

The Challenge of Maintaining Local Culture in the Global Era (Case Study of the RT Culture Competition, RT 4, Cemandi Village, Sedati District, Sidoarjo Regency)

Nirwasita Sakhi Azzahra

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

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Abstract

Introduction: This study examines the challenges of preserving local culture in the era of globalization by focusing on the Cultural Neighborhood Competition (Lomba RT Berbudaya) in RT 4, Cemandi Village, Sedati Subdistrict, Sidoarjo Regency. The phenomenon of globalization, digital transformation, industrialization, and decreasing open spaces poses significant threats to cultural sustainability. The competition serves as a community-based initiative aimed at both strengthening social solidarity and preserving cultural values.

Material and Methods: The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews with the head of RT 4 and representatives from the Community and Village Empowerment Agency (DPMD). To ensure validity and reliability, data were analyzed using source triangulation. The theoretical framework is based on concepts of social solidarity, mutual cooperation, communal harmony, and the role of community participation in cultural preservation.

Research Results: Findings indicate that the Cultural Neighborhood Competition has a dual role: functioning as a contest and as a medium for fostering community cohesion. Traditional values such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), communal harmony (guyub rukun), and togetherness were identified as essential drivers of the event's success, encouraging active participation, collective responsibility, and a sense of belonging. Moreover, the program supports the preservation of local arts and traditions, including patrol music, banjari, PKK women's gatherings, and the Reog Cemandi performance, which has become a cultural identity of the local community.

Conclusion: The study concludes that the Cultural Neighborhood Competition is not merely ceremonial but serves as a strategic effort to strengthen social solidarity, revive traditional values, and safeguard local identity amidst the challenges of modernization and globalization.

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Corresponding Author:

Nirwasita Sakhi Azzahra

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

Email Coresspondent: sakhiazzahra497@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The long history of humanity is inseparable from culture. All societies, everywhere in the world, possess cultural elements. (Kistanto, 2017, p. 7) Indonesia is inextricably linked to culture. Culture is what shapes a nation's identity. Culture itself plays a role in shaping an identity that gives a nation its own uniqueness that distinguishes it from other nations. The role of culture in society is as a bond that unites a diverse society and can create a sense of pride in one's own culture. The culture in question encompasses language, art, customs, beliefs, and even moral values that have long served

as exemplary morals. It is hoped that in the future, these cultures will continue to be inherited and kept alive by future generations.

In modern times, various cultures have declined or faded due to the erosion of time. This is due to changes that have slowly eroded noble values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, respect, and so on. (Molle et al., 2021, p. 77) However, there are certainly groups of people who want to maintain their culture.

Previous research has shown that mutual cooperation is a cultural practice universally recognized by every ethnic group in Indonesia, which can strengthen the sense of solidarity of the Kalangan Hamlet community, ensuring they maintain their moral and cultural values. (Kurnia et al., 2023) Other research has also identified local wisdom such as *Teki fe'a chest radha* can provide positive values to the Rendu indigenous community. These positive values include harmony, mutual cooperation, brotherhood, and togetherness. (Djandon, 2022) Globalization can be a challenge for local culture, as the younger generation is vulnerable to exposure to foreign values that can erode nationalism, as research conducted by (Siregar et al., 2024). Other studies have shown that challenges in maintaining culture can be overcome with adequate training, facilities, and support to maintain existing local culture. Appropriate mentoring and education can increase community enthusiasm and interest in local culture. (Bima et al., 2024) (Kristiyono et al., 2024)

The novelty of this research lies in its focus, specifically highlighting the RT Berbudaya Competition as the main object of study, which until now has not been widely studied in depth. And there are not many studies that focus on this topic. Through a structural functional theory approach, this research offers a new perspective on how various elements of society—RT heads, residents, arts groups, PKK, and social organizations—play a collective role in strengthening social solidarity and preserving local culture. In addition, this research makes an academic contribution by showing that local government policies, such as the RT Berbudaya competition, can be an effective instrument in facing the challenges of globalization, social change, and industrialization that threaten the existence of local culture. Thus, this research is expected to be able to fill the gap in the literature in the fields of cultural sociology and community-based social development, as well as serve as a reference for further research that focuses on cultural preservation at the small community level. The purpose of this research is to determine the contribution of the RT Berbudaya competition to solidarity among residents of RT 4 Cemandi Village. This research also aims to analyze the contribution of this activity in increasing social solidarity among residents, especially in strengthening relationships between RTs and strengthening a sense of togetherness. In addition, this study aims to examine the role of the RT cultural competition in preserving and strengthening local cultural values that live among the people of Cemandi Village.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the contribution of the RT Berbudaya competition in strengthening community solidarity and preserving local culture in Cemandi Village. Descriptive qualitative research focuses on a systematic and factual description of the social phenomena that occur, without manipulating the variables studied. Data in this study were obtained through interview techniques. Interviews were conducted with the head of RT 4 Cemandi Village and employees of the

Community and Village Empowerment Service (DPMD). The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The analysis technique used was triangulation. Triangulation is used to analyze data from various sources to determine its validity. (Nurfajriani et al., 2024) More specifically, source triangulation, namely using various different sources of information and digging into the truth of the information obtained.

3. RESULTS

Getting to Know the Cultural Neighborhood Competition

The Sidoarjo Regency Government is holding a Neighborhood Association (RT) Competition to encourage development based on community participation and self-reliance. The Sidoarjo Regency Government has five programs to strengthen togetherness. These five movements will begin in 2024 as a stimulus to foster and strengthen citizen participation at the RT level. Citizen participation is considered important because it can strengthen democracy, create better policies in the future, and improve the quality of life of the community. Togetherness among community members can foster harmony and healthy relationships (Thifa et al., 2024). The five programs to strengthen togetherness are RT Sehat, RT Mandiri Sejahtera, RT Asri, RT Berbudaya, RT Jimpitan.

The purpose of the RT Competition (Thifa et al., 2024) is to encourage community participation/self-reliance and mutual cooperation in order to accelerate the achievement of goals. It also encourages the community to maintain and preserve the values of community life based on mutual cooperation and kinship. The RT Competition is intended to improve the function of the Neighborhood Association (RT) to support the implementation of government, development, and community tasks. The RT Competition is also intended as an appreciation from the Sidoarjo Regency government for RT achievements in the aspects of welfare, establishing, and advancing community members.

Each competition branch has its own assessment aspects and indicators. The neighborhood association (RT) Jimpitan assesses orderly administration during community fundraising, how the funds are utilized for community infrastructure, and the level of community participation. The neighborhood association (RT Sehat) assesses waste management, ownership of healthy latrines, reforestation, community health, and attention to maternal and child health. The neighborhood association (RT Mandiri) focuses on strengthening independence and economic empowerment, including providing assistance to the poor and orphans, women's economic enterprises, and savings and loans. The main assessment for the neighborhood association (RT Asri) concerns waste management, reforestation, the beauty of the neighborhood garden's ornaments, the arrangement of house buildings, and good environmental management. The neighborhood association (RT Berbudaya) prioritizes the presence of arts groups and regional art performances, the presence of social organizations such as community service, regular PKK meetings, and the physical presence of neighborhood watch posts.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF RT 4 RW 1 CEMANDI VILLAGE

Cemandi Village is located in Sedati District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java Province. One of its neighborhood associations (RT) won third place in the 2024 Cultural RT Competition.

1. Patrol music culture. This musical art form is quite popular in East Java, particularly in the Jember, Sidoarjo, and Lumajang areas. Its original function was to wake residents up during the month of

Ramadan. The meaning of the word "patrol" stems from its original function, which is to stand guard. The instrumentation of patrol music itself consists of remo, kletes, bass, small bass, selingan, tingtung, and can be combined with other musical instruments, both traditional and modern. (Zabrina et al., 2023)

2. PKK mothers' association. PKK mothers in RT 04, Cemandi Village, hold regular meetings for social gatherings and other activities.
3. Banjari. Its members are women from RT 04, Cemandi Village, and they usually practice regularly at the nearby TPQ (Islamic boarding school).
4. Omah Seni. This art studio, located on Jl. Semeru, RT.04/RW.01, Cemandi, Sedati District, Sidoarjo Regency, provides a platform for young people in the surrounding area to develop their interests and talents in various arts. Local youth come to Omah Seni, whether to learn about new cultures or to develop their talents and interests in the culture itself. The cultural lessons offered are diverse, ranging from Gamelan, Reog Cemandi, Patrol Music, and so on. Later, these young people will perform or perform at certain events.
5. Reog Cemandi. Sidoarjo has an icon of the Reog Cemandi art form, which was founded in 1922. (Gustiani & YANUARTUTI, 2020) Actually, this reog originated from another region but was competed in RT 04, Cemandi Village. Initially, Reog Cemandi served as a form of resistance by Cemandi residents against Dutch colonialism. However, over time, this function became a local art and folk entertainment in Sidoarjo (Maskurin et al., 2023). In Reog Cemandi, there are two types of characters and masks used in the performance. Namely, the Barongan Lanang and the Barongan Wadon. Both have different characteristics. Where the Barongan Lanang uses a red mask with a grinning expression that symbolizes the fire of anger. While the Barongan Wadon uses a white mask that symbolizes purity and balances the meaning of the Barongan Lanang mask, which is feminine (Apriliza & Sinduwiatmo, 2024).

THE ROLE OF CITIZENS' SOLIDARITY IN MAKING THE SUCCESS OF THE CULTURAL Neighborhood Competition

From the perspective of structural functional theory, society is viewed as a system consisting of interrelated parts that each have their own function to maintain the stability and sustainability of the system as a whole. This theory emphasizes the importance of social roles and functions in creating order and harmony within society. (Juwita et al., 2020)

Structural functionalism, popularized by figures such as Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, emphasizes that every social institution, such as family, education, religion, economics, and politics, has a specific function in maintaining societal balance. According to Durkheim, society rests on the principles of consensus, harmony, and balance. The social institutions within it are seen as interdependent and working together to maintain the order of the system. In this regard, education plays a crucial role as a means of transmitting values and norms that ensure the continuity of social life (Arif, 2020). This principle applies not only to formal institutions but can also be found in the practices of everyday social life at the community level.

The Cultural Neighborhood Competition in RT 04, Cemandi Village, can be understood as an effective social system, where every element of society is able to optimally carry out its role and function. The RT head serves as a leader who not only organizes and directs the course of activities

but also motivates residents to actively participate. Furthermore, residents demonstrate solidarity and collective awareness in maintaining and preserving local culture through various activities that are part of the competition. This dynamic reflects that citizen participation is not merely individual, but has a broader social meaning, namely strengthening bonds of togetherness while maintaining the continuity of cultural values in community life.

Competitions are not merely a means of competition; they also serve as a social mechanism that reinforces the values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and a commitment to cultural preservation. Furthermore, when cultural practices are consistently implemented in daily life, these competitions serve a latent function: the formation of a strong and sustainable cultural identity. This identity then serves as a pillar of society, ensuring its solidarity and resilience amidst the rapid flow of change.

ANALYSIS OF EXEMPLARY VALUES

THE VALUE OF MUTUAL WORK

In the conclusion section, it is necessary to briefly explain the generalization of the research results and be able to answer the formulation of the research problem. In addition, the conclusion section also needs to provide limitations of this research and recommendations or suggestions for further research.

Mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is a distinctive characteristic of the Indonesian people, deeply rooted in social life. This culture is often praised by other nations as a unique form of local wisdom, imbued with tolerance, consideration, and respect for others. More than just a tradition, *gotong royong* also reflects noble values rooted in Pancasila, making it an essential part of the Indonesian nation's identity and personality (Fusnika et al., 2022). These values emphasize that *gotong royong* serves as a moral guideline that maintains social harmony amidst diversity. *Gotong royong* can also be understood as a means of community empowerment that fosters solidarity and strengthens community capacity. This practice serves as social capital that fosters institutional strength, both at the local and national levels, and even across nations and countries. With the spirit of *gotong royong*, Indonesian society has a solid foundation for achieving shared prosperity, as the togetherness that exists allows each individual to contribute collectively in facing various social, economic, and cultural challenges (Permana & Mursidi, 2020).

In organizing the RT Cultural Competition, the value of mutual cooperation is not only present as a spirit of togetherness, but also a key factor in determining the success of the event. Residents who work together from the planning stage, fundraising, task allocation, and implementation of activities demonstrate that solidarity can foster active participation and a sense of ownership in the jointly initiated event. In this way, the RT Competition is not only a competition but also a space for residents to strengthen social bonds, preserve culture, and revitalize family values that have begun to fade due to the busyness of daily life.

THE VALUE OF GUYUB HARUKUN

Guyub rukun (community in harmony) are two distinct terms closely related in Javanese society. Etymologically, "guyub" means togetherness or unity, while "rukun" means living without conflict or striving to avoid disputes. These two terms are inseparable because harmony arises from

togetherness, and a society that lives in an atmosphere of "guyub rukun" (community in harmony) logically fosters a harmonious life. Implementing the values of "guyub rukun" in daily life has a positive impact on creating a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere within society (Sudarsih & Widisuseno, 2021).

A harmonious life also confirms the view that humans' *area partners*, namely creatures that essentially live in society. In togetherness, each individual realizes that they need each other, so social relationships must be carried out with mutual respect. This attitude fosters a sense of comfort and trust within social groups. When the values of togetherness and harmony are established, society will more easily achieve common goals because the foundation of togetherness becomes a bond that strengthens solidarity (Ariyanto et al., 2024). In the implementation of the RT cultured competition, the value of togetherness becomes the main spirit that drives solidarity among residents. The spirit of togetherness and harmony encourages each individual to be actively involved, both in preparing equipment, developing competition strategies, and enthusiastically supporting their group. This participation not only strengthens community cohesion but also fosters a sense of ownership in the activities carried out together. Through togetherness, the RT cultured competition transforms into a momentum that is not just a competition, but a forum for strengthening social bonds and a means of preserving cultural values passed down from generation to generation. Thus, the success of an RT competition is not only measured by winning, but also by how community solidarity is built and brings benefits to community life in a sustainable manner.

VALUES OF TOGETHERNESS

Togetherness in a community creates a calm and conducive atmosphere for various activities, while hostility actually hinders and can even stop all social activities. The primary value of togetherness is fostering a sense of family amidst differences in elements and backgrounds, thus creating a harmonious coexistence. This value is essentially simple: it is realized through interaction, sharing, and synergy. Intense interaction strengthens communication between residents, fosters mutual respect, and builds a comfortable and safe community. Meanwhile, the practice of sharing fosters awareness of mutual need and shared destiny, which ultimately gives rise to cohesiveness as a vital social capital in maintaining community harmony (Afryanto, 2013). The solidarity that grows from this togetherness is key to the success of every activity, including the RT cultural competition. Resident participation, driven by a sense of family and shared concern, ensures smooth preparation and implementation of the competition. Each individual feels a role and responsibility, allowing collective energy to be directed toward achieving shared goals. Furthermore, this solidarity not only strengthens technical coordination but also reinforces the competition's role as a platform for strengthening social bonds and preserving inherited cultural values. Thus, the cultural neighborhood association competition not only produces winners but also fosters collective pride and happiness, strengthening community harmony.

CHALLENGES IN THE MODERN ERA IN CULTURAL PRESERVATION

The challenges of cultural preservation in the modern era are complex, influenced by globalization, social change, and the dynamics of people's lifestyles. Globalization has driven the influx of foreign popular culture, often more appealing to younger generations than local heritage,

while social change and technological advancements have shifted traditional interaction patterns to digital ones. This situation makes cultural preservation not merely about maintaining the outward form of tradition, but also requires adapting cultural values to remain relevant and able to coexist with the times without losing their original identity.

GLOBALIZATION

Globalization does not always have a positive impact on people's lives. The changes it brings often impact local lifestyles, particularly with the influx of modern gadgets and technology, which have now become part of everyday consumption (Fahma & Safitri, 2024). *smartphone*, laptops and tablets, *PC* Not only does it change people's mindsets, but it also slowly causes the younger generation to abandon local wisdom and traditional culture. Highly engaging online gaming applications cause children to become dependent, drastically reducing their social interactions. Children spend more time in front of screens, which has the potential to harm mental and intellectual development. This condition ultimately encourages the emergence of individualism, decreased social sensitivity, and even egocentric attitudes that make them prefer solitude to collective physical activity.

This phenomenon demonstrates that globalization not only brings technological challenges but also has a negative impact on the quality of social interactions in society. To address this, one step that can be taken is to reintroduce traditional games as a healthy and educational alternative. Games such as stilts, gobak sodor, and fortifications not only reduce children's dependence on gadgets but also play a role in fostering moral, social, and emotional values. Furthermore, traditional games train motor skills, foster teamwork, and hone creativity and dexterity, all of which are important in shaping children's character (Pratiwi & Bachri, 2023). Therefore, reviving traditional games can be a relevant strategy for maintaining a balance between technological advancement and preserving local cultural values. Efforts to reintroduce traditional games will be more effective if supported by collective community participation. Through activities such as the RT (Neighborhood Association) cultural competition, residents have a space to collectively revive local values that are starting to be forgotten. These competitions serve not only as entertainment but also as a learning platform that instills a sense of togetherness, sportsmanship, and mutual cooperation. The community's solidarity was reflected in their enthusiasm in preparing equipment, training children, and encouraging participants. The interactions fostered during the activity demonstrated that the culture of mutual cooperation remains a key force in strengthening social ties. With the active involvement of all levels of society, the Cultural Neighborhood Competition is clear evidence that community solidarity can act as a bulwark and bridge to maintain cultural identity amidst the tide of globalization.

CULTURAL SHIFT

According to Handhayani & Dewi (2020), cultural shift is a dynamic process involving various stages and mechanisms. This shift occurs not only through how people learn their own culture, such as internalizing values and norms, socializing social roles, and cultural enculturation from generation to generation, but also through interactions with other cultures. Furthermore, cultural evolution over time drives changes in societal habits, followed by the diffusion or spread of cultural elements due to population movement. Intercultural encounters can also give rise to acculturation, the acceptance of new elements without losing the original culture, or assimilation, the absorption of new

cultures until the old ones fade away. Equally important, innovation and new discoveries, both in the form of discovery and invention, are the main drivers that introduce new elements into people's lives, thus accelerating cultural change.

This cultural shift can be clearly observed in the play habits of today's children. According to the informant's observations, traditional games such as marbles, catfish patil, spinning tops, and jumpritan, which were once popular, are now being abandoned. During the informant's childhood, these traditional games were daily activities because gadgets were not yet dominant. However, technological developments have brought significant changes. Children often choose to play games on their mobile phones rather than playing outside. This phenomenon demonstrates how the mechanisms of cultural shift, particularly technological innovation and interaction with global culture, have a direct impact on shifting children's play patterns, while also demonstrating a shift in values from togetherness to individualism.

The shift in children's play patterns, from emphasizing togetherness to individual activities, demands a new space for re-invigorating social interaction. The Cultural Neighborhood Competition (RTC) is a strategic tool that addresses this need, as it engages all levels of the community in a collective activity. Children, teenagers, and even adults actively participate, both as participants and supporters. Community solidarity is demonstrated through mutual assistance, cooperation, and a willingness to help each other to ensure the competition's success. This empowers the community not only to reinvigorate the values of togetherness that have been eroded by cultural change, but also to create an alternative space that strengthens local cultural identity. Thus, the Cultural Neighborhood Competition is not merely a ceremonial event, but a tangible manifestation of community concern for preserving cultural heritage and strengthening social ties between generations.

DECREASE IN OPEN LAND

As mentioned previously, children today rarely play traditional games. This is not solely due to the development of gadgets, but also due to the decreasing availability of open spaces for play. Research conducted by Syeren Syanuna and Rini Darmawati highlighted this problem, particularly in Kertijayan Village, Pekalongan, where dense settlements have reduced the quality and function of children's playgrounds. Many previously designated playgrounds have been cleared and converted into buildings. This situation has caused children to lose interest in playing in the fields, and they ultimately choose residential roads as an alternative, which can be dangerous due to vehicle traffic. A similar situation is also seen in densely populated urban areas, where closely packed houses leave no open space. For example, the once-popular spinning top game is now difficult to play because the narrow yards risk breaking windows or even endangering children.

These issues underscore the importance of open spaces as a means for children to develop, socialize, and channel their energy through healthy physical activity. As play spaces shrink, children's access to traditional games becomes limited, making it increasingly difficult to avoid dependence on gadgets. Therefore, greater attention is needed from both the community and the government in providing, managing, and optimizing safe and comfortable play spaces. Providing adequate spaces not only reduces the risk of children playing in dangerous areas but also serves as a strategic step in preserving traditional games, strengthening social interaction, and maintaining the physical and mental health of the younger generation.

INDUSTRIAL CHANGE

The previous point mentioned the limited availability of children's play areas, and one of the factors contributing significantly is industrial change. The conversion of rice fields or open fields into factories and industrial buildings further reduces open spaces available to the community. This phenomenon is not simply a result of population growth, which increases the need for land (Sari & Yuliani, 2021), but is also influenced by the declining community contribution to preserving local culture as the primary focus shifts to meeting economic needs. This situation gradually shifts community priorities, from preserving cultural sustainability and providing children's play spaces to simply meeting the demands of daily life. This condition can be more clearly seen through a historical study of industrial development on the island of Java. According to Dita Ayu Rani Natalia's research, the booming sugar industry in the early 18th century following the Dutch policy of forced sugarcane cultivation led to the establishment of numerous sugar mills, which utilized sugarcane fields, rivers, and strategic road access. Although many sugar mills subsequently closed due to the financial crisis and reduced sugarcane supply, the buildings were not immediately returned to open spaces. Instead, as was the case with the Colomadu Sugar Factory, the buildings were converted into museums, cafes, and tourist attractions. This revitalization does provide economic and historical value, but it also demonstrates a pattern of how old industrial spaces are being directed more towards commercial needs than providing public space. Thus, it becomes increasingly clear that industrialization, both past and present, has contributed to the shrinking of open spaces that should be used by children for play and the community for socializing (Natalia, 2023).

The limited open space has actually spurred residents to find creative ways to maintain social ties while preserving cultural values. The Cultural Neighborhood Competition (RTB) presents a platform that can revitalize the spirit of togetherness amidst the physical limitations of the environment. Through this activity, residents not only demonstrate cooperation in preparing for the competition but also strive to provide alternative spaces for children to play, learn, and explore local culture. Thus, the competition is not merely a competition but also a momentum to strengthen solidarity, foster a sense of shared ownership, and maintain the sustainability of cultural values amidst the tide of modernization.

4. THE KNOT

Research on the Challenges of Maintaining Local Culture in the Global Era through a case study of the RT Berbudaya Competition in RT 4 Cemandi Village, Sedati District, Sidoarjo Regency, shows that this activity plays a significant role in strengthening social solidarity while preserving local cultural values. Through the perspective of structural functional theory, it is proven that every element of society (RT head, residents, arts groups, PKK, and social organizations) carries out their roles optimally, thus creating togetherness, mutual cooperation, and a sense of family. This competition is not only a competition but also a means of social bonding, cultural inheritance, and strengthening local identity amidst the currents of globalization and social change. Noble values such as mutual cooperation, harmonious relationship, and togetherness have proven to be the main pillars of the competition's success, because they trigger active participation, collective awareness, and a sense of belonging among residents. This activity is able to address the challenges of the modern era in the

form of globalization, cultural shifts, reduced open land, and industrialization, by providing an alternative space for social interaction and a forum for preserving local culture.

However, this study is limited by its coverage area, focusing only on RT 4 in Cemandi Village. Therefore, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other areas with different socio-cultural conditions. Furthermore, the data obtained is limited to interviews with RT heads and representatives from the Regional Leadership Council (DPMD), so it does not fully represent the voices of all levels of society. For further research, it is recommended that comparative studies be conducted in several other villages or regions to obtain a broader picture of the effectiveness of culture-based competitions in maintaining solidarity and local identity. Future research can also deepen aspects of local government policy and the role of the younger generation in facing the challenges of globalization. This way, efforts to preserve local culture can be more measurable, relevant, and sustainable.

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