

## **Tradition as a Bridge Between Islam and Christianity in Kediri**

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### **ARTICLE INFO**

#### ***Keywords:***

Interfaith Dialogue;  
Cultural Tradition;  
Social Harmony;  
Religious Tolerance;  
Community Interaction;

#### ***Article history:***

Received 2025-05-14

Revised 2025-10-12

Accepted 2025-11-17

### **ABSTRACT**

Tradition is a social practice that is inseparable from community life. It not only serves as a cultural heritage but also serves as a space for social interaction. In reality, tradition often acts as a bridge for dialogue between religious communities. Traditional practices allow individuals from different religious backgrounds to meet, interact, and build harmonious social relationships. In Kediri society, tradition serves as a means of bringing Muslims and Christians together in social life. The various traditions that develop in society are not solely followed by one religious group but often involve the participation of people from across religions. Joint participation in these traditions creates a natural space for dialogue, where values of togetherness, mutual respect, and tolerance can grow organically. This research on culture and interfaith harmony aims to comprehensively examine the role of tradition in the life of the multireligious community in Kediri. This research utilizes qualitative methods, including interviews, field observation and documentation, as well as data analysis using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. The results indicate that tradition, in addition to being understood as a theological practice, also serves as a medium for dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kediri. The unduh -unduh tradition, part of the GKJW Christian liturgy, has played a crucial role as a bridge of harmony between Islam and Christianity. This finding of culture as a bridge for interfaith relations reinforces Hans Kung's theory of interfaith dialogue and Pierre Bourdeu's theory of culture as capital in habitus.

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious life is essentially rooted in human belief in the existence of supernatural powers, or powers beyond the capabilities of ordinary humans, which are believed to influence the lives of individuals and communities (A. Abdullah et al., 2023; Abidin et al., 2025; Bolotio & Yusuf, 2025; Razali & Natalia, 2025). Nearly all communities in various parts of the world believe in the existence of supernatural powers or spirits. This belief can manifest itself in various forms, such as belief in natural phenomena, the existence of gods, or belief in God Almighty as the ruler of the universe (Aldi, 2023; Ogugbuaja & Akpan, 2026; Samdani et al., 2025; Sunardin, 2021; Syam, 2005). This belief then gives rise to various forms of religious behavior, such as prayer, worship, and carrying out various religious rituals. Furthermore, belief in supernatural powers also forms certain mental attitudes in individuals and communities, such as fear, hope, resignation, and optimism towards the power believed in. Therefore, various instructions, provisions, and wishes that are considered to originate from supernatural powers are seen as something that must be obeyed and followed so that human life can run well, orderly, and safely (Damami, 2002; Rakhmat, 2021; Setiyani, 2018). This phenomenon of religious life is a social reality that has been inherent in the course of human history. Human dependence on supernatural powers or things considered sacred can be found from ancient times to modern society (M. A. Abdullah, 2024; Li, 2025). Based on this strong connection between humans and their beliefs, what is believed to be true, has given rise to what is known as religious belief or religiosity (Nasr, 2021; Situmorang, 2021).

Ceremonies in religious life are often referred to as religious acts or rituals that have a special place in religious practice and usually use elements considered sacred. These rituals are an important part of human spiritual life because they are related to human relationships with something considered sacred (Bruto et al., 2024; Setiyani, 2021). According to Émile Durkheim, human experiences with something sacred can create a moral urge or obligation for individuals to practice religious behavior (Kamiruddin, 2011; Mustapha, 2026; Putri, 2022). Meanwhile, Koentjaraningrat explains that human experiences with things considered sacred will give rise to various forms of religious actions as expressions of that belief (Suhantoro et al., 2025; Yushman et al., 2025). These religious actions are routinely carried out by humans as an effort to maintain and nurture relationships with powers considered sacred. In Rudolf Otto's view, the sacred is a supreme power that is beyond human comprehension. This sacredness has a mysterious dimension that cannot be fully understood by humans and transcends all creatures. Therefore, experiences with the sacred often evoke feelings of awe and helplessness among adherents (O'Dea, 1954). From Durkheim's perspective, these experiences with the sacred ultimately motivate people to carry out religious obligations through various ritual practices. This traditional practice continues to develop in society, surviving until today (Gennep, 2019; Huda, 2017; Rohmah, 2015; Setiyawan, 2020).

In the Kediri community, harvest thanksgiving ceremonies and offerings of crops combined with Christian liturgy and prayers are a way for the community to express gratitude not only to ancestors and nature but also to God the Creator (Purwaningrum & Ismail, 2019; Retnaning & Ruja, 2022). The Unduh-unduh tradition is one tradition formed from the intersection of Javanese tradition and Christian teachings, because, in Javanese society, there is a ritual of harvesting and storing rice in the barn. At that time, every harvest is accompanied by a ceremony to put or store the rice in the barn after the harvest (Wiratanaya & Kembuan, 2023). In Islam Kediri, we also see various traditions that have developed, namely life cycle rites, namely traditions or rituals carried out throughout the stages of human growth (Gennep, 2019). According to McGuire, this aspect is an expression of all subjective

individual involvement with things that are sacred. Although these experiences are essentially private, humans try to communicate them through expressions of belief and ritual. Communal rituals become the backdrop for personal religious experiences. Prayer, meditation, singing, and dancing are a shared backdrop for personal religious experiences (Setiyani, 2021). This unification of two dimensions reflects the community's ability to bridge traditional values and beliefs, maintaining both sustainability and harmony. In practice, this tradition continues to be maintained by the people of Kediri, passed down from generation to generation (Huda, 2017; Huda & Khasanah, 2019; Ismail, 1998; Setiyawan, 2020).

The practice of the unduh -unduh tradition among Christians in Kediri serves as a means of bringing Muslims and Christians together. Participating together in this tradition creates a natural space for dialogue, where values of togetherness, mutual respect, and tolerance can grow organically. This study aims to deepen the understanding of the unduh -unduh tradition and its role in building bridges between religious communities, particularly between Muslims and Christians in Kediri. This study reinforces Hans Kung's view of interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue, in Kung's view, does not only occur in formal theological discussions but can also occur in everyday social life through interactions between communities of different religions. In this context, local traditions become a form of practical dialogue that brings together adherents of different religions in shared social and cultural activities.

However, it is important to understand that the unduh -unduh tradition that has developed in the Kediri community is part of the religious tradition of Christians, who demographically occupy a minority position within the region's religious structure. This tradition is not only interpreted as an internal religious practice within the Christian community, but also has social and cultural dimensions that involve the wider community. In the context of a pluralistic society, the existence of the unduh -unduh tradition demonstrates that minority groups are not always passive but can play an active role in creating harmonious social relations with other religious groups. Therefore, it is interesting to understand more deeply how minority groups are able to create social spaces that serve as bridges for interfaith dialogue through traditional practices. The unduh -unduh tradition serves as a means of social encounter that brings together Christians and Muslims, the majority group in Kediri. Through shared participation in this tradition, a space for communication, interaction, and the exchange of values is created, fostering mutual respect and strengthening interfaith relations.

### **Method**

This research will produce descriptive analytical findings on traditional practices and their role in building Islamic and Christian relations at the GKJW Kediri. Therefore, a qualitative method is appropriate to facilitate interpretation and description of the research results. The qualitative research method is a method used in research with natural object conditions. Objects in qualitative research are natural, so this research method is usually called a naturalistic method, a condition that is as it is without manipulation (Rahman et al., 2022; Simanjuntak & Sosrodiharjo, n.d.). Bogdan and Taylor provide an overview that qualitative research is part of the research procedure and the results are descriptive data, in the form of written or spoken words from people or observed behavior. To support the qualitative research method, there are several data collection techniques that will be carried out, including: First, interviews, which are the activity of conversing with research subjects, this technique is used to obtain primary data and answers related to the research problem (Tersiana, 2018), namely the role of tradition as a medium for Islamic and Christian dialogue in Kediri. Second, observation was conducted to obtain primary data, namely by directly observing the practice of implementing Islamic and Christian traditions in Kediri. Third, documentation, namely the technique of collecting images or

films in the field. Data from this documentation technique is used to test data, interpret data, and can even be used as evidence for testing research results in the field (Simanjuntak & Sosrodiharjo, n.d.). This technique is used to obtain primary data in answering the research formulation, namely related to the role of tradition in the relationship between Islam and Christianity in Kediri. After obtaining data from the field, the next thing the researcher did was analyze the data, in this case the researcher used the Millels and Hubelrman model as follows. First, data reduction is the process of summarizing, selecting important things, and discarding data that is considered unnecessary. By doing this data reduction, it will provide a clear picture and make it easier for researchers to collect further data. Second, data presentation. This data presentation can take the form of brief descriptions, charts, tables, flowcharts, and so on. The purpose of this data presentation is to make it easier to read. Third, drawing conclusions, namely providing conclusions based on the research results (Tampubolon, 2023).

## Discussion

### Hans Kung Interfaith Dialogue

Hans Küng's "Interreligious Dialogue" is based on the idea that there can be no world peace without interreligious peace, and no interreligious peace without dialogue among the world's religions. He emphasizes that religions have a shared responsibility for creating global peace and justice. He argues that religions should work together to address global problems such as violence, poverty, and environmental degradation. He believes that all major world religions share common ethical values that can serve as a basis for dialogue and cooperation. He promotes the idea of a "Global Ethic," which identifies universal principles that transcend religious differences (Meo, 2019). Küng emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and understanding among different religious traditions. He believes that interreligious dialogue does not aim to convert others, but rather to deepen mutual understanding and learning. He views dialogue as an ongoing process, not a one-time event. It requires ongoing engagement, learning, and openness to the beliefs and practices of others. Küng recognized the diversity of religious beliefs and practices, and advocated a pluralistic approach in which different religions could coexist peacefully, each contributing to the moral and spiritual development of humanity (Küng, n.d.).

Küng's theory of interreligious dialogue is closely related to the concept of a "global ethic." Küng argues that to achieve world peace, there must be a common ethical foundation that transcends religious boundaries. This global ethic is not a new religion, but rather a set of universal values that can be accepted by all religions. Küng believes that there can be no world peace without interreligious peace, and no interreligious peace without dialogue between religions. Küng, with the basic principles of his global ethic, can be found in the teachings of the world's major religions, including values such as respect for life, rejection of violence, respect for human dignity, and the pursuit of social justice. All religions, he believes, share a moral foundation that can be adopted together to create harmony between religious communities (Fenn, 1999; Shen & Oxtoby, 2004).

One of Hans Küng's most famous statements is: "No peace among the nations without peace among the religions." This shows that, according to Küng, interreligious conflict is one of the main sources of global conflict. Therefore, world peace can only be achieved if religions can dialogue and cooperate. Küng believes that world peace cannot be achieved only through political diplomacy or economic agreements, but also requires the involvement of religious communities. Through interreligious dialogue, religions can find common ground and collaborate to promote global peace, justice, and prosperity (Boase, 2013; Paul, 2024).

Hans Kung's theory of interreligious dialogue is an important approach to promoting understanding between the world's diverse religious beliefs and convictions. Proposed by Hans Kung, interreligious dialogue focuses on key principles aimed at facilitating open, honest, and respectful dialogue between adherents of different religions. One of the key principles in this theory is "Nostra Aetate," which emphasizes the need to respect differences between religions and seek common ground among them (Basuki, 2018; Stout, 2026).

Kung encouraged religious adherents to develop a deep understanding of other religions and participate in active dialogue to promote peace and harmony. In Kung's view, dialogue is not merely a conversation, but rather a profound process that allows religious adherents to better understand one another, thus creating a harmonious and humane life (Wera, 2017). According to Mukti Ali, interfaith dialogue plays a crucial role in strengthening and maintaining the religious stability of each community when interacting with individuals of differing religious beliefs (Ali, 1988; Anandari, n.d.). Meanwhile, Gus Dur viewed interfaith dialogue as a means of fostering understanding among religious communities regarding tolerance and cooperation that can enhance harmony. To strengthen communication between religious communities, dialogue forums can serve as an effective tool. The interfaith dialogue initiated by Gus Dur does not focus solely on doctrinal debates, but rather emphasizes the role of religious communities in addressing humanitarian issues by adopting humanist values as a guiding principle (Chauhan, 2023; Faris, 2024; Sholihah et al., 2024)

According to Hans Kung, this dialogue does not only take place in theological spaces or formal forums, but can also occur in various social and cultural practices that bring together adherents of different religions. In this context, culture can be understood as a field for interfaith dialogue that allows for more fluid and inclusive interaction and communication between religious groups. Through cultural practices that exist in society, values of togetherness, solidarity, and mutual respect can be built without having to negate each person's religious identity. In other words, culture becomes a social space that brings together various religious groups in shared activities oriented towards social harmony.

In the context of relations between Muslims and Christians in Kediri, local culture can serve as a medium for dialogue that strengthens interfaith harmony. Various local traditions involving the participation of communities of different faiths demonstrate that cultural practices can create a natural space for encounter between Muslims and Christians. In this space, communities not only interact socially but also build a shared understanding of the values of humanity, tolerance, and brotherhood.

### **Culture and Co-Existence of Interfaith Relations**

Culture can indeed play an important role in fostering harmony in society. Culture includes the shared beliefs, values, customs, traditions, arts, and social behaviors of a particular group or community. When culture promotes harmony, it creates an environment that encourages cooperation, understanding, and respect among individuals. Here are ways in which culture can contribute to societal harmony: (1) Shared Ethical Values: Cultural norms and values provide moral guidance for individuals in society. When there is a shared understanding of right and wrong, ethical behavior becomes a common ground, leading to more harmonious interactions (Hudiarini, 2017; Ramdhan et al., 2025). (2) Social Cohesion: Cultural practices, celebrations, and rituals often bring people together and foster a sense of belonging and unity. When people feel connected to their cultural heritage and share experiences, it can lead to greater social cohesion and understanding (Mubayanah & Amin, 2024). (3) Interpersonal Relationships: Culture shapes the way individuals communicate and interact with one

another. When cultural norms promote empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity, it enhances positive relationships and reduces conflict (Huda, 2017; Huda & Khasanah, 2019; Setiyawan, 2020; Tubbs et al., 2012; Valencya et al., 2025). (4) Conflict Resolution: Cultural frameworks can provide methods and approaches to resolve conflicts peacefully. Cultural practices that emphasize dialogue, mediation, or reconciliation can help resolve differences of opinion constructively and harmoniously (Bessie & Luji, 2025; Ibnu, 2025). And (5) Inclusivity and Diversity, namely a culture that values inclusivity and embraces diversity can create an environment where people from different backgrounds feel accepted and valued. Celebrating diversity in society fosters harmony by reducing prejudice, discrimination, and social divisions (Katsaros, 2025; Sechandini et al., 2023; Setyorini & Yani, 2020).

Introducing culture to foster societal harmony requires the collective efforts of individuals, communities, and institutions to create spaces that celebrate diversity, foster empathy, and uphold shared values of respect and understanding. From this, we can draw a common thread between culture and social harmony: culture can foster social harmony between one community and another. Furthermore, culture can also create harmony between the body and soul within a human being.

Culture and society are inseparable entities. Culture plays a vital role in social life, including as a unifying force or a bond of social cohesion within society. Cultural practices often involve many individuals or groups, demonstrating that culture is a shared activity carried out collectively by the community. Even if the culture has been legitimized by the community as something of greater value and has been passed down through generations, there is no reason for the community not to practice it.

On the other hand, Indonesian society is a heterogeneous society, with diverse cultures, ethnicities, and languages. In this context, culture plays a role in strengthening relationships between individuals and groups. Culture acts as a bond between people of different religions, fostering interfaith harmony, and fostering societal harmony between religious communities.

Culture, in its role as a co-existence of religious communities, is a crucial element in building a multi-religious society. Therefore, existing culture must always be preserved in community life. Culture and Interfaith Relations serve as the foundation for portraying the relationship between Islam and Christianity in Kediri. Coexistence, in the context of interfaith relations, refers to peaceful and harmonious coexistence between different religious groups. This includes recognition, appreciation, and cooperation between communities with different beliefs and practices. The importance of mutual understanding and respect between various cultural and religious communities is emphasized. Coexistence requires not only tolerance but also active engagement in ongoing dialogue and cooperation (Meo, 2019; Paul, 2024).

Culture in the context of interfaith relations encompasses the system of symbols, values, norms, and social practices that govern how people interact with their social environment, including how they view and interact with different religious groups. In interfaith relations, culture serves as a framework of meaning that helps guide how different religious groups view each other and how they should coexist. Traditions, rituals, language, and social norms all create an environment in which religious groups can build or damage their relationships with one another. Culture can be a powerful tool for facilitating interfaith coexistence by creating symbolic spaces where religions can meet and engage in dialogue (e.g., ceremonies or cultural parades), creating symbols of inclusivity (e.g., mutual cooperation or joint celebrations of religious holidays), and cultivating values of tolerance (e.g., mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation).

### **“Unduh-Unduh” as a Bridge Between Islam and Christianity**

The GKJW's "unduh -unduh" tradition symbolizes the harmonious acculturation of Christian teachings and Javanese culture. Researchers' observations and documentation indicate that this traditional celebration is part of a local cultural tradition that has been incorporated into liturgy and worship. The unduh-unduh tradition has only been held twice, but Pastor David explained that it has existed since 1880. The term "unduh-unduh" comes from Javanese, meaning harvest, and because it is plural, it can be interpreted as a shared harvest. Thus, the harvest includes not only agricultural and plantation products but also livestock products (Prass, 2025).

The congregation wore traditional attire, including lurik cloth, udeng (traditional headdress), and kebaya (traditional headdress). This was not merely ceremonial, but also affirmed that spirituality can grow from the cultural roots of the surrounding area. This phenomenon demonstrates that the church is not only a place of worship but also a space for preserving meaningful traditional values. It also serves as proof that faith and cultural identity can coexist, creating a unique religious experience.

The "unduh-unduh" is not only open to the congregation, but also to anyone who wants to experience the warmth of togetherness. The enthusiasm of the congregation was impressive, with attendees from all walks of life, from children to adults, and from various faiths. This tradition transcends boundaries of identity and belief, inviting everyone to sit together in a circle of brotherhood. This celebration is eagerly anticipated not only by church members but also by the wider community from various backgrounds.

Turner emphasized that during this liminal phase, customary social norms loosen, allowing the community to experience a collective experience that strengthens solidarity and shared identity (Hilmy et al., 2024). This ritual not only expresses gratitude but also strengthens social cohesion and renews the community's commitment to cultural and environmental preservation (Wajabula, 2024).

The presence of people from various faiths further strengthens the meaning of the unduh-unduh, creating an inclusive and pluralistic space for togetherness. They attend not only as visitors but also participate, enjoying the strains of traditional art and experiencing the closeness that naturally develops during the celebration. Herein lies the true power of the unduh-unduh tradition, acting as a bridge connecting people, building social solidarity, and recognizing that diversity is a gift that must be celebrated together (Bagus, 2025).

In the Unduh-Unduh tradition, people from various religious groups come to witness the tradition, making the Unduh-Unduh tradition not only a worship ritual, but also a place for warm and harmonious interfaith meetings. This means that the Unduh-Unduh tradition is not a closed tradition; people from all backgrounds can participate in and witness the Unduh-Unduh tradition, including Muslims. The involvement of Muslims in the Unduh-Unduh tradition provides concrete evidence of the strong values of tolerance held by the community.

Bagus Ani observed that local wisdom plays a crucial role in cementing community ties, including as a solution to any horizontal conflict. Furthermore, Estu Widyowati added that local wisdom can serve as a foundation for conflict management within the community (Ode, 2016; Valencya et al., 2025; Widiyowati et al., 2018). Imas Setiyawan and Huda stated that tradition can bridge the barriers of difference within society (Huda, 2017; Huda & Khasanah, 2019; Setiyawan, 2020).

The Unduh-Unduh tradition in Kediri is not merely a cultural preserve or an annual ceremony. Rather, it also serves as a bridge for harmony between the various religious communities within the community. The values of mutual cooperation, tolerance, and solidarity are not only taught through words but also embodied in concrete actions, from the preparations for the Unduh-Unduh tradition to

the actual sitting together. From this, it can be concluded that this tradition not only strengthens local cultural identity but also serves as a strong foundation for peace and social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

Another form of Muslim involvement in the unduh-unduh tradition can be seen in the active role of Muslims who are trusted to judge the tumpeng arak competition. This appointment is not without reason, but rather a symbol of the trust, openness, and respect that Christians have for Muslims in maintaining the tradition. The presence of Muslims as judges also has strategic significance, namely to maintain neutrality and objectivity in the assessment, so that there is no impression of bias toward certain Christian groups participating in the competition. Furthermore, the role of Muslims in this capacity demonstrates a form of interfaith cooperation that is not merely ceremonial, but also rooted in everyday socio-cultural practices. By involving Muslims in the committee structure and decision-making process, the unduh-unduh tradition becomes more inclusive and able to accommodate a sense of belonging from all levels of society, regardless of religious differences (Prass, 2025).

The Unduh-unduh tradition not only holds religious significance for the GKJW Christian congregation, but also serves as a source of harmony in building harmonious relations between Christians and Muslims. As a celebration of thanksgiving for the harvest and God's blessings, unduh-unduh embodies universal values such as gratitude, sharing, togetherness, and social concern that are acceptable to various religious groups. As part of the public sphere, unduh-unduh also demonstrates that expressions of religious identity can be present openly yet remain inclusive. This tradition is not exclusive, but rather provides space for interfaith engagement, thereby strengthening social cohesion and broadening the meaning of religiosity as a unifying force.

The following is a conceptual matrix in the unduh-unduh tradition:

**Table 1.** conceptual matrix in the unduh-unduh traditi

<b>Dimension of Faith (Religious)</b>	<b>Cultural Dimension (Socio-Cultural)</b>	<b>Dimensions of Interfaith Relations</b>
<b>Thanksgiving service for God's blessings through prayer and liturgy</b>	The tradition of giving alms to the earth in the form of offerings of harvest produce	Inviting the local community without distinguishing religion
<b>Offering crops as a form of faith and obedience</b>	The mountain procession as a symbol of Javanese agrarian culture	The Muslim community also attended and participated in the activities
<b>Strengthening the spirituality of the congregation through joint celebrations</b>	Wearing traditional clothing (kebaya, lurik, udeng)	Social interactions that strengthen relations between religious communities
<b>The values of love, sharing, and social care as Christian teachings</b>	Mutual cooperation in the preparation and implementation of the event	Interfaith cooperation in committees or activity support
<b>The church as a space for faith development and social service</b>	Preservation of traditional arts (music, dance, and local symbols)	Tradition becomes a natural and fluid space for social dialogue.

<b>Faith is manifested in social action and togetherness</b>	Tradition as a cultural identity of local communities	Increase mutual trust and reduce barriers of religious identity
<b>The celebration is a collective expression of gratitude to God</b>	Local wisdom as a social glue for society	Strengthening religious tolerance, harmony, and moderation in public spaces

## Conclusion

This study found that the unduh-unduh tradition practiced by the Christian community in Kediri not only serves as a theological ritual expressing gratitude for God's blessings, but also plays a significant social role in building interfaith relationships. This tradition has developed into a space for interfaith social encounters (*lumbung pirukun*) involving the participation of Muslims, Christians, and adherents of other religions. Through joint involvement in the preparation and implementation of activities, unduh-unduh is able to create an atmosphere of togetherness, strengthen mutual trust, and foster mutual respect in a pluralistic society. Theoretically, it also contributes to the study of the relationship between religion and culture by demonstrating that religious traditions practiced by minority groups can function as a medium for interfaith dialogue. These findings enrich the discourse on interfaith harmony by emphasizing that theological practices embodied in socio-cultural traditions can be an effective means of building harmony and social solidarity. Furthermore, this study also emphasizes the importance of viewing local traditions as spaces for practical dialogue that bring together various religious communities in everyday life. This is in line with Hans Kung's theory on interfaith dialogue and Pierre Bourdieu's *Habitus* theory on culture as one of the capitals in *habitus*. However, this study still has limitations because it focuses on one local tradition, namely unduh-unduh in the Kediri region, so the findings of this study cannot be generalized widely to the context of other communities with different cultural and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, this study focuses more on the social and cultural aspects of this tradition. Therefore, further research is expected to expand the scope of the study by involving more interfaith traditions, different regions, and more diverse methodological approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of tradition in building interfaith dialogue and harmony.

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