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## IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATION IN OVERCOMING WOMEN'S EXPLOITATION IN ADVERTISING IN INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of regulations aimed at combating the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia. It identifies key factors influencing the effectiveness of these regulations, including public awareness, law enforcement, education, and supervision. Despite their importance, the study highlights several challenges in implementation, such as insufficient supervision, inadequate sanctions, gaps in education, and cultural resistance to change. Utilizing a literature study method, the research critically examines various sources, including books, articles, and related documents. The findings underscore the significance of well-designed and effectively enforced regulations in promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights in advertising. The study concludes by emphasizing the vital role of collaborative efforts between the government and media industry stakeholders to ensure these regulations are properly applied and achieve their intended outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

Advertising is one of the most powerful communication tools in the modern world used to promote products, services, or ideas to the public (Zotos & Grau, 2016). While advertising has the potential to be an effective means of communicating messages, it is often used in harmful ways, especially in the context of the exploitation of women (Rinaningputri, 2011). Often, advertising practices contain the exploitation of women (Grau & Zotos, 2016). The exploitation of women in advertisements creates a detrimental impact, both on the dignity of women and on existing social norms (Houston & Houston, 2019).

In Indonesia, this issue has become even more critical, given the possible impact on communities that are already discriminated against (Sazali & Basit, 2020). In various advertisements, women are often represented stereotypically, often as sexual objects or as mere appendages in the context of the ad's narrative (Driscoll, 2018). The use of demeaning images of women in advertising not only creates unrealistic images but also reinforces gender inequality and harmful social norms (Gora, 2016).

Exploitation of women in advertisements in Indonesia is a common problem. Women's bodies are often exploited in ads because they have high economic value in the media industry (Putri, 2009). Some examples of the exploitation of women in TV commercials include their portrayal as sexual objects, the emphasis on perfect physical beauty, or the positioning of women as objects (Kitsa & Mudra, 2019).

The exploitation of women in advertising has far-reaching effects, both on the women themselves and society as a whole. This advertising can damage women's self-esteem and body image and reinforce negative views about their societal roles and abilities (Kitsa & Mudra, 2019). Meanwhile, on a broader scale, advertising practices that demean women can exacerbate conditions of

gender inequality and exploit already discriminated communities.

Women in advertisements are often stereotypically represented as sexual objects or as mere appendages (Prihatiningsih & Mudrikah, 2020). It can worsen the condition of women in society who are already discriminated against. Regulation is one solution to address the exploitation of women in advertising. Strong and effective advertising regulations can regulate advertising practices, prevent demeaning or harmful depictions of women, and promote more inclusive and ethical advertising (Setiawati & Pratama, 2021).

Advertising regulation is expected to be one of the solutions to address the problem of exploitation of women in advertising. Effective regulation can provide the framework to regulate advertising practices, prevent demeaning depictions of women, and promote more inclusive and ethical advertising (Junaedi & Et.al, 2022). However, in Indonesia, advertising regulation still faces challenges. Existing rules may not be strict enough to address the exploitation of women in advertising, or their implementation may not be effective. Regulation can play an essential role in addressing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia.

Some efforts that can be made are: First, supervision, the government can supervise advertisements featuring women so as not to exploit women's bodies. Second, applying the law: The government can penalize companies that influence women in ads. Third, education: Education on gender equality and women's rights can be provided to the public and media industry players so as not to exploit women's bodies in advertisements. Fourth, Campaigns: Campaigns that emphasize the importance of respecting women and not controlling women's bodies in ads can be conducted (Junaedi & et.al, 2022). With the proper regulation, it is hoped that the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia can be reduced and women can be respected in the media industry.

In this context, this study aims to review and analyze the role of regulation in addressing the issue of exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia, as well as identify potential improvements in existing advertising regulations. By engaging in literature analysis, we will explore how advertisements often portray women and their impact on society. In addition, this research will also consider existing regulations, whether they are adequate, and to what extent they effectively address the exploitation of women in advertisements. The researcher will also discuss the findings of this study in the context of relevant theories such as gender stereotype theory and role theory.

Through this research, the researcher hopes to contribute to understanding the role of regulation in addressing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia and provide insights that can support positive changes in the advertising industry that better respects women's rights and stimulate the development of a more inclusive society.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **a. Exploitation of Women in Advertising**

Exploitation of women in advertising refers to the practice of utilizing women's images, bodies, and roles in a demeaning or sexualized manner in advertisements to attract attention or achieve specific marketing goals (Wicaksono, 2012). It is a serious issue that often occurs in the advertising industry.

In some advertisements, women are portrayed as sexual objects without considering their values, talents, or personal characteristics (Krishen et al., 2015). Women are often treated as merchandise to attract consumer attention. Advertisements often use sexual stereotypes about women, such as depicting them in demeaning positions and clothing and linking products or services to sexual appeal.

Some advertisements utilize women's bodies to gain attention without any real connection to the product or service being offered. Advertisements often reinforce unrealistic beauty norms by using women who have been edited or transformed to meet beauty standards that are not possible in the real world. Advertisements also strengthen the role of women in demeaning positions, such as the housewife who is always smiling and has no aspirations or goals other than serving the family (Mudafiuddin, 2020).

The exploitation of women in advertising has negative impacts, including damaging women's self-image, dehumanizing them, and reinforcing harmful gender norms. It can also create gender inequality and contribute to a culture of unhealthy sexualization. Some impacts of the exploitation of women in advertisements (Harianto & Wahyuddin, 2017):

- a. Reducing women to objects: Exploitation of women in advertisements can reduce women to exploited objects and limit their choices and potential.
- b. Increasing gender stereotypes: Exploitation of women in advertisements can increase gender stereotypes and reinforce the view that women only have value as sexual objects.
- c. Influencing perceptions and behaviors: Advertisements that exploit women can influence individual perceptions and behaviors related to gender and the image of women.
- d. Increasing social pressure: Advertisements that exploit women can increase social pressure on women to meet unrealistic beauty standards.
- e. Increasing gender inequality: Exploitation of women in advertisements can increase gender inequality and reinforce the view that women only have value as sexual objects.

The negative impact of the exploitation of women in advertising can affect women's mental and physical health and reinforce derogatory views of women (Pramesti, 2023). Therefore, there is a need to address the exploitation of

women in advertising so that women can be respected and treated fairly in the media industry. Advertising regulations and public awareness about the impact of the exploitation of women in advertising have been a focus to address this issue and promote advertising that is more ethical, inclusive, and respectful of women's rights.

## **b. Gender Stereotype**

Gender stereotyping in advertising refers to the practice of portraying women and men in advertising based on traditional views and often demeaning or simplifying gender roles and characteristics (Auli & Jamiah, 2017). Gender stereotypes in advertising can create unrealistic and harmful images for both genders. Gender stereotypes refer to common perceptions of the roles and characteristics expected of men and women in society. In television advertising, gender stereotypes are often used to position women in limited and stereotypical roles, such as sexual objects or housekeepers (Pramesti, 2023).

In many advertisements, women are often portrayed in limited roles, such as housewives, servants, or sexual objects. It creates a narrow picture of women's role in society. Many advertisements use images of women as sexual objects to attract viewers. The use of images of women that emphasize their physical aspects often dehumanizes women and views them as objects that can be controlled (Thompson-whiteside et al., 2020).

Advertisements also often utilize stereotypes about men and women, such as strong men and weak women. It can reinforce unbalanced gender norms (Christanti & Wicandra, 2018). Gender stereotypes in advertising can reinforce harmful social norms, such as gender inequality and oppression. It can influence people's views on gender roles in society.

It is essential to understand that gender stereotypes in advertising not only create unrealistic images but can also influence society's perception of gender,

reinforce inequalities, and affect women's self-image (Fardiah & Et.al, 2012). To address this issue, strict regulation and public awareness education on the impact of exploitation and gender stereotyping in advertising are essential. With these measures, more ethical and inclusive advertising practices can be pursued.

### c. Role Theory

Role theory is a viewpoint in sociology and social psychology that considers most daily activities to be performed by individuals in a particular social role. Each social role is a set of rights, obligations, expectations, norms, and behaviors that a person must face and fulfill (Salfa, 2022). Role theory is based on the observation that people act in predictable ways and that a person's behavior is context-dependent, based on social position and other factors. Theater is a metaphor often used to describe role theory. Although the word 'role' has existed in various European languages for centuries, it only emerged around the 1920s and 1930s as a sociological concept. The term gained prominence in sociological studies through the theoretical work of Mead, Moreno, and Linton (Zulfikar et al., 2021). Some dimensions of roles in role theory include (Zulfikar et al., 2021):

1. The role of a policy
2. Role as a strategy
3. Role as a tactic
4. The role of therapy.

In addressing the exploitation of women in advertising, role theory can be used to understand women's social roles in society and how these roles are often exploited in advertising. By understanding women's social roles, governments, and media industry players can take action to reduce the exploitation of women in advertising and promote gender equality and women's rights. This theory addresses how regulation affects society and the behavior of

advertising actors. It can also assist researchers in evaluating the effectiveness of existing rules and identifying areas where improvements may be needed.

## METHODOLOGY

The method used is a literature study. According to Bungin in his book entitled "Qualitative Research: Communication, Economics, Public Policy, and Other Social Sciences," the literature study method is one of the data collection methods used in social research to access existing records of events and information (Palinggi & Limbongan, 2020). The literature study method involves a series of steps related to collecting written sources of information, reading and recording relevant information, and organizing the research material (Zimmerman, 2008); (Grahani et al., 2022).

This method is used to collect data and information related to existing regulations addressing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia. In this study, literature includes sources used by researchers to collect data, including references from previous studies such as journals, reference books, and online observations and documentation relevant to the role of regulation in dealing with the exploitation of women in advertisements.

## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### a. Overview of Advertisements Containing Exploitation of Women

Advertisements that contain exploitation of women often present women in a degrading context, over-sexualizing them or exploiting gender stereotypes (Fardiah & Et.al, 2012). Women in advertising are usually represented as sexual objects, where their bodies are the focus, often by emphasizing certain body parts such as the face, chest, or lower body. The way women dress in



advertisements can sometimes be provocative or skimpy, which emphasizes sexuality rather than the product or service being advertised.

Women are often placed in a passive or powerless position, which portrays them as "objects" that need protection or help (Huhmann & Limbu, 2016). Advertisements often link products or services to women's sexual desirability, using explicit language or imagery. Some advertisements may convey negative messages related to women's bodies or appearance, such as an emphasis on physical flaws or unrealistic beauty norms.

Some advertisements also portray women in traditionally demeaning roles, such as housewives focusing only on household chores. Advertisements often use gender stereotypes that portray women as weak, dependent on men, or only capable of specific roles (Olsen & Olsen, 2021). There is also the comparison of women to unrealistic standards, for example, by comparing their physical appearance to models that have been altered through digital editing.

In this study, it has been found that advertisements containing the exploitation of women are still standard in Indonesia. Some common forms of exploitation are objectification of women's bodies, demeaning gender stereotypes, and the use of sexual imagery to promote products. Advertisements containing the exploitation of women are often criticized because they can damage women's self-image, reinforce unrealistic beauty norms, and contribute to an unhealthy sexualized culture. Therefore, advertising regulation and public awareness are essential to address these issues and promote more ethical and inclusive advertising.

## b. Impact of Exploitation of Women in Advertisements

In this study, it was also found that the exploitation of women in advertising can harm society's view of women, especially in terms of reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes. In addition, the exploitation of women in advertisements can also trigger self-dissatisfaction and psychological problems in women who are subjected to exploitation.

The exploitation of women in advertising can have detrimental effects, both on an individual and social level (Rinaningputri, 2011). The exploitation of women in advertising often leads to harmful gender stereotyping. It can narrow the role of women in society and portray them in limited roles, such as sexual objects or as mere appendages.

Advertisements that portray women with unrealistic beauty standards or emphasize their bodies can damage women's self-image (Fardiah & Et.al, 2012). It can lead to feelings of lack of confidence and inadequacy. Highlighting unrealistic physical beauty can encourage unhealthy beauty norms. It can pressure women to achieve unattainable standards and spend much time and money on beauty products.

Advertisements in Indonesia that exploit women's sexuality can contribute to an unhealthy culture of sexualization (Driscoll, 2018). It can influence the way society views sexuality and reinforce views that reduce women to sexual objects. Advertisements that exploit women can influence consumer behavior, especially in terms of the perception of the product or service being advertised. Women can be portrayed as objects associated with the product, which can influence purchasing decisions.

The impact of the exploitation of women in advertising can also involve contributing to gender inequality (Olsen & Olsen, 2021). When women are portrayed in a demeaning manner or simply as sexual objects in advertisements, this can reinforce harmful views of women in society. Ads that contain the exploitation of women can reduce support for gender equality. If women are constantly represented in detrimental roles, this can obscure efforts to achieve gender equality.

The impact of the exploitation of women in advertising has raised concerns in society. It has prompted efforts to strengthen advertising regulations and raise awareness about the importance of ethical and inclusive advertising. Increased regulation, public awareness, and gender advocacy can contribute to reducing the negative impact of the exploitation of women in advertising.

### **c. Role of Regulation**

In Indonesia, regulations addressing women's exploitation in advertising involve the Advertising Supervisory Agency (BPP), which oversees advertising practices. The regulation includes various rules and guidelines that aim to avoid the exploitation of women in advertisements (Junaedi & Et.al, 2022).

BPP has an Indonesian Advertising Code of Ethics that serves as a code of conduct for advertising companies and advertisers (Ayu, 2016). The code includes provisions that prohibit advertising that demeans, exploits, or exploits women. Advertisements that utilize stereotypical or overly sexualized images of women may violate this code.

Some television stations and print media in Indonesia have internal policies that screen advertisements before they are broadcast or published. They can reject ads that are deemed unethical or harmful to women. Indonesia's

Consumer Protection Law has provisions that prohibit advertising practices that mislead or manipulate consumers (Perwira & Winanti, 2020). If advertisements exploit women to attract consumers, this could be considered a violation of this law.

The Child Protection Act can also be applied when advertisements involve girls. Advertisements that utilize girls or involve them in ads, not in the child's best interest may violate this law (Junaedi & Et.al, 2022). Several advertising industry organizations in Indonesia have adopted ethical commitments that prohibit advertising that demeans or exploits women. They can sanction advertising companies that violate these commitments.

These regulations, when effectively implemented and enforced, play a role in reducing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia. However, cooperation between the authorities, advertising companies, and civil society is needed to ensure that these regulations are correctly implemented and that advertising practices that harm women are prevented. In addition, continuous improvement and monitoring of the regulation are needed to keep up with developments in the advertising industry and cultural changes.

#### **d. Regulatory Effectiveness in Addressing the Exploitation of Women in Advertisements**

The effectiveness of regulations in addressing the exploitation of women in advertising can be measured based on the extent to which they achieve their primary objective, which is to protect women from harmful and demeaning advertising practices. The firmer and stricter advertising regulations are, the more effective they are in preventing the exploitation of women in advertising. Regulations that are clear and have strong sanctions tend to be more effective

in disincentivizing violations.

Involving the public in monitoring advertisements and reporting violations can increase the effectiveness of regulations. The more eyes and ears that can detect violations, the harder it is for advertisers to violate regulations without being noticed. Cooperation with the advertising industry and advertising companies is also essential. The industry must take responsibility for complying with regulations and play a role in developing solid ethical guidelines.

Advertising regulations that reflect the principle of gender equality and strictly prohibit the exploitation of women are more effective in addressing this issue. Provisions that identify harmful gender stereotypes and prohibit advertising practices that over-sexualize women are examples of gender-sensitive provisions.

Not only should it be monitored, but advertising regulations should always be evaluated and improved following changes in the advertising industry and cultural developments. Static regulations may not be effective in addressing evolving challenges. Regulations implemented by the Indonesian government to address the exploitation of women in advertising can be effective if done appropriately and consistently. Several factors influence the effectiveness of regulations in managing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia, among others:

- *Public awareness*: public awareness about the importance of respecting women and not exploiting women's bodies in advertisements can affect the effectiveness of regulations. If people do not understand the importance of these regulations, then they may not be effective. The level of public awareness about the regulation and the impact of the exploitation of women in advertisements also plays a role. Public education on regulations and

gender equality can help the public be more aware of these issues and more careful in reporting violations.

- *Enforcement of the law*: consistent and strict application of laws against companies that exploit women in advertisements can affect the effectiveness of regulations. If the sanctions are not severe enough, companies may not be afraid to violate the regulation. Regulations will only be effective if they are consistently applied and enforced. Advertising regulatory agencies and governments must be able to monitor, evaluate, and implement regulations effectively. It includes the ability to identify advertisements that violate regulations and sanction perpetrators.
- *Knowledge*: knowledge about gender equality and women's rights to the public and media industry players can affect the effectiveness of regulations. If the public and media industry players understand the importance of gender equality and women's rights, they may be more likely to comply with the regulation.
- *Supervision*: strict supervision of advertisements aired in the mass media can affect the effectiveness of regulations. Companies may find violating the regulation easier if supervision is not done well.

The effectiveness of regulations in addressing the exploitation of women in advertising results from a sustained effort involving various stakeholders. With strong regulations, strict law enforcement, high public awareness, and active participation of all parties, regulations can effectively protect women from exploitation in advertising. In addressing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia, appropriate and effective rules can help to promote gender equality and women's rights. However, the effectiveness of such regulations is

also influenced by other factors such as public awareness, law implementation, education, and supervision. Therefore, the government and media industry players must work together to ensure these regulations can be implemented properly and effectively.

#### **e. Challenges in Regulation Implementation**

The implementation of regulations to address the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia can face several challenges. Some advertising industry players may not comply with regulations or try to find loopholes to avoid sanctions. This non-compliance may result in increased regulatory violations.

Strict supervision of advertisements aired in the mass media can affect the effectiveness of regulations. However, strict supervision also requires adequate human resources and technology. It can be challenging for the government to monitor advertisements aired in the mass media. Advertising regulatory agencies and related institutions often face resource constraints regarding personnel and budget. It can hamper their ability to monitor and enforce regulations effectively.

Inadequately strong or ambiguous laws may hinder regulatory enforcement. In addition, law enforcement officials may need specialized training to handle violations of advertising regulations. Consistent and strict application of laws against companies that exploit women in advertisements can affect the effectiveness of rules. However, the sanctions are sometimes not severe enough and insufficient to prevent companies from violating regulations. Some advertisements may come from international companies that may be difficult to regulate by national regulations. Coordination between countries and monitoring of cross-border regulation is essential.

The development of technology and social media has created new platforms for advertising that are often difficult to monitor. Advertisers can utilize social media to exploit women without detection. A culture that views women as sexual objects in advertising can be a challenge in addressing the exploitation of women in advertising. These cultures can be difficult to change and take considerable time to change. Certain cultural norms and market demands may promote advertising that disadvantages women. Changing these norms can be a difficult challenge.

Gender stereotypes that have developed in society and the media over the years can make regulations against them face resistance. Changing the views of society and industry takes time. In the legal domain, reporting and handling cases of regulatory violations needs to be simplified and made easily accessible to the public. Complex reporting or slow case handling can hamper the effectiveness of regulations.

Thus, education on gender equality and women's rights is needed for the public and media industry players. However, adequate and effective education requires sufficient human resources and funds. It can be a challenge for the government to provide education on gender equality and women's rights. Increasing public understanding of the regulations and the importance of addressing the exploitation of women in advertising is a very difficult challenge.

In addressing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia, the government and media industry players need to work together to overcome these challenges. The government can increase supervision, provide strict sanctions, provide adequate education, and change the culture that views women as sexual objects in advertisements. Media industry players must also pay attention to ethics in advertisements and promote gender equality and women's rights.



There needs to be cooperation between the government, advertising industry, NGOs, and civil society to address these challenges. Stricter regulations, increased law enforcement capacity, and sustained efforts to change advertising culture are necessary steps to address the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia.

#### **f. Regulations to Address the Exploitation of Women in Advertisements**

Regulation is one of the practical tools in addressing the exploitation of women in advertising. Regulation can provide a clear legal framework and ethical guidelines for businesses and the advertising industry (Junaedi & et.al, 2022). Regulation to address the exploitation of women in advertising is a crucial step towards protecting women's dignity and rights in advertising. It can help protect women from demeaning advertisements and combat harmful gender stereotypes.

Regulations can prohibit the use of gender stereotypes that disadvantage women in advertising. It includes prohibitions on portraying women as sexual objects, using demeaning images or words, or promoting unequal gender roles. With regulations in place, it can limit advertisements that are overly sexualized or provocative. It aims to prevent ads that rely solely on female sexuality to promote products or services.

Beyond regulation, creating or refining an advertising code of ethics is commonly taken by advertising regulatory bodies. This code of conduct can include principles of gender equality and ethics in advertising. Tighten oversight of advertising related to health and beauty products, as these are often sites of significant exploitation. Regulations could require claims made in advertisements for these products to be backed by strong scientific evidence.

Regulations should include clear and firm sanctions for violations. Advertising regulatory bodies should be able to investigate and impose sanctions on violators of rules. In addition to regulation, it is also vital to increase public education and

awareness on the issue of exploitation of women in advertising and the role of regulation in protecting women. Education and awareness campaigns can help change the advertising culture.

The advertising industry and companies need to commit to complying with regulations and play a role in developing strong ethical guidelines. Such regulations play an essential role in ensuring that advertising is not only a marketing tool but also respects the dignity and rights of women. They help create more ethical, inclusive, and gender-equal advertising.

With proper regulation, women in advertising can be represented more positively and realistically. Regulation can also help avoid over-sexualization and objectification of women in advertising. Thus, Regulation is essential in supporting gender equality and promoting more ethical and inclusive advertising.

However, ensuring the regulations are consistently applied and enforced is also essential. It involves cooperation between advertising regulatory agencies, governments, the advertising industry, NGOs, and communities in monitoring, reporting violations, and implementing regulations. With concerted efforts, regulations can be a powerful tool in protecting women from exploitation in advertising.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the regulations governing advertisements in Indonesia require significant improvement to effectively prevent the exploitation of women in advertisements. Gender stereotype theory plays a crucial role in understanding how advertisements influence societal perceptions of women. This literature study highlights that many advertisements continue to rely on harmful gender stereotypes, which contribute to the objectification and marginalization of women.

To address this issue, stronger and more comprehensive regulations are necessary to control advertising content. These regulations should explicitly address critical aspects such as the use of gender stereotypes, the objectification of women, and the portrayal of violence against women in advertisements. Additionally, strict and enforceable sanctions must be implemented for those who violate these regulations to ensure compliance and accountability within the advertising industry.

Beyond regulatory measures, the active involvement of the community is essential in combating the exploitation of women in advertisements. The public should adopt a more critical perspective when evaluating and responding to advertising content, rejecting ads that perpetuate harmful stereotypes or exploit women. Furthermore, communities can exert pressure on relevant authorities and stakeholders to strengthen existing regulations and demand greater accountability within the advertising sector.

In conclusion, addressing the exploitation of women in advertisements in Indonesia requires a dual approach: the establishment of robust and enforceable regulations, alongside active participation and vigilance from society. Only through these combined efforts can fairer, non-discriminatory advertising practices be achieved, ultimately contributing to a more equitable representation of women in media and society.

## **LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD**

While providing essential insights into the role of regulation and public awareness in addressing the exploitation of women in advertising in Indonesia, this research has several shortcomings. Firstly, this research is limited to a literature study, which means it does not rely on empirical data from the field that could provide a deeper perspective on how specific advertisements

influence people's perceptions and how individuals respond to them in real life. Secondly, this research focused on the Indonesian context. It did not compare with practices in other countries, which might have yielded valuable insights into how similar issues are addressed in different regulatory systems. Thirdly, it focuses on gender stereotypes of women and does not explore how such stereotypes affect men or non-binary groups, which reduces the diversity and inclusiveness of the analysis. Finally, while it mentions the need for stronger regulations and community participation, it lacks practical recommendations or concrete policies that can be taken to address the issue effectively.

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