

PLACEMAKING ON BEGGARS' BEHAVIOR IN AL-AQSHA MOSQUE AREA WITH DRAMATURGY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT: *Beggars are a prevalent issue in many urban areas, reflecting the challenge of poverty and inequality. Al-Aqsha Mosque in Kudus Regency is one of the areas that has a significant number of beggars. Beggars have long been present in the Al-Aqsha Mosque area, mainly at the pilgrimage area, traffic lights, and the streets along Al-Aqsha Mosque. The beggar population in the area consists of individuals including children, unemployed adults, and elderly citizens with limited social support. Qualitative research method was used to collect information through observation and interviews with beggars, local people, and visitors. Based on observation and interview, the beggars are being a great disturbance to the local people and visitors. This research analyzes how the behavior of the beggars in Al-Aqsha Mosque area can develop placemaking. The methods used to collect information are observation and interview. The boundaries are Al-Aqsha Mosque area, which covers Jalan Menara, Kauman District, and Damaran District. The time boundaries are from 06.00 AM until 06.00 PM. The study aims to provide insights into how the presence of beggars shapes the mosque environment.*

Keywords: *Al-Aqsha Mosque, beggar, Kudus Regency, placemaking*

INTRODUCTION

Begging is a complex social issue that has occurred in societies across the world for centuries. While it is often seen as a symptom of poverty and socioeconomic disparities, the factors contributing to begging are complicated. The presence of beggars in urban areas, particularly around religious institutions such as mosques, has raised numerous questions and concerns. Al-Aqsha Mosque, a prominent mosque located in the heart of the city, has not been immune to the presence of beggars.

Understanding the profiles of beggars in the vicinity of Al-Aqsha Mosque aims for addressing the broader issues related to poverty, homelessness, and social exclusion. This research aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the beggar population in the Al-Aqsha Mosque area, their socio-demographic characteristics, reasons for begging, and the placemaking that were created. By diving into the deeper information of the beggars, the author hopes to contribute valuable insights and understanding the placemaking of Al-Aqsha Mosque area related to the beggars.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, as outlined in his work "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" (1959), offers a unique perspective on the social interaction and behavior of individuals in society. Goffman conceptualized social life similar to a theatrical performance, with individuals playing different roles, managing impressions, and using various techniques to present themselves to others. This theory has been widely applied in the field of sociology to analyze human behavior in various contexts, including the study of marginalized and stigmatized groups, such as beggars.

In Goffman's dramaturgical theory, individuals are seen as actors who perform on a "front stage" where they present a carefully constructed self-image to the audience. This front stage performance is marked by impression management, where individuals aim to convey a desired identity or persona. In contrast, there is a "backstage" where actors can relax, drop their performance, and be their authentic selves. The interaction between front stage and

backstage is crucial in understanding how individuals navigate social situations and manage their self-presentation.

Beggars, like all individuals, engage in impression management. They carefully select aspects of their identity to present to others, particularly to potential donors. Their appearance, choice of words, and demeanor are all part of the performance aimed at eliciting sympathy and financial assistance (Fiske & Pavelchak, 1986). On the street, beggars often maintain a front stage persona of vulnerability and neediness to appeal to passersby. However, in private moments or backstage, they may drop this performance and reveal their authentic selves, which could include diverse life stories, coping mechanisms, and personal struggles (Lee, 2019). Goffman's concept of stigma is particularly relevant to the study of beggars. Beggars often experience severe stigmatization due to their social status. Goffman's work on stigma highlights how individuals with stigmatized identities manage the separation between their true selves and societal perceptions, which can be critical for beggars trying to navigate a harsh social environment (Goffman, 1963).

"The begging activities carried out by beggars in the area of Sunan Gunung Jati's tomb are a sign that poverty will always be a part of them." This shows the persistent issue of poverty that drives begging in religious pilgrimage sites (Gumelar, 2024). Beggars in urban areas often employ various strategies to elicit sympathy from passersby, reflecting both cultural practices and interpretations of Islamic charity (Abror, 2020). Al-Aqsha Mosque in Kauman District, Kudus Regency, is one of the most prominent mosques in Indonesia. Many Muslims around Indonesia came to do pilgrimage in Sunan Kudus Tomb near the mosque. Beggars often solicit money from pilgrims visiting the cemetery of prominent Muslim spiritual leaders, indicating a significant social issue intertwined with religious tourism in Indonesia (Apriati, 2021). A place that is known for worship and religious activities, such as Al-Aqsha Mosque of Kudus Regency, often attracts beggars that seek alms from pilgrimage, visitors, and not often the local residents. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of charitable giving, with the practice of zakat being one of the Five Pillars of Islam. As such, religious tourists visiting Masjid Menara Kudus may feel a moral obligation to provide assistance to beggars. Beggars often come from marginalized backgrounds and may view religious tourism areas as prime locations for alms collection due to the populated number of visitors with charitable intentions. The presence of beggars can impact the overall tourism experience and the image of religious tourism destinations. Negative encounters with beggars may affect tourists' satisfaction and potentially deter future visits (Gursoy, 2013). This is a challenge for destinations like Al-Aqsha Mosque, which aim to attract and retain religious tourists.

The theory of placemaking, as outlined in "How to Study Public Life" by Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre, is linked to understanding and improving public spaces. Placemaking, in essence, focuses on creating places that are vibrant, inclusive, and meaningful for the people who use them. The theory can be linked to the behavior of beggars at Al-Aqsha Mosque in Kudus Regency. The theory explores the methods, tools, and principles for understanding, analyzing, and improving public spaces. Jan Gehl, a renowned urban design expert, and Birgitte Svarre, an architect, present a detailed examination of how people interact with and experience public spaces in urban environments.

Placemaking theory emphasizes the creation of distinctive places within the urban environment. This is relevant to understanding the behavior of beggars as they often occupy specific spots or areas in and around Al-Aqsha Mosque, forming a distinct 'place' within the broader public space. The theory also speaks about the importance of social interactions and inclusivity in forming places. When studying the behavior of beggars, it's essential to assess how they interact with other users of the public space—such as tourists, worshippers, or locals—and whether their presence contributes to or detracts from

inclusivity and community engagement. Placemaking helps to understand how different users perceive a place. In the context of Masjid Menara Kudus, studying the behavior of beggars can provide insights into how they perceive and utilize the public space. This understanding is crucial for evaluating the inclusivity of the environment and its impact on marginalized groups.

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach that was used in this research is using a qualitative method by conducting observation and interview. Qualitative data will be collected through observation and interviews with beggars, local people, and visitors of Al-Aqsha Mosque in Kudus Regency. These methods give information about personal experiences, challenges faced, and responses to the problems that will later be analyzed to gain comprehensive understanding regarding the relationship between people, their actions, and the place. The interviews will be conducted in designated times and locations around Al-Aqsha Mosque.

Proceeding to the next step after conducting the observation and interview is to gather the information and data collected. The findings are kept relevant to the theme of the research about understanding the profile of the beggars in Al-Aqsha Mosque area. The information from different participants will be combined to create a more comprehensive understanding regarding the topic.

Next step, the findings from the interviews will be critically compared and connected with the relevant literature review on beggars in religious tourism areas, Goffman's dramaturgy theory, and the theory of placemaking. The interviews will provide narratives that complement the theoretical insights from Goffman's dramaturgy theory on how beggars manage impressions and navigate their roles in a religious context. Participants' perceptions of tourists and the local community will be explored to assess whether they align with the findings discussed in the literature review regarding tourists' responses and the community's attitudes. The results will also be assessed to understand how the behavior of the people shaped the place and how it interferes with the placemaking.

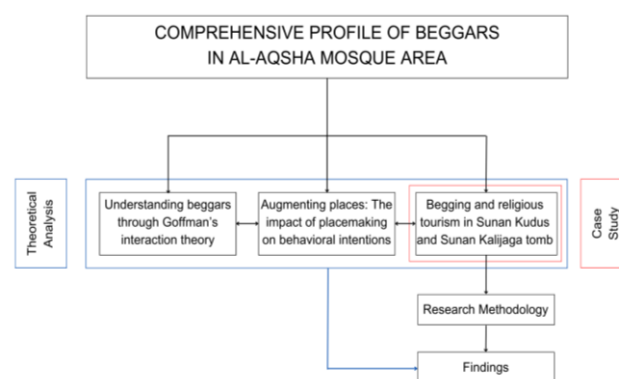


Figure 1 Theoretical framework
Source: Author's diagram

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The front stage of the beggars in Al-Aqsha Mosque is by presenting themselves as beggars according to their social status that is associated with poverty. Other than verbal language, the non-verbal communications are carried out using properties, facial expressions, body movements and so on. Some of them are carrying a child to evoke pity from visitors. All of this was done by the beggars to get a certain impression and to achieve their goal. Back stage of the beggars is the stage where they show themselves completely. This stage becomes an area where they can freely express everything regardless of the activities or roles they perform on the front stage. They tend to show their true self, being more relaxed and

hanging out with other beggars. Some of them even practice their acting in the morning before the area is crowded with people. The beggars are seen in back stage behavior in the morning and in the evening where they are almost done for the day.



Figure 2 Mapping of beggars at 08.00
Source: Google Maps and author's drawing

In the morning, the number of beggars is relatively low compared to later in the afternoon. During this time, most of them exhibit passive behavior, with some simply hanging around and engaging in casual conversations. Observations suggest that many beggars use this period as a form of preparation, practicing their actions as if they are still in the backstage phase before fully engaging with the public. However, a few have already transitioned to their front-stage act, actively seeking alms from passersby. The beggar population at this time consists mostly of elderly women, some of whom carry children to enhance the emotional appeal of their performance when interacting with potential donors.



Figure 3 Mapping of beggars at 10.00
Source: Google Maps and author's drawing

As the day progresses, the number of beggars begins to increase, and their behavior becomes more aggressive. Most of them have fully transitioned into their front-stage act, actively approaching people and spreading across various areas around the mosque. Their presence becomes more noticeable, creating a more assertive dynamic in the space. The beggar population at this time is predominantly elderly women, accompanied by some children and a few elderly men, all engaging in different strategies to gain sympathy and financial aid from passersby.



Figure 4 Mapping of beggars at 18.00
 Source: Google Maps and author's drawing

As the day comes to an end, the number of beggars begins to decrease, with most of them already gone. Their behavior becomes noticeably more passive compared to the afternoon, as their energy and efforts start to wind down. While they still maintain aspects of their front-stage act, the urgency fades, and they gradually shift back into a more relaxed, backstage demeanor. At this time, the remaining beggars are primarily elderly individuals, with no children present.

Articles	Title	Author	Method	Topic	Results
#1	PENGEMIS DAN MAKAM (Fenomena Pengemis di Makam Sunan Giri Kabupaten Gresik)	Hasim Asari, 2015	Qualitative method by using Schutz Phenomenology approach. Data collection technique was using primary and secondary data. Primary data collection is done by participant observer and in-	The relationship between beggars and tomb. The "because of motive" and "in order to motive" of each individuals to become beggars.	Giri Tomb is used as a place to do religious rituals (pilgrimage and praying) and to seek potential alms giver. "Because of Motive" that caused individuals to become beggars are: 1) educational factors, 2) socio-cultural factors, and 3) economy and family factors. "In Order to Motive" of th beggars are: 1) contemporary objectives (short-term) and 2) strategic objectives (long term).
#2	Pengemis di Kecamatan Sananwetan Kota Blitar (alun-alun dan Kompleks Makam Bung Karno)	Nasa Andriansa, I Dewa Putu Ekasasandana, I Nyoman Ruja, Sukanto, Ade Ana Kartikasari, Birisang Muhammad Sahara Etendi, 2021	Qualitative method with descriptive qualitative. Data collection sourced from primary and secondary data using purposive sampling method.	The characteristics of beggars. The reasons for begging. The strategies of begging.	1) The majority are aged 50 years and over 2) The majority are female 3) come from the original area in Blitar City 4) Embracing Islam 5) The level of education is low 1) The age factor of those who are classified as old age 2) To seek additional income 3) Dependents to meet the needs of children 4) Have a low level of education 5) Do not have a family or live alone 1) Move around 2) Settled 3) Using or wearing a clown costume 4) Pretending to be sick and disabled 5) Operate during religious worship or on certain occasions
#3	Exploration of pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia	Tani Handriana, Pratiwi Yuliani and Masmira Kurniawati, 2019	This study used a qualitative approach. Data collection was done using in-depth interviews of Muslims in Indonesia who had already attended pilgrimages to wail limo and/or wail sorgo	The existence of beggars.	In some religious tourism destinations, there are many beggars, and the manager is expected to reduce the number of the beggars. The existence of beggars in tourist spots is also almost the same as that which occurs in developed countries, such as in Belgium and France.
#4	Begging and tourism: between visual imagery and a social reality	D. Dewiyanti, D. Rosmalia, 2018	This research was done using qualitative approach through a descriptive method. Data was obtained	The distribution of the beggar's origin and workplace.	The origin of the beggars indicates that most begging activities are carried out by residents from the western area of Cirebon region, and not from residents who live in coastal areas. This phenomenon is caused by the ease of transportation to the city center which is easier than to go to the coast.

Figure 5 Meta analysis of the literature review
 Source: Author

			through observation and in-depth interviews with ten beggars and a number of tourists performing ritual activities around the mosque.	The type of the beggars and the duration of activities.	The characteristics of the beggars in the mosque areas are: 1) Most are adults between 40-60 years old, male and female; 2) begging directly to the visitors; 3) act as a person with disabilities; 4) selling goods by asking for a mercy and following the visitors; 5) sell services of measuring the tension and the body weight by requesting compassion; 6) working individually although they are coming in groups from the same or the adjacent villages; 7) they are not a very poor people and have no place at all to live, because, in fact, they have a house in the village around Cirebon City.
				The position of beggar's activity.	The beggar's money making position and those who "sell" the body's disability are in the front entrance area, with the static properties and non-moving followers. While those who sell goods or services by asking for mercy are on the inside of the mosque area and follow the direction of visitor movement.
				The beggars' motivation.	a) because it's hard to find another job; b) many people are looking for the God's rewards, so they will share the kindness; c) just kill the time; d) just for fun; e) join the friends or neighbors; f) must be a lot of people who want to buy a goods; g) looking at the atmosphere of the crowd and make a money; h) come to enliven the event; i) want to get a blessings.
				The implications for the tourists.	60% tourists find the beggars to be very annoying, 20% tourists hope that the beggars can be minimized by the government, 15% tourists believe they can share goodness, and 5% tourists find the beggars not too disturbing.
#5	The Dramaturgy Communication of Beggars in an Indonesian Market	Iris Sulastr, Sulaeman, Uky Firmasyah, Rahman Hakim, Zakman, Ghina Novarisa, M. Ridwan, 2022	Qualitative methodology through a study of dramaturgy.	The front stage of beggars.	On the front stage, beggars seem like poor people who deserve to be pitied. Appearances are divided into two types: the first appearance because it was not planned (for example, physical disability, due to birth or an accident or illness); the second is intentional, such as worn clothes, bandaged feet, and others. Their performances scope from speech to writing to gestures to demonstrate that they are deserving of pity.
				The backstage of beggars.	In backstage, they have a decent life because their income is up-and-coming. When in a family environment, beggars are friendly, kind, and caring for others and often give things to family and other people.

Figure 6 Meta analysis of the literature review
Source: Author

				The impression management of beggars.	Beggars manage impressions by using different ways. Some of them use verbal language, while others use written language with pitiful expressions.
#6	Fenomena Anak Studi Kualitatif Proses Sosialisasi Serta Eksploitasi Ekonomi Pada Pengemis Anak Di Makam Sunan Giri Kecamatan Kebomas Kabupaten Gresik	Putri Ratna Zunita, 2015	This research is using qualitative method with purposive technique to determine the research subject. Data collection technique is using in-depth interview and observation. To	The type of exploitation.	Economic exploitation carried out by their own biological parents who were also beggars at Sunan Giri's grave.
				The social impact.	The social impact experienced by child beggars is that children receive a negative stigma from the surrounding community.
				The psychological impact.	The psychological impact is that the children feel embarrassed and lack self-confidence.
#7	DAMPAK PERILAKU MALADAPTIF BAGI ANAK YANG DIADIKAN PENGEMIS OLEH ORANG TUA SEBAGAI BENTUK EKSPLOITASI DI MAKAM KH. SYEKH ASNAWI CARINGIN	Ali Sumiyati, Sholih, Afandy Wern Handoyo, 2021	A qualitative approach using the case study method was carried out to 5 informants, consisting of 3 child beggars, 1 person from one of the child beggar informants' parents, and 1 manager of the KH tomb.	The factor of child exploitation.	Low economic factors, supervision low parenthood, and the absence of applicable law enforcement.
				The impact of child exploitation.	Maladaptive behavior shown by child beggars who are victims of exploitation by their parents can be felt as a form of impact of this exploitation. The child beggar feels a lack of attention from his parents so that the informant displays behavior that can attract the attention of his friends.
#8	FUNGSI SOSIAL LANSIA PADA KELUARGA MISKIN (Studi Etnometodologi Tentang Pengemis Lansia di Makam Sunan Giri Kabupaten Gresik	Doni Laksono Subagio, 2020	The research method uses a qualitative approach with the perspective of ethnomethodology theory and the theory of poverty culture. Subjects were selected by purposive technique and data collection through primary data and secondary data. This study uses Miles and Huberman's interactive model analysis techniques.	The objective conditions of elderly beggars.	Old age is characterized by being physically weak, lacking skills, and not selling at work, plus it has become an old habit so that the culture of begging develops in the poor elderly. Characterized by the cultural values of poverty that appear to elderly beggars such as: First, resignation and mental poor attitude. Second, the low participation in community institutions.
				The social function of elderly beggars in community.	1) a place for charity or charity 2) a place for the emergence of altruistic attitudes towards elderly beggars 3) a place for prayer for pilgrims 4) a place to change coins
#9	KONSTRUKSI SOSIAL PRAKTIK MENGENAL OLEH MASYARAKAT SEKITAR MAKAM SUNAN GIRI KABUPATEN GRESIK.	Endang Setiawati, 2016	This study adopted qualitative approaches with the design research phenomenology. Research informant totaled 7 person. Data	The social construction regarding beggars.	Society's construction of the practice of begging refers to bad attitudes, laziness, lack of responsibility and tends to be destructive. Begging is considered a profession. The construction of society is based on social religion where the Wali's grave is a place of worship that attracts many pilgrims which can trigger individual beggars to carry out their practices at that location.

Figure 7 Meta analysis of the literature review
Source: Author

			collection techniques used is in-depth interview and observation. While the technique of data validity using triangulation. The theories that were used are: (1) the theory construction	The habitus of beggars.	The practice of begging in the Giri grave area is formed from habitus in the form of Islamic traditions, the habit of giving alms, the habit of hiding disgrace, and the habit of respecting older people and superiors. The financial funds owned by pilgrims to give alms as well as several assets owned by beggars (residence, cell phone, begging spot, and money) supports the practice of begging that has occurred.
#10	Persepsi masyarakat terhadap keberadaan pengemis dikokasi wisata religi makam Syeikh Abdul Muhyi; Penelitian di Desa Pamijahan Kecamatan Bantarkalong	Riswandi, Wandi, 2017	The research method used is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation. The object of the research is the beggars at the grave of Sheikh Abdul Muhyi. The informants in this research were beggars and the community around the tomb. The theory used "dramaturgy theory".	The internal factor of beggars. The external factor of beggars. The social perception.	Someone chooses to be a beggar of their own choice, because they are lazy and don't want to work, especially if they have physical disabilities. The culture of poverty is ingrained in beggars (cultural factor). Beggars there have been around for a long time, it has become a tradition of begging to seek sustenance (structural factor). The public's perception regarding the existence and behavior of beggars in Pamijahan is that child beggars often disturb pilgrims because they like to pull on pilgrims' clothes if they have not been given money. Meanwhile, adult beggars and the disabled prefer to wait until they are given money, but based on pilgrim's opinion it is still disturbing.

Figure 8 Meta analysis of the literature review
 Source: Author

In the morning, regarding Goffman's concept of the "backstage" and "frontstage" behaviors in social interactions, the observation shows the result of fewer beggars could be seen as a manifestation of the backstage aspect of their lives. The morning hours might represent a time when beggars are not as prominently engaged in public begging activities, akin to the backstage where individuals can step out of their public roles. The concept of "acting" in the dramaturgy theory suggests that individuals, including beggars, strategically present themselves to influence how others perceive them. They even gather and practice "acting" when the visitors are still a few. In the morning, the beggars choose not to actively engage in public begging as part of a deliberate strategy to manage public perceptions, reserving their more visible role for later in the day.

Midday hours are increasing in visibility of beggars due to higher foot traffic, communal activities, and cultural norms associated with charitable acts during these times. The use of properties, such as signs or containers, during midday may serve as a deliberate strategy to enhance visibility and convey messages more effectively. Midday hours also bring heightened competition among beggars for limited resources, leading to potentially more assertive behavior. The increased aggressiveness could stem from a desire to secure a share of charitable contributions amid the larger and more active audience, especially the pilgrimage that possibly will give alms. The perceived aggressiveness in behavior during midday could be a survival tactic employed by beggars to navigate the competitive landscape. Adopting more assertive actions may be seen as a way to attract attention and garner support in a crowded and bustling environment.

In the evening, it was observed a shift toward a more backstage behavior among beggars, accompanied by a significant decrease in their numbers. As the day progresses, beggars experience physical fatigue due to prolonged periods of public engagement. The evening hours might prompt a retreat to more private or secluded areas, allowing them to conserve energy and recuperate from the demands of the day. The decreasing numbers of beggars in the evening may be linked to a decline in pedestrian activity as people return home or engage in evening activities. With fewer potential donors in public spaces, beggars may find it less advantageous to maintain a visible front stage presence.

Throughout the day, beggars in the Masjid Menara Kudus area engage in dynamic behaviors shaped by the distinct characteristics of morning, midday, and evening hours. In the morning, a backstage demeanor is evident, with fewer beggars visibly present as individuals

navigate personal routines or practicing their “acting”. As midday unfolds, a transition to a more front stage approach occurs, marked by increased visibility, strategic use of properties, and potentially more assertive behavior, aligning with peak pedestrian activity and societal norms. However, as the evening approaches, there is a noticeable shift back to a backstage act, accompanied by a significant decrease in numbers, possibly driven by fatigue, diminished pedestrian activity, and the prioritization of shelter and safety concerns.

The practice of begging in the Al-Aqsha mosque area is formed from the habit of Islamic traditions which is the habit of giving alms. Similar to the Sunan Gunung Jati tomb, where the visitors gives money to the beggars as a form of *ibadah* (Yusuf, 2023), the religious significance of Al-Aqsha Mosque attracts individuals seeking assistance from the worshippers and visitors. The mosque, being a center of religious activities, could be seen as a place where compassionate individuals may provide support to those in need. Hence, the beggars are asking for money in the name of alms (*sadaqah*). They would ask for money from pilgrims in exchange for giving prayers to the almsgiver. The beggars aim to make the pilgrims give alms for religious intentions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey results, the beggars show various behaviors based on their demographic and time period. The beggars in the morning are more reserved with a few numbers present in the area. Based on Goffman’s dramaturgy theory, they tend to act like they are still backstage in early mornings where the visitors are low. Moving to midday, the beggars increased significantly in number and their behavior became more aggressive and brave. Since they are acting in the front stage, they use properties like containers or signs and sometimes they hold their children to gain empathy from other people. In the evening, the number decreased and their behavior became more passive. Most of the beggars are already done for the day and start to go back to backstage behavior. The begging behavior in Al-Aqsha Mosque area is mostly shaped by the religious tradition and culture. The beggars are asking for money in the name of alms in exchange for prayers to the almsgiver.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the effectiveness of potential interventions in improving the lives of beggars in the Masjid Menara Kudus area. Initiatives such as skill development programs, community awareness campaigns, and healthcare outreach efforts could be systematically assessed for their impact on the well-being and socio-economic integration of beggars over time. Additionally, a comparative study across different urban settings could provide insights into the adaptability and transferability of these interventions. The research could also investigate the perspectives and experiences of beggars themselves, capturing their feedback on proposed solutions and gaining a deeper understanding of their needs and aspirations. Hopefully, this would contribute to refining and tailoring future interventions to address the specific challenges faced by beggars in the local context.

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