as a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond economic deprivation and is also shaped by limited educational attainment and restricted access to employment opportunities. Accordingly, improving human capital through education and expanding productive employment opportunities constitute essential strategies for alleviating poverty.

South Sulawesi represents one of the major economic growth centers in Eastern Indonesia with substantial economic potential. Nevertheless, several regencies continue to experience relatively high poverty rates, including Selayar Islands Regency, Jeneponto Regency, Pangkajene and Islands Regency, Bone Regency, Enrekang Regency, Luwu Regency, Tana Toraja Regency, North Luwu Regency, and North Toraja Regency. This condition indicates the persistence of interregional development disparities that adversely affect social welfare across the province. Fluctuations in poverty levels further suggest that the benefits of economic growth have not been distributed equitably throughout the region. In addition, disparities in educational quality and the limited availability of productive employment opportunities continue to exacerbate poverty conditions in several regencies of South Sulawesi.

Against this backdrop, the present study investigates whether GRDP growth, educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate significantly influence poverty levels across nine regencies in South Sulawesi. Specifically, this study aims to examine both the partial and simultaneous effects of GRDP growth, educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate on poverty during the 2016–2025 period. By employing a quantitative approach and panel data analysis, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding the determinants of poverty in regions characterized by relatively high poverty rates in South Sulawesi.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Poverty

Poverty remains one of the most persistent socioeconomic challenges in the development process, particularly in developing countries. Conceptually, poverty can be understood as a condition in which individuals or groups are unable to adequately fulfill their

basic needs, including both food and non-food necessities such as education, healthcare, housing, employment access, and other essential social needs. Thus, poverty should not merely be viewed as a form of economic deprivation, but also as a reflection of the low quality of life resulting from limited access to productive resources and social opportunities (Suryawati, 2005).

From the perspective of economic development, poverty is categorized as a multidimensional phenomenon because it is influenced by various interrelated factors, including low educational attainment, high unemployment rates, limited access to employment opportunities, low labor productivity, and unequal income distribution across social groups and regions. Poverty not only reflects the limited economic capacity of communities to fulfill their basic needs, but also indicates restricted access to various dimensions of development that support improvements in quality of life. Therefore, poverty alleviation efforts cannot rely solely on increasing household income, but must also be accompanied by improvements in human capital quality, the expansion of employment opportunities, enhanced labor productivity, and the equitable distribution of sustainable economic development (Puspitarini & Anggraini, 2018).

In the regional development context, poverty is frequently employed as a key indicator for evaluating the success of regional development policies. High poverty rates within a region indicate that the outcomes of economic development have not been able to improve public welfare equitably. This phenomenon can be observed in several regencies of South Sulawesi that continue to experience relatively high poverty rates, including Selayar Islands Regency, Jeneponto Regency, Pangkajene and Islands Regency, Bone Regency, Enrekang Regency, Luwu Regency, Tana Toraja Regency, North Luwu Regency, and North Toraja Regency. The persistently high poverty rates in these regions indicate that economic growth has not yet been optimally transformed into inclusive welfare improvements for society.

Economic Growth Theory

Economic growth constitutes one of the most important indicators for assessing the success of regional development. Economic growth reflects an increase in the production capacity of goods and services within an economy, commonly measured through changes in Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). The higher the economic growth of a region, the greater the opportunities for communities to obtain employment and increase their income, which is ultimately expected to reduce poverty levels. In the context of regional development, economic growth is frequently utilized as a principal indicator for evaluating development performance because it is directly associated with improvements in public welfare (Hasibuan et al., 2022).

Regional economic development can be analyzed through observations of economic growth within a particular area. Economic growth is considered to occur when the real income of society increases compared to the previous period (Wani et al., 2020).

An increase in GRDP indicates the expansion of economic activities capable of stimulating higher production of goods and services within society. Such conditions are expected to generate positive impacts on social welfare improvement. In addition to reflecting economic progress, GRDP also functions as an important indicator for assessing and evaluating regional economic conditions over a certain period (Suleman & Hasibuan, 2021).

The relationship between economic growth and poverty can be explained through the *trickle-down effect* theory introduced by Simon Kuznets. This theory posits that high economic growth is expected to create a spread effect of prosperity across all segments of society through increased investment, employment expansion, productivity enhancement, and broader economic opportunities for low-income communities. Therefore, economic growth, as reflected in rising GRDP, is theoretically expected to exert a negative effect on poverty levels, implying that higher economic growth is associated with lower poverty rates within a region (Juliana et al., 2018).

However, in practice, economic growth does not always produce a significant impact on poverty reduction when the benefits of development are distributed unevenly. This condition may occur when economic growth is concentrated only in certain regions, particularly urban areas or specific economic sectors that do not directly involve low-income communities. As a result, increases in GRDP are enjoyed primarily by certain groups within society, thereby maintaining income inequality and limiting the broader benefits of development. Consequently, economic growth must be accompanied by inclusive and equity-oriented development policies to ensure that the outcomes of development contribute meaningfully to poverty reduction, especially in regions characterized by relatively low welfare levels (Ardiani, 2024).

Educational Attainment

Education represents one of the fundamental aspects of human resource development and plays a strategic role in improving societal quality of life. From the perspective of development economics, education is viewed as a form of long-term human capital investment capable of enhancing individual capacity through improvements in knowledge, skills, competencies, and labor productivity. The higher an individual's educational attainment, the greater the opportunity to obtain decent and productive employment with higher income levels. Therefore, education constitutes an important instrument for supporting economic development while simultaneously functioning as an effective mechanism for poverty reduction within a region (Alim & Harsono, 2025).

According to the human capital theory proposed by Gary Becker, education is regarded as an investment in human capital that generates both individual and social economic benefits. Education enhances cognitive abilities, technical skills, productivity, and innovation, thereby increasing opportunities to obtain employment with better wages. Consequently, individuals with higher educational attainment tend to possess stronger economic capacities compared to those with lower levels of education. Conversely, limited access to education may trap communities in cycles of poverty due to the low quality of human resources and restricted access to productive employment opportunities (Anwar et al., 2024).

Research conducted by Hermawan and Bahjatulloh (2022) demonstrated that education significantly affects poverty levels in Indonesia. Better educational attainment improves labor quality and expands opportunities for individuals to earn higher income, thereby contributing to poverty reduction.

In this study, educational attainment is measured using the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) indicator. This indicator is employed because it effectively reflects the educational achievement level of society within a region. Higher mean years of schooling indicate relatively better educational attainment, which potentially enhances labor quality and economic productivity. Conversely, lower mean years of schooling reflect limited access to education, which may ultimately reduce human capital quality and increase the risk of poverty.

Within the context of South Sulawesi, disparities in mean years of schooling remain evident across regions. Urban areas such as Makassar, Parepare, and Palopo generally exhibit higher educational attainment compared to several regencies that continue to experience relatively high poverty rates. This condition suggests that unequal access to education remains one of the contributing factors to persistent poverty in several regions of South Sulawesi.

Open Unemployment Rate

The Open Unemployment Rate (OUR) is an economic indicator used to measure the proportion of the working-age population that belongs to the labor force but remains unemployed while actively seeking employment. The open unemployment rate serves as an important indicator for evaluating labor market conditions within a region because it reflects the capacity of the regional economy to generate employment opportunities for society. A high unemployment rate indicates relatively low labor absorption, resulting in a portion of the population lacking sufficient income sources to meet their living needs adequately (Zaqiah et al., 2023).

From the perspective of development economics, unemployment is closely associated with poverty because individuals without employment tend to experience income

limitations or even lose their primary source of livelihood necessary for fulfilling daily needs. Such conditions may reduce household purchasing power, increase economic dependency, and enlarge the likelihood of households falling below the poverty line. Therefore, high unemployment rates are frequently associated with worsening welfare conditions within a region (Ngubane et al., 2023).

A high unemployment rate constitutes one of the major factors contributing to the increase in poverty levels within a region. This condition arises because the annual growth in the labor force is not always accompanied by the capacity of the economic sector to generate adequate employment opportunities. The imbalance between the number of job seekers and the availability of jobs results in difficulties for a portion of the population in obtaining employment, thereby adversely affecting household income and overall welfare. In addition, relatively high population growth and the continuous increase in the productive-age population further exacerbate unemployment problems, making unemployment an increasingly complex issue within the context of regional economic development. Consequently, high unemployment rates not only affect the economic conditions of society but also contribute to rising poverty levels and widening social welfare inequality (Anggraini et al., 2023).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using an associative research design aimed at examining the effects of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP), educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate on poverty in South Sulawesi. The study utilized secondary panel data obtained from the Statistics Indonesia of South Sulawesi, covering nine regencies with a total of 90 observations. The dependent variable in this study was poverty (Y), while the independent variables consisted of GRDP (X1), educational attainment (X2), and the open unemployment rate (X3).

The analytical method employed was panel data regression using the EViews application. Panel data analysis was selected because it combines time-series and cross-sectional data, thereby producing more robust and efficient estimations. In panel data regression, three estimation models are commonly applied, namely the Common Effect Model (CEM), Fixed Effect Model (FEM), and Random Effect Model (REM). The selection of the most appropriate model was conducted using the Chow test, Hausman test, and Lagrange Multiplier test. Based on the model selection results, the Random Effect Model (REM) was identified as the most suitable model for analyzing the effects of the independent variables on poverty. The regression model employed in this study is formulated as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

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Where:

Y : Poverty

β_0 : Constant

X_1 : Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP)

X_2 : Educational Attainment

X_3 : Open Unemployment Rate

$\beta_1 X_1\ \beta_2 X_2\ \beta_3 X_3$ I : Regression Coefficients

ε : *Error Term*

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the partial test (t-test) to determine the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, as well as the simultaneous test (F-test) to examine the collective effect of the independent variables on poverty. In addition, the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) was employed to measure the explanatory power of the independent variables in explaining variations in poverty levels in South Sulawesi.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

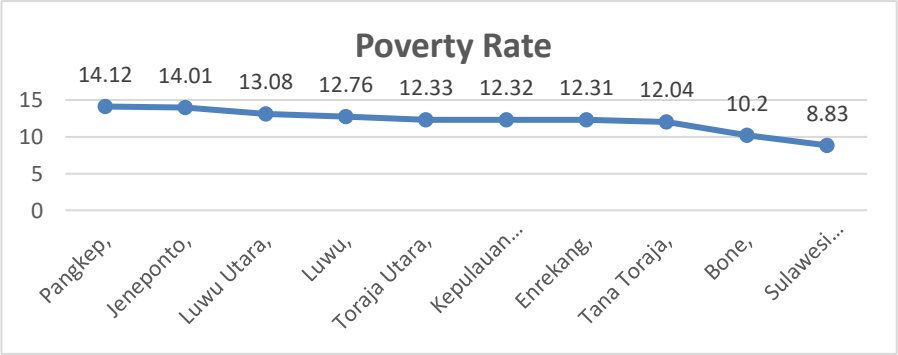

Figure 1 Average Poverty Rates Across Regencies and Municipalities in South Sulawesi

Based on the figure above, this study focuses on nine regencies, namely Selayar Islands Regency, Jeneponto Regency, Pangkajene and Islands Regency, Bone Regency, Enrekang Regency, Luwu Regency, Tana Toraja Regency, North Luwu Regency, and North Toraja Regency. The selection of these regions was based on the condition that, throughout

the 2016–2025 period, all nine regencies consistently recorded poverty rates exceeding 10 percent, thereby remaining above the average poverty rate of South Sulawesi.

Model Selection

Chow Test

The Chow test was employed to determine the most appropriate model between the Common Effect Model (CEM) and the Fixed Effect Model (FEM). If the test results indicate that $H_0$is accepted, the Common Effect Model is selected, and the testing procedure does not proceed to the subsequent stage. Conversely, if $H_0$is rejected, the analysis is continued using the Hausman test to identify the most suitable model between the Fixed Effect Model (FEM) and the Random Effect Model (REM).

Table 1 Chow Test

Effects Test	Statistics	d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section F	44.864387	(8,69)	0.0000
Cross-section Chi-square	164.233646	8	0.0000

Source: Processed Data Using EViews 12

Based on the results of the Chow test, the value of Prob. Cross-section F was 0.0000, while the value of Prob. Cross-section Chi-square was also 0.0000. These probability values were below the significance level of $\alpha = 5\%(0.0000 < 0.05)$, indicating that $H_0$was rejected and $H_1$was accepted. Accordingly, the Fixed Effect Model (FEM) was considered the most appropriate model for the analysis. Furthermore, since the Chow test indicated that the Fixed Effect Model was preferable, the analysis proceeded to the Hausman test.

Hausman Test

The Hausman test was conducted to determine the most appropriate model between the Fixed Effect Model (FEM) and the Random Effect Model (REM). Prior to performing the Hausman test, the data were first estimated using the Random Effect Model (REM) approach.

Table 2 Hausman Test

Test Summary	Chi-Sq. Statistic	Chi-Sq. d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	0.000000	3	1.0000
Period random	0.000000	3	1.0000

Source: Processed Data Using EViews 12

Based on the results of the Hausman test, the value of Prob. Cross-section random was 1.0000, while the value of Prob. Period random was also 1.0000. These probability values

were higher than the significance level of $\alpha = 5\%(1.0000 > 0.05)$, indicating that $H_0$was accepted and $H_1$was rejected. Accordingly, the Random Effect Model (REM) was considered the most appropriate model for this study. Furthermore, since the Hausman test indicated that the Random Effect Model was the preferred model, the analysis proceeded with the Lagrange Multiplier test to further validate the selection of the most suitable model.

Lagrange Multiplier Test

The Lagrange Multiplier test was conducted to determine the most appropriate model between the Common Effect Model (CEM) and the Random Effect Model (REM).

Table 3 Lagrange Multipler Test

	Hypothesis		
	Cross-section	Time	Both
Breusch-Pagan	163.6717 (0.0000)	4.308369 (0.0379)	167.9800 (0.0000)

Source: Processed Data Using EViews 12

The results of the Lagrange Multiplier test indicate that the Prob. Breusch–Pagan value was 0.0000. This probability value was below the significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$or 0.05, indicating that $H_0$was rejected and $H_1$was accepted. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the Random Effect Model (REM) was the most appropriate model for this study.

Estimation Results of the Random Effect Model (REM)

Based on the results of the panel data regression model selection through the Chow test, Hausman test, and Lagrange Multiplier test, the Random Effect Model (REM) was identified as the best model for this study. The REM was selected because it was considered more capable of explaining the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The estimation results of the Random Effect Model (REM) are presented in the following table.

Tabel 4 Estimation Results of Panel Data

Independent Variables	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-statistic	t-table	Prob.
GRDP	-0.027439^{ns}	0.045846	-0.598496	1,663	0.5511
Educational Attainment	-1.482012**	0.287662	-5.151930	1,663	0.0000
Open Unemployment Rate	0.230459**	0.093121	2.474837	1,663	0.0153
Konstanta	23.67693				
Adjusted R-squared	0.510601				
F-statistic	12.46581				
Prob. (F-statistic)	0.000001				

Source: Processed Data Using EViews 12

** = indicates significant at the 0,05% level
ns = no significant

Based on the estimation results of the Random Effect Model (REM), the constant value was 23.67693. This value indicates that when the variables of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP), educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate are assumed to remain constant, the poverty rate in South Sulawesi is estimated at 23.67693 percent.

The Effect of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) on Poverty

The results indicate that the GRDP variable has a coefficient value of -0.027439, showing a negative coefficient direction. This implies that a 1 percent increase in GRDP tends to reduce the poverty rate by 0.027439 percent, assuming other variables remain constant. However, the probability value of 0.5511, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05, and the calculated *t*-value of -0.598496, which is smaller than the *t*-table value of 1.663, indicate that GRDP does not have a statistically significant effect on poverty in South Sulawesi.

These findings suggest that the increase in economic growth reflected through GRDP has not been fully capable of significantly reducing poverty levels. This condition indicates that the benefits of economic growth have not been distributed equitably across society. High economic growth tends to be concentrated among particular groups within society, resulting in relatively limited effects of economic growth on poverty reduction.

Furthermore, economic growth in several regions may be driven predominantly by capital-intensive rather than labor-intensive sectors. Consequently, increases in GRDP have not been able to generate sufficient employment opportunities for the broader community. As a result, the expansion of economic activity has not directly contributed to reducing the number of people living in poverty.

The findings of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Suharti and Monika (2024), which reported that GRDP has a negative relationship with poverty; however, economic growth does not necessarily reduce poverty when income distribution remains unequal.

The Effect of Educational Attainment on Poverty

The results demonstrate that the educational attainment variable has a coefficient value of -1.482012, indicating a negative relationship. This finding implies that a 1 percent increase in educational attainment is associated with a 1.482012 percent reduction in the poverty rate, assuming other variables remain constant. Based on the probability value of 0.0000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, and the calculated t-value of -5.151930, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.663, educational attainment has a negative and statistically significant effect on poverty in South Sulawesi.

Education plays a crucial role in reducing poverty levels. Higher educational attainment improves the quality of human resources, enabling individuals to acquire better skills, competencies, and productivity in obtaining employment. The higher the level of education within society, the greater the opportunities to secure decent employment and sustainable income, thereby improving social welfare.

The findings further indicate that improvements in educational quality in South Sulawesi have contributed to poverty reduction. Therefore, the government should continue enhancing access to and the quality of education in order to strengthen society's capacity to improve living standards.

The Effect of the Open Unemployment Rate on Poverty

The results indicate that the open unemployment rate variable has a coefficient value of 0.230459, reflecting a positive coefficient direction. This finding implies that a 1 percent increase in the open unemployment rate leads to a 0.230459 percent increase in the poverty rate, assuming other variables remain constant. Based on the probability value of 0.0153, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, and the calculated t-value of 2.474837, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.663, the open unemployment rate has a positive and statistically significant effect on poverty in South Sulawesi.

These findings suggest that high unemployment rates contribute to increasing the number of people living in poverty. Individuals without employment experience income limitations, making it difficult to fulfill their daily needs. The higher the unemployment rate, the lower the capacity of households to meet essential needs such as food, education, and healthcare. In addition to reducing household income, high unemployment may also generate broader socioeconomic problems.

Low labor absorption indicates that available employment opportunities are insufficient to accommodate the continuously growing labor force each year. Such conditions place a portion of society in economically vulnerable circumstances and increase the risk of poverty.

This study is consistent with the findings of Aulia (2025), which demonstrated that unemployment has a positive relationship with poverty because unemployed individuals lose their primary source of income necessary to meet their living needs.

Simultaneous Test (*F*-Test)

Based on the simultaneous test results, the calculated *F*-value was 12.46581, which is greater than the *F*-table value of 2.711, while the Prob(*F*-statistic) value was 0.000001, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. These findings indicate that GRDP, educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate simultaneously exert a significant effect on poverty in South Sulawesi. The results suggest that poverty is influenced not merely

by a single factor, but rather by the interaction of multiple economic and social factors simultaneously.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Based on the estimation results, the Adjusted R^2value was 0.510601. This value indicates that GRDP, educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate collectively explain 51.06 percent of the variation in poverty levels, while the remaining 48.94 percent is explained by other variables outside the scope of this study.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) has a negative but statistically insignificant effect on poverty in South Sulawesi. This finding indicates that economic growth alone has not been sufficient to significantly reduce poverty levels, primarily because the benefits of economic expansion have not been distributed evenly across society. Educational attainment, on the other hand, has a negative and statistically significant effect on poverty, suggesting that improvements in education contribute substantially to enhancing human capital, increasing labor productivity, and expanding opportunities for individuals to obtain decent employment and sustainable income. In contrast, the open unemployment rate exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on poverty, indicating that higher unemployment levels increase the vulnerability of households to economic deprivation due to limited income-generating opportunities.

Furthermore, the simultaneous test demonstrates that GRDP, educational attainment, and the open unemployment rate collectively exert a significant influence on poverty levels in South Sulawesi. These findings imply that poverty is a multidimensional socioeconomic issue shaped by the interaction of economic growth, human capital development, and labor market conditions. Consequently, poverty alleviation policies should not solely prioritize economic growth, but also emphasize inclusive development strategies that ensure equitable distribution of economic benefits across regions and social groups.

In this regard, the government is expected to strengthen policies aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of education, particularly in regions with relatively high poverty rates, in order to enhance the competitiveness and productivity of the labor force. In addition, greater efforts are required to expand productive and sustainable employment opportunities through labor-intensive industries, entrepreneurship development, and regional economic empowerment programs. Policies promoting inclusive economic growth and reducing interregional disparities are also essential to ensure that the outcomes of development can be enjoyed more equitably by society.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of integrating economic, educational, and employment policies in a comprehensive and sustainable manner as a strategic approach to

poverty reduction in South Sulawesi. The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and empirically to the literature on regional economic development and poverty alleviation, particularly within the context of developing regions in Indonesia.

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