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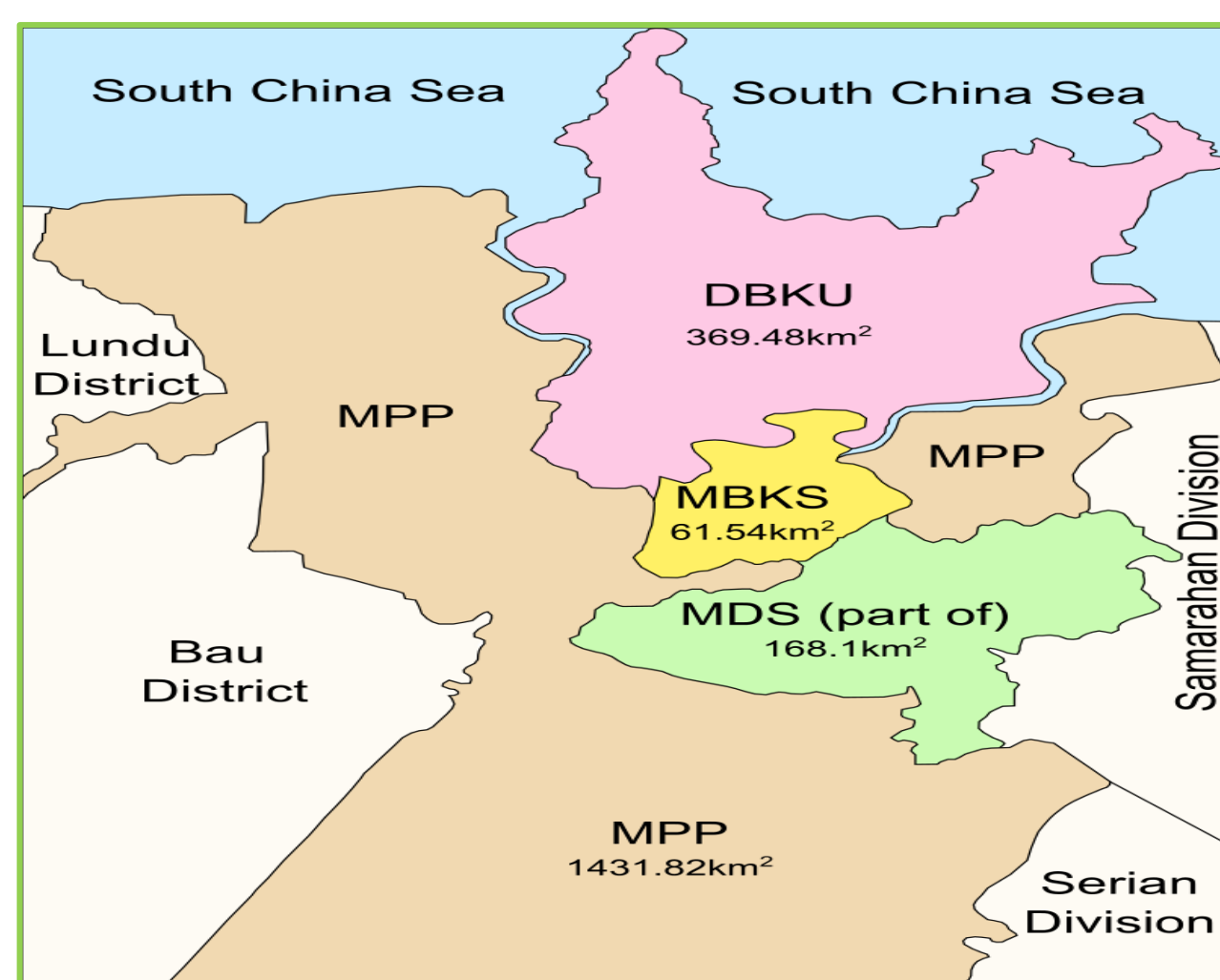
INTRODUCTION

The global population of older adults is projected to increase substantially by 2050. This increase can be attributed to declining fertility rates, improved medical care, and technological advancements. There will be consequential effects on the experiences, health, and support systems of older adults [1]. Given its status as the largest state in Malaysia, Sarawak presents a significant demographic profile that warrants a thorough comprehension of its elderly population's attributes. Social networks influence older individuals' lives, affecting their well-being, physical and mental health, and holistic quality of life [2]. Social network analysis [3] identified influential individuals in elderly social networks and comprehended the exchange dynamic of information, resources, and support [2]. Analysing influential individuals in networks yields valuable insights for developing interventions, policies, and programmes that prioritise social connectedness, bolster support systems, and improve holistic well-being.

STUDY AIM

The aim of the study is to identify the most influential group of people among elderly in urban area of Sarawak.

STUDY AREA



Kuching is the state capital of Sarawak and is the largest city on the island of Borneo. Kuching city is divided into 2 areas:

- Kuching North City
- Kuching South City

DATA COLLECTION

This cross-sectional survey analysed 32 elderly individuals residing in Kuching North City, Sarawak.

The inclusion criteria comprised

- participants' willingness to participate
- minimum age of 60 years
- residency of at least one year in the study area
- ability to answer survey questions
- non-existence of cognitive or depressive disorders

DISCUSSION

- Relatives exhibited high interconnectivity levels and served as intermediaries among diverse groups.
- The spouses' central location indicates their proximity to other network members.
- Neighbours offered social support and assistance, whereas friends possessed access to influential individuals.

CONCLUSION

- The sociogram analysis indicated that the elderly's social networks were varied, with family members (relatives) exerting the most significant influence.
- The study underscored the significance of family members, specifically relatives and spouses, in elderly individuals' social networks.
- Friends' and neighbours' contribution was comparatively minor.
- Augmenting these relationships may ameliorate the elderly individuals' social support, well-being, and holistic quality of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strategies for enhancing well-being encompass
 - Intergenerational co-living spaces
 - technology training and adoption: facilitating social interactions
 - strengthening marital relationships
 - community networking events : promoting community engagement
 - fostering interprofessional collaboration
- Health and well-being programmes should integrate social networks, intergenerational activities, community-based support systems, technology integration, and age-friendly policies.

METHODS

An egocentric network was constructed between the elderly (n=32) and their close networks (e.g. spouse, relatives, friends and neighbours; n=131) which reported in the social network questionnaire.

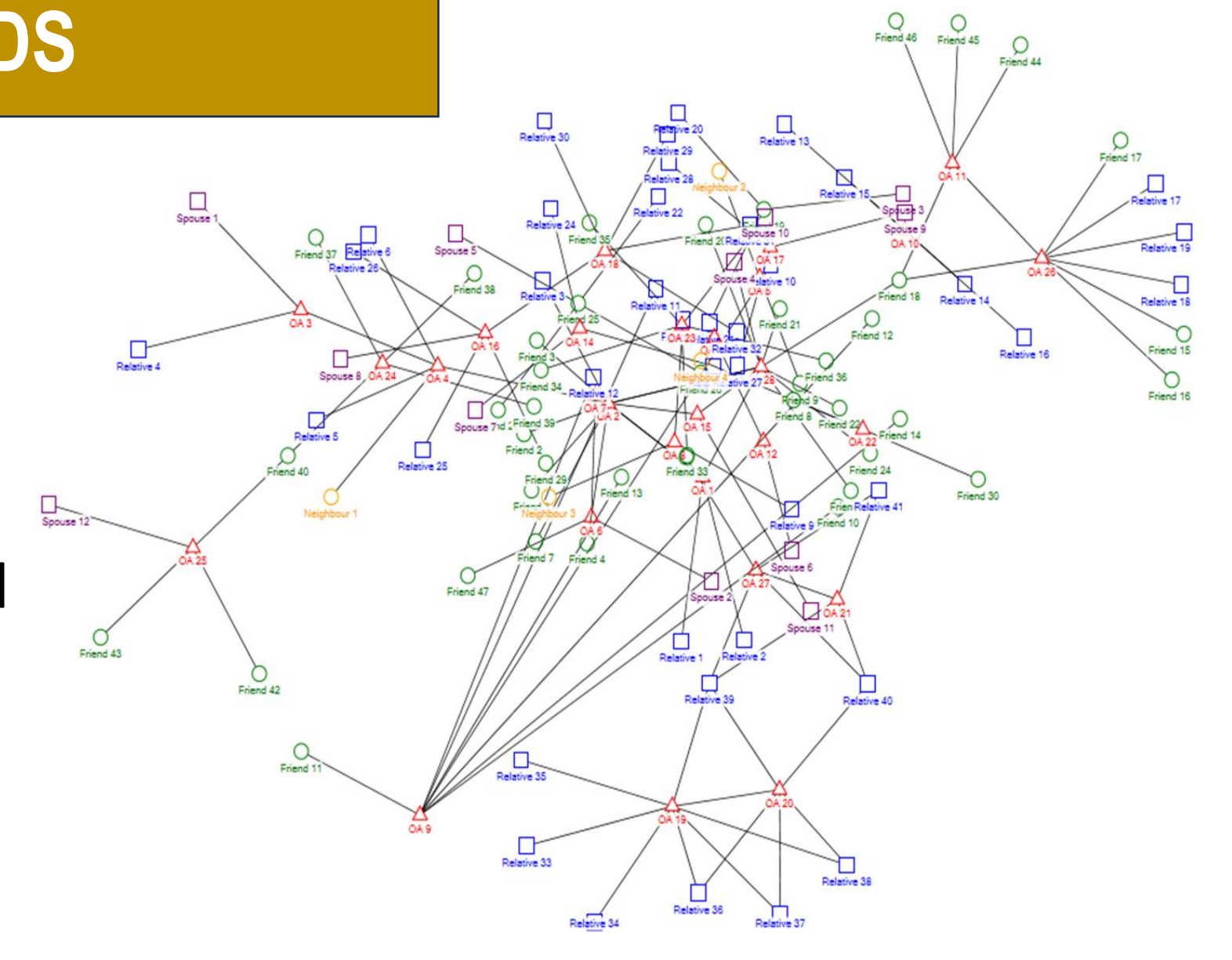


Figure 1. Sociogram of general network among elderly in Kuching North City, Sarawak

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive analyses were conducted employing IBM SPSS 27.0, and social network analysis was facilitated by NodeXL Pro software.

RESULTS

Table 1. Sociodemographic

| Variable | Categories | n (%) | Mean |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| Age | | | 67.16 (7.318) |
| Gender | Male | 11(34.4) | |
| | Female | 21(65.6) | |
| Ethnic | Malay | 29(90.6) | |
| | Chinese | 0(0) | |
| | Iban | 0(0) | |
| | Bidayuh | 1(6.3) | |
| | Others | 2(9.4) | |
| Education | None | 2(6.3) | |
| | Primary | 12(37.5) | |
| | Secondary | 12(37.5) | |
| | Tertiary | 6(18.8) | |
| Arrangement of living | Own's house | 28(87.5) | |
| | Child's house | 4(12.5) | |
| | Rental house | 0(0) | |
| | Others | 0(0) | |

Figure 2. Sociogram of elderly social network based on roles

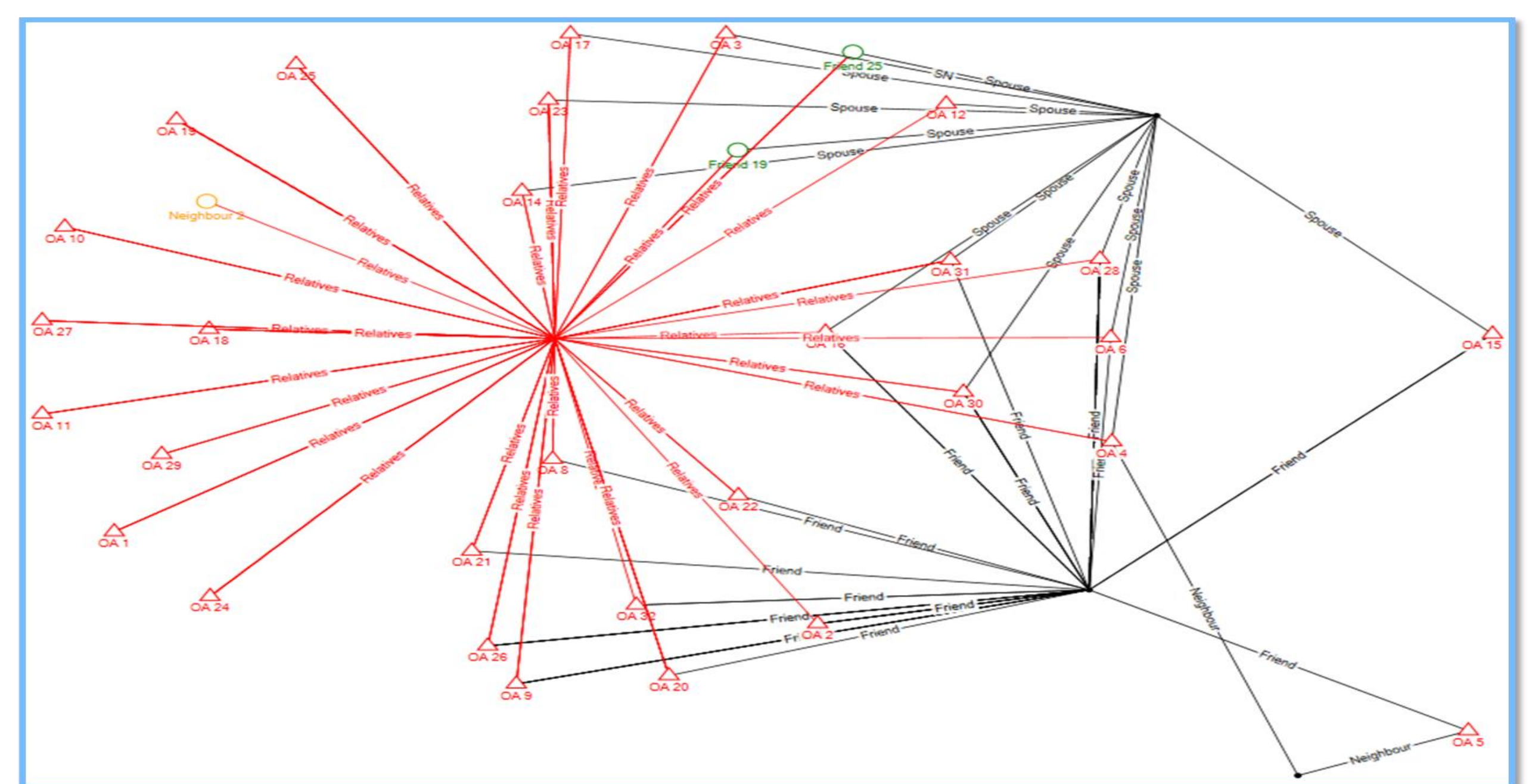


Table 2. Centrality measurement based on four roles

| Roles | Degree | Betweenness Centrality | Closeness Centrality | Eigenvector Centrality | PageRank |
|-----------|--------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Relatives | 31 | 465.080 | 0.837 | 0.232 | 0.092 |
| Friends | 14 | 63.844 | 0.468 | 0.122 | 0.045 |
| Spouse | 15 | 93.431 | 0.480 | 0.126 | 0.047 |
| Neighbour | 2 | 2.645 | 0.356 | 0.011 | 0.026 |

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