

THE ECONOMY OF WELLBEING IN BEJI, EAST JAVA: PESANTREN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

Syamsul Hadi

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia (UNUSIA) Jakarta

Jalan Duri Raya Masjid Al Uchwah II No.24, Kedoya, Jakarta Barat, Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: cak_hadi@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

This article aimed to explain the field findings related to the socio-economic conditions of the community in Beji village. The village is known as *santri*-based community that contributes to the socio-economic impacts of the community around the pesantren. The research used a qualitative method with a constructivism approach. Data gathered through in-depth interview techniques and field observations and enriched with document studies. Informants interviewed were determined through the snowballing techniques. The result of the research shows that the existence of Manbail Futuh pesantren in the middle of the village not only serves as religious education (Islam) but with the number of *santri* coming from various regions, so the existence of pesantren also gives a socio-economic impact for the surrounding community. The economic benefits provided by pesantren is not active but passive. This is because the pesantren is only providing opportunities for residents to open stalls inside the pesantren for free, without renting them spaces to trade. This pesantren has overall students of 2469 with 833 are staying in the dormitory. Sociologically, the socio-economic relation between pesantren and the local people who work as a seller shows a pattern of the economic of *mashlahat* (wellbeing). It can be said that the economic action played by pesantren is a substantive economy based on Islamic moral values, namely the principles of *ta'awun* (mutual help) and the principle of *mashlahat* (the common good).

Keywords:

Pesantren, rural, mashlahat economic.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan menjelaskan temuan lapangan terkait kondisi sosial-ekonomi masyarakat di Desa Beji, yang dikenal sebagai basis kaum santri serta dampak sosial ekonomi yang memberikan nilai manfaat bagi kehidupan masyarakat di sekitar pesantren. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan konstruktivisme. Penggalan data melalui teknik wawancara mendalam dan observasi lapangan serta diperkaya dengan studi dokumen. Para informan yang diwawancarai ditentukan melalui teknik *snow balling*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, keberadaan pesantren Manbail Futuh di tengah-tengah lingkungan masyarakat desa tidak hanya berfungsi melayani pendidikan keagamaan (Islam), tetapi dengan banyaknya santri yang datang dari berbagai daerah, keberadaan pesantren juga memberikan dampak sosial-ekonomi bagi warga sekitarnya. Terhadap warga sekitar manfaat ekonomi yang diberikan pesantren tidak bersifat aktif melainkan pasif. Sebab, pesantren sebatas memberikan kesempatan membuka usaha bagi penduduk setempat di dalam lokasi pesantren yang menampung 833 *santri mukim* dan memiliki siswa aktif sebanyak 2.469 orang, tanpa menarik sepersen pun uang "retribusi". Secara sosiologis relasi sosial-ekonomi antara pesantren dengan warga sekitar yang berprofesi sebagai pedagang melahirkan pola perilaku ekonomi *mashlahat*. Dapat dikatakan bahwa tindakan ekonomi yang diperankan pesantren adalah ekonomi substantif yang dilandasi oleh nilai-nilai moral Islam, yaitu prinsip *ta'awun* (saling tolong-menolong) dan prinsip *mashlahat* (demi kebaikan bersama).

Kata Kunci:

Pesantren, pedesaan, ekonomi mashlahat.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The economic impact of the pesantren to the surrounding community has been reported by Horiko Horikoshi (1987) in Cipari Village in Garut region. She proved, that with the development of pesantren educational institutions in a village, not only is the Islamic knowledge of the community progressing, but also contributing to the socio-economic conditions of the village. With the provision of formal education and religious knowledge, Cipari and surrounding villages also experienced an increase in social mobility. Likewise, social benefits are also sought in the form of cooperation between residents and the pesantren. The impact of economic improvement in the rural realm can be seen from a number of students living in boarding school who came from various regions. These students became a blessing for residents around the pesantren whose stalls and grocery stores could serve the needs of the students.¹

In 1990 a non-profit organization in Jakarta, the Association for Pesantren and Community Development (P3M) reported some of the economic benefits received by rural communities from pesantren institutions to include; (i) get venture capital loans, (ii) obtain work skills through training organized by pesantren, (iii) get job opportunities provided by pesantren, and (iv) establish business partnerships with pesantren. P3M also emphasized that the active economic role of the pesantren cannot be generalized to all pesantren. However, pesantren continue to contribute and passively provide economic benefits to the surrounding community. Because of the large number of students living at an Islamic boarding school, then economic opportunities were opened. The opportunity was then used by neighboring pesantren and

other villagers to open food stalls, grocery stores, coffee shops, and other services to serve the needs of students who come from various regions. Village business establishments are increasingly advancing as the number of consumers increases due to increased demand.²

From the perspective of economic sociology, there is a concept of economic behavior that develops in society called formal and substantive. The formal economy is interpreted as an individual's choice of means to achieve the goals (ends) desired by actors. If the calculation is for material gain, then the individual's actions are considered logical because they produce material. Whereas substantive economics refers to the role of exchange or human dependence on the natural and social (ecological) environment. The desired result is to obtain more on non-material means of living because it is for inner satisfaction.³ Therefore, substantive economic action is more concerned with the value of the benefit for others. In the environment of rural communities in general, (including pesantren) the principle of *maslahat*, namely the consideration of moral values in addition to economic and social values.⁴

Then the question is, does the development of Islamic boarding schools in rural communities affect the benefit of the rural economic sector? And what form of economic benefit can the village community accept?

This brief paper aimed to discuss the socio-religious values socialized by pesantren in the village community environment concerning the economic actions of residents. For data collection, this research used several techniques include; direct observation, in-depth interviews and document study or use of structured data.⁵ Several informants interviewed were determined through its roles

¹Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kyai Dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat, 1987), 102.

²Redaksi, "Peran Pesantren Dalam Ekonomi Pedesaan, Terjebak Slogan?," *Jurnal: Pesantren* 7, no. 1 (1990), 14.

³Karl Polanyi, "The Economy as Instituted Process," in *The Sociology of Economic Life*, ed. Mark Granovetter

and Richard Swedberg (Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), 31.

⁴Mubyarto and J. Roesmanto, "Ekonomi Pedesaan: Kenyataan Dan Prospeknya Di Masa Depan," *Jurnal: Pesantren* 7, no. 1 (1990): 16–23.

⁵Sugiyono, *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010), 125.

either in the pesantren or in the community such as caregivers and family of pesantren, religious teachers, *lurah pondok*, *santri*, relevant government officials, village elders, religious / community leaders, and communities around pesantren.

B. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Portrait of Beji Pesantren Village

Beji Village is one of the villages in the Jenu Subdistrict which is directly adjacent to the Java Sea coast. Geographically the village, which is located on the north coast (Pantura), is in a strategic location. Located on the edge of the national highway majoring in Surabaya-Jakarta, which is 10 Km away from the capital of Tuban Regency.

Based on Village Monograph data, the area of Beji Village is around 3,602,222 Ha. In 2014 the number of people live in this area is 6054 consisted of 1,628 households with population density reached 1776 people/km².

By bearing the *santri* village label, the Muslim population in Beji are around 99.30 percent. The remaining 0.70 percent are Christians, Catholics, Confucians, Hindus, Buddhists, and believers. Even though it is the basis of the *santri*, it does not necessarily abandon the characteristics of Beji as a plural rural community, both from the aspect of professional background, ethnicity and religion and the beliefs of its citizens. The atmosphere looks harmonious and peaceful even though the aspect of trust is relatively plural. As far as the author's information is known, throughout the history of Beji Village, there has never been a conflict between the population that was motivated by racial or primordial motives.

Based on stories from locals before independence, many Chinese had settled in this *santri* village. Some of them even married to Javanese people. The interwoven social network as if without a partition has continued until now. They seem to get along well and *teposeliro* (respect each other) in everyday relationships, both in social and economic

relations. And it can be ascertained almost every year at the end of every month of Ramadan, villagers of Chinese ethnicity and non-Muslims always give alms to the mosque *takmir* alms. So, it is not strange that such activities and friendships between different ideological and ethnic residents have been carried out by their ancestors for a long time.⁶

In Beji, there are 4 pesantren institutions and 70 more religious institutions spread across 4 hamlets. Two existing pesantren, PP. Mukhtariyah and Pondok Pesantren Manbail Futuh was established before independence. Even though the Mukhtariyah boarding school first stood, the popular one called Pondok Beji or Mbah Hisham's was the Manbail Futuh boarding school. At present, the four pesantren are inhabited by approximately 1,250 students or around 20.65 percent of the total population of the village. Most students come from East Java Province. Only a small portion from outside Java, namely from Bali, Jambi, East Waringin and Papua. The most *santri* live in Pondok Pesantren Manbail Futuh which accommodates as many as 823 students (65.8 percent of the total number of *mukim* students in Beji). Now the Manbail boarding school Futuh Beji is raised by KH. Fatchurrohman Mizan. He is the grandson of KH. Fatchurrohman bin Abu Sa'id (founder of the pesantren).⁷

The rest, more or less there are about 427 students living in 3 other boarding schools, namely (i) Al-Mukhtariyah boarding school that was raised by KH. Ahyat and KH. Fathul Jawad; (ii) the pesantren Hidayatus Sholihin who was raised by KH. Sholeh Nur Hadi; and (iii) the Al-Khozini boarding school that was raised by KH. Husen Chozin. But only Manbail Futuh Beji among 4 pesantren held formal (madrasah/school) and non-formal education, namely *madrasah diniyah* and the study of the yellow book (*kitab kuning*). While the other three pesantren only hold the traditional study of religious books. The *santri* who live in *pesantren* located in Beji Village and some

⁶Abd. Kholik, interview by Syamsul Hadi, Beji, on November 5, 2015.

⁷Lia Faricha, interview by Syamsul Hadi, Beji, on August 15, 2015.

pesantren in the surrounding villages mostly study informal educational institutions in the management of the Futuh Manbail Education Foundation (YADIKMA).

As the main icon of the Beji village, the Manbail Futuh pesantren was established in 1925M / 1345H by the son of a tobacco and *palawija* merchant, KH. Fatchurrohman bin Abu Sa'id. At first, the *santri* and *langgar* dormitory buildings stood on a waqf area of 2,964 M2. Now the area of land occupied by pesantren and units of educational institutions is almost 3.2 hectares. In this location, 9 dormitories (*ribath*) have now been built, which are places for *santri* who come from various regions. In addition to establishing formal education units (schools and madrassas) such as RA / TK, MI, MTs, MA, Manbail Vocational School Futuh Beji also maintaining traditional Islamic-educational institutions (*salafiyah*), namely *Madrasah Diniyah* at 'Ula (basic) level and *Wustho* (intermediate).⁸

With a large number of *mukim* students currently reaching 1,250 or 20.6 percent of the total population of Beji Village, it is certainly an economically clear impact on increasing the income of the community, especially residents who have businesses around the pesantren location. Thus, the predicate of the pesantren village is not only adorned with lively Islamic religious study and learning activities among young students and residents but also contributed to an increase in economic income for some residents around the pesantren who are in direct contact with the consumptive needs of the *santri*. This is a result of economic effects from the establishment of pesantren in improving the welfare of the surrounding community.

2. The economic style in Santri Village

Changes in agrarian structure, in turn, have an impact on changes in the structure of work in society and the environmental crisis. Farmers who lose land due to conversion by themselves will look for new jobs to meet family needs. It could even be, they were marginalized because of the loss of production assets and because he did not immediately get a replacement job.⁹ Judging from the speed conversion, the phenomenon of land transfer in Beji village and surrounding villages sped up in the late 90s to the present due to local government policy that prioritizes the west coast of Jenu Subdistrict and surrounding sub-districts as industrial areas in regional, national and local scale. Added to this is the level of land requirements for new settlements, offices, and businesses that are increasing the rate of land-use change as the flow of social migration continues to arrive in this area.¹⁰

The most affected and disadvantaged groups of people with land conversion policies are farmers because they have lost their sources of production. In many cases, they not only lost production assets but also find a place to live and work as a substitute outside their birthplace.¹¹ According to the results of the East Java Province agriculture census, in Tuban District within ten years (2003-2013), there had been growth minus the number of land-use farmer households by 27,480 people or around 12.24 percent. In 2003 the number reached 224,436 people and then dropped to 196,956 people in 2013. While the number of smallholder households in 2003 which amounted to 147,024 people fell to 115,043 people, which experienced a growth of minus 31,981 people or around 21.75 percent.

Villagers affected by the conversion and could not be accommodated in the industrial sector were forced to find new jobs outside the

⁸Abdullah Sani, interview by Syamsul Hadi, Beji, on August 27, 2015.

⁹Astri Astri Lestari and Arya Hadi Dharmawan, "Dampak Sosio-Ekonomis Dan Sosio-Ekologis Konversi Lahan," *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan* 5, no. 1 (2011), 7.

¹⁰Bupati Tuban, "Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Tuban Nomor 09 Tahun 2012 Tentang Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah Kabupaten Tuban Tahun 2012 - 2032" (2012).

¹¹Compare with Lestari and Dharmawan, "Dampak Sosio-Ekonomis Dan Sosio-Ekologis Konversi Lahan."

industrial sector, namely the trade and services sector, or self-employed. For example, opening food stalls, grocery stores, meatball shops, boarding houses, coffee shops, and other businesses in the formal sector. While some other residents choose to work in the informal sector, such as motorcycle taxi drivers, washing laborers, porters in markets and fish auctions (TPI), mobile vegetable sellers, casual laborers, street vendors and so on. This case proves that the structure of community work is strongly influenced by the agrarian structure. Some of the residents of Beji village and surrounding villages who were eliminated from work in the

agricultural sector then opened businesses around the pesantren location.

At present, the economic institutions that operate around the location of the Manbail Futuh boarding school and three other formal and non-formal boarding schools are around 53 types of businesses. These places of business not only serve the needs of students but also residents and outsiders who work in factories. From morning to evening the pesantren location has become a fairly busy "place" for trade besides economic activities concentrated in the village market.

Table 1. Economic Institutions Operating Around Pesantren

Type of Institutions	Type of business	Total
Formal	Food stalls, meatballs and coffee shop	18
	Services	11
	Home industry	3
	Street vendor	3
Informal	Street vendor	18
Total		53

Source: Processed from field data, 2016.

The business owners are mostly residents around pesantren who open businesses in their own homes or yards. Some of them are teachers /religious teachers and pesantren families (*ahlu al-bait*), who open part-time businesses to increase family income. Generally, they provide food and snacks needed by the students. Because the majority of students prefer *majeg* (pre-paid meals) rather than *ngliwet* (cooking) by themselves with the reasoning that there is not enough time to cook. From early morning at 04.00 to 22.00 at night a variety of learning activities in schools/*madrasah* and boarding schools have taken up their time. During this time, they explore religious and general sciences for their increased knowledge that will be beneficial for themselves and others. They are trained in this pesantren to be independent and have a good character.

The majority of street vendors come from residents outside Beji. They are free to shop around selling merchandise in the *madrasah/school* environment, even some of them can trade inside the location of the *santri* hostel. They are not prohibited as long as they do not interfere with the activities of studying. Other conditions that must be obeyed by traders are not to sell food and drinks that endanger the health of the body and soul, and or which are prohibited from religion.

Although the business opportunities in the trade and services sector are bright enough, only a few participate in this sector around 4.86 percent. A large proportion of the population works in the industrial sector around 75.56 percent of the total population.¹² This happened because around the village environment there had been a change in the agrarian structure due

¹²Pemdes Beji, *Monografi Desa Beji Tahun 2014* (Beji: Pemdes Beji, 2014).

to the promotion of the construction of large factories of national and international scale.

3. Encouraging *Mashlahat* Economy

Institutionally the pesantren *Manbail Futuh* has only economic institutions in the form of savings and loan cooperatives. This business entity only serves religious teachers who work in the pesantren environment and not intended for the general public or residents around the pesantren. The economic benefits that can be felt by the surrounding community in the presence of pesantren in Beji Village are still passive or not in the form of direct economic relations. Pesantren *Manbail Futuh* has no concrete experience in managing community economic development programs, for example, providing capital assistance or loan funds, or conducting small business management training to village communities as *Maslahul Huda* Islamic Boarding School, from the Kajen Margoyoso Pati village.¹³

Although relatively passive, many pesantren policies have a relatively significant effect on the economic activities of surrounding communities due to a large number of settlers. The number of *mukim* students is certainly a quantitative benchmark to determine the size of a pesantren institution. This is a market niche for small traders in the village to gain economic benefits. Because, the needs of the students are not only eating and drinking, but many other needs that make market demands continue to increase. Some pesantren "policies" that are considered to be able to push the wheels of the citizens' economy are:

- a) The pesantren invites traders to peddle their wares in the *madrasah* and *pondok* (dormitory) neighborhoods.
- b) Islamic boarding schools do not make canteens and cooperatives to meet the needs of students.
- c) Not at all attract profit or retribution to the traders.

The above policy was taken by considering the values of pesantren and socio-cultural conditions ("neighboring institutions") namely *ikram al-jaar*; *adab* guidance glorifies neighbors in the community. Especially for people who need income to meet family needs. And the priority is the neighboring pesantren whose economic conditions are poor. Ustadz Abdullah Sani (26 years),¹⁴ a *kyai's* relatives said:

By allowing the neighbors to be able to sell in the boarding it is like we are helping them so that they can get benefit from the existence of the boarding among this community. There are about 7 merchants who are allowed to sell inside the women's dormitories. In the men's dormitories, students are free to search outside the pesantren. Those who trade are mothers from a neighboring village, for example, Yu Wiek and Ms. Sholehah and others. There are several people who sell their goods or foods in this pesantren. They sell a variety of foods like rice, snacks or fried rice.

With this policy traders who usually stay in the madrasah/school environment can take advantage of available business opportunities. For pesantren, providing business opportunities to others, especially if they need it is a form of *ta'awun* values (the principle of helping) and *maslahah* values (the principle of well being or for the common good). Islamic teachings strongly emphasize the value of *ta'awun* and *maslahah* in social life to build an atmosphere of harmony in social life. The attachment of the two principles to the level of social action (individuals and groups) is needed to strengthen social integration and solidarity. Pesantren can monopolize the market to make maximum profits for itself, however, in this case, it is not because the pesantren implements the religious norms of *ta'awun* and *maslahah*. The pesantren even invited residents to take

¹³Mifedwil Jandra, "Pondok Pesantren Dan Pembangunan Masyarakat: Studi Kasus Pesantren Maslahul Huda Kajen, Margoyoso, Pati Jawa Tengah," *Jurnal: Istiqro'* 1, no. 1 (2006), 112.

¹⁴Abdullah Sani, interview by Syamsul Hadi, Beji, on August 27, 2015.

advantage of existing economic opportunities. Borrowing the term economic sociologist, Mark Granovetter (1992), perhaps this is just an example of moral economic action that still exists in rural areas because of its attachment to the *maslahat* values and *ta'awun* socialized by pesantren. More precisely, there is a social embedded between economic behavior with religious and cultural institutions that develop in society.¹⁵

In other cases, the economic practice of *maslahat* also applied to the cooperation institutions or the Yasinan association, which is the institution for the study of Muslimat, women's organization, which is held every Friday Night in Beji. This association was established in 1990 with a total membership of 37 women around the pesantren location. Since its establishment until now, every activity has

been accompanied by *kyai*. The aim is to improve the quality of Islam and encourage friendship between citizens. Activities are carried out in turn from house to house. The activities include holding religious rites and *taklim* then closed by *arisan* (saving and credit in the social gathering).

The *arisan* fund is intended to finance the activities of the association, while contributions to the organization's cash funds are then used as loan capital and social funds. The membership fee is set at IDR 500 per activity for each member. And it is used as a grant to contribute to villagers whose families have died, members who are sick and require donations for a wedding celebration (social insurance). This form of social insurance in Beji is called joint responsibility (*tanggung renteng*).

Table.2. Schedule of Syarekat Mutual Assistance Activities in Rural Women

Time	Market Day *	Activities (<i>Ritual</i>)
1 st Week	Pahing	Tartilan/Simaan Al-Quran
2 nd Week	Pon	Yasin and Tahlil
3 rd Week	Wage	Istighotsah and Manaqib
4 th Week	Kliwon	Sholawatan (Barzanji)
5 th Week	Legi	Taklim (religious lecture)

Source: Processed from field data, 2016.

Note: * Time cycle in Javanese calendar.

In addition to holding ritual activities in the form of the practice of simulating the *Quran*, *dhikr*, and *taklim* as listed in table 2, weekly events like Yasinan gathering are also used for social and economic activities, namely social gathering and savings and loans. The *arisan* withdrawal amount is IDR 10,000 per member in one week. The proceeds from the *arisan* money are used to fund the activities of the association and are handed over directly to the members of the congregation who have their turn to be the host of the event or as the organizer of *Yasinan*. Each member can only borrow a maximum of IDR 500,000. The

savings and loan system is carried out in the revolving fund and paid in installments for ten months. The smooth running of loan funds is very dependent on the activeness of the members borrowing because the problem of capital adequacy comes only from cash funds obtained from the withdrawal of membership dues every week.

Beyond the interests of villagers who use the *Yasinan* association as a cooperation organization, the local creativity initiated by the *kyai* together with his congregation is also an effective means of shaping the values of pesantren in the community. According to

¹⁵Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," in *The Sociology of Economic Life*, ed. Mark Granovetter and

Richard Swedberg (Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1992).

Abdurrahman Wahid (2007), the existence of pesantren is very much determined by the extent to which the function of forming values in the community is effectively carried out, in addition to being able to provide answers to challenges and changes in the field of education and socio-politics.¹⁶

From the perspective of sociology, the variety of local creativity that is colored by the values of pesantren (*ta'awun* and *maslahah*) can provide an understanding of the articulation of a meaningful shared life because it is based on cooperation and benefit. Namely the effectiveness of the collective ethos of reciprocity which is the adhesive element. Borrow conception theory from James C. Scott (1989),¹⁷ that mutual assistance institutions in this context are social insurance, revolving fund and social gathering (housewives) in a Yasinan association is nothing but an alternative form of subsistence that can be classified as self-help. The implementation of the reciprocal collective ethos among the community members is very functioning to help community members who are in need, for example, there is a sudden need for money. Without prudent requirements, they can be settled on a joint initiative.

C. CONCLUSION

The existence of Islamic boarding schools in rural communities does not only function as a religious educational institution. With a large number of *mukim* students and students studying in formal pesantren institutional units, it has opened up potential market opportunities in driving the economic activities of the surrounding residents.

The economic benefits provided by the Pesantren *Manbail Futuh* Beji are not active, for example in the form of capital assistance or offers of cooperation in business with surrounding communities. *Futuh Manbail Pesantren* is only limited to providing a place to trade without collecting profits to traders who

sell their wares at the pesantren location. Thus, the economic support provided by pesantren is still passive. These forms of "passive economy" movements around pesantren locations can increase traders' incomes due to increased demand.

The formation of socio-economic relations between pesantren and the traders in which residents of Beji and surrounding villagers gave birth to patterns of economic behavior. The economic activity that is providing the opportunity to sell without attracting money "retribution" is based on the spirit of the values of the pesantren, *ta'awun* (the principle of helping) and *maslahah* (the principle for the community well being). Even so, the phenomenon of *maslahat* economic behavior also appears in the activities of citizens in the Yasinan society. This religious institution is also a means of the gathering of villagers who function as cooperation institutions because they run a joint economic system of responsibility in the form of social insurance and revolving funds.

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¹⁶Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2007).

¹⁷James C. Scott, *Moral Ekonomi Petani: Pergolakan Dan Subsistensi Di Asia Tenggara*, trans. Hasan Basri (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1989), 25.

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INTERVIEW

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