

## Ethical Standards and Accountability of Election Organizers in Handling Code of Ethics Violations in Makassar City

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### ABSTRACT

The election organizing organization is one of the objects of public administration studies with problems related to ethics and accountability. If the ethical discourse in organizations revolves around the relationship between individuals, values, and the environment, then leadership can be seen as distilling those factors in an individual. One of the district/city-level election organizers, namely the Makassar City KPU, has a significant number of cases of ethical violations by ad hoc bodies. This violation indeed cannot be separated from the leadership of the Makassar City KPU in handling it. This research uses qualitative methods with a case study design. Data collection techniques are carried out by in-depth interviews and document studies. Data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results showed that the Makassar City KPU is still partial in showing the characteristics of ethical leadership by Trevino et al. (2003) in the aspects of setting ethical standards and accountability. This is because the Makassar City KPU generally has moral standards and rules for handling ethical violations contained in PKPU No. 8 of 2022. However, the Makassar City KPU still needs to comply with these rules. This is shown from several cases of ethical violations, where the Makassar City KPU was again reported to the DKPP based on procedural non-compliance with KPU Decree No. 337/HK.06.2-Kpt/01/KPU/VII/2020, which contains related to handling violations of the Code of ethics by ad hoc bodies. In addition, implementing ethical standards and managing ethical violations must also be based on local culture, namely siri' culture in the people of Makassar. However, this has not been practiced well by the Makassar City KPU, so it is prone to causing miscommunication and offense between parties.

### Introduction

Public organizations have a complexity of problems. This makes it essential to apply the principles of openness and accountability. In a democratic country like Indonesia, public organizations are required to be accountable for all actions they have taken. (Wicaksono, 2015). The election organizing organization is one of the objects of public administration studies that has a complexity of problems and has its uniqueness. This is because the organizing organization model has its characteristics, its code of ethics highlighted by the public, and its violation resolution mechanism.

With the complexity of these issues and regulations, Election organizers make it essential to apply professional organizational ethics. With various primary duties and functions, as well as interaction with political activities, it must have clear rules and boundaries through existing codes of ethics. According to Lawton and Macaulay (2009), the organization has formal and informal regulations that limit individual actions. Some of these rules will demand ethical behavior and others will be neutral in terms of ethics. At the same time, public service organizations, in particular, are expected to respond to the interests of citizens, clients, and customers, and part of this expectation will have to do with the standards of conduct of elected and appointed officials.

If the ethical discourse in organizations revolves around the relationship between individuals, values, and the environment, then leadership can be seen as distilling those factors in an individual. Truly ethical leadership consolidates legitimacy and credibility against the organization's goals and vision, creates trust, and develops personal relationships (Mendonca, 2001).

Trevino et al. (2003) define ethical leadership through two stages. First, the person carries out normative and interpersonal behavior; the second exemplifies and campaigns for such behavior to its members. By way of decision-making, encouraging, and two-way communication. Leadership ethics can distinguish effective and ineffective leadership. (Ciulla, 1995).

Trevino et al. (2003) categorize ethical leaders into two morals: personal and manager. The leader's actions are based on ethical principles, are ethical leaders (Trevino et al., 2003). Ethical leaders demonstrate consistency between words and behavior, integrity, fairness, and helping others, creating trust among followers. Then, they also identify seven characteristics of ethical leadership: Setting ethical standards and accountability. This characteristic refers to how ethical leaders implement applicable ethical standards, including handling violations of the Code of ethics.

The ethics of election organizers are regulated in the Code of Ethics for Election Organizers based on the Regulation of the Honorary Board for Election Implementation (DKPP) Number 2 of 2017 concerning the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for Election Organizers is a unity of moral, ethical, and philosophical principles that become a code of conduct for Election Organizers in the form of obligations or prohibitions, actions and / or remarks that should or should not be done by an election organizer.

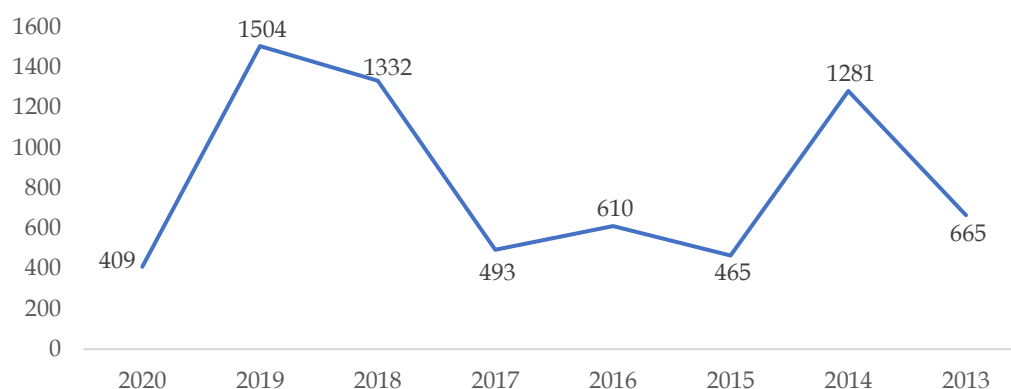
Ethics of election organizers can be categorized as ethical rules that are the result of the findings of judges, in this case, DKPP commissioners who prosecute cases of violations of election organizer ethics (Prasetyo, 2019). Arrangements related to the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for election administrators are an effort to purify values for election administration institutions. Material ethics in enforcing the Code of Ethics for election organizers can not only be described or implemented from the aspect of DKPP Regulations regarding the Code of Ethics for election organizers but also the principles of conducting elections regulated in the Election Law can be used as material ethical aspects in enforcing the Code of ethics.

Enforcement of the Election Organizer Code of Ethics is primarily the authority and responsibility of the DKPP. However, along with its development, to create effective and efficient enforcement of the Code of Ethics, there are also some authorities to enforce the Code of Ethics owned by the KPU and Bawaslu ranks. Enforcement of the Code of Ethics owned by the KPU is the enforcement of the Code of ethics that is internal to the ranks of the KPU.

Referring to PKPU No. 8 of 2022, the KPU can internally clarify the alleged violations of work procedures and codes of ethics committed by the KPU ranks and provide sanctions if found guilty. The KPU can also forward the case to the DKPP, primarily if allegations of gross violations of the Code of ethics exist. Through this authority, the District/City KPU is also authorized to conduct investigations on alleged violations of the Code of Ethics committed by ad hoc ranks such as PPK, PPS, and KPPS.

The number of complaints of ethical violations in Indonesia is relatively high. This can be seen from the following data:

**Graphs 1.** Number of Complainants of Ethical Violations from 2012-2020

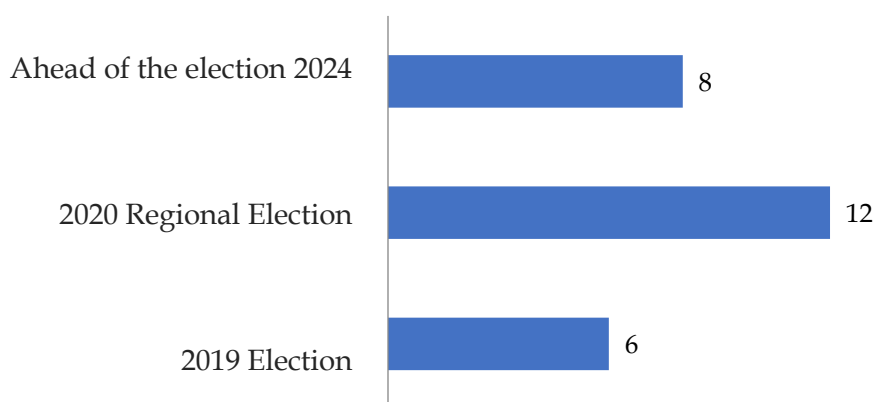


Source: DKPP-RI data on Lapkin DKPP in 2020, processed by author.

This data shows an increase in election organizers complaining of ethical violations. This is undoubtedly a challenge in solving the problem.

One level of election organizer with a high complexity of problems and is in the spotlight is the Makassar city election organizer. Regarding violations of the Code of Ethics, violations continue to occur in the holding of General Elections in Makassar City and remain relatively high. This can be seen in the chart below:

**Graphs 2.** Number of Violations of the Election Code of Conduct by Election Organizers in Makassar City in the 2019 Elections, 2020 Regional Elections, and Ahead of the 2024 Elections



*Source: KPU data for South Sulawesi Province, processed by the author (2023)*

Based on the graph above, the number of violations of the election code of conduct committed by organizers continues to occur. In 2019, as many as 12 ad hoc organizers were caught in cases of ethical violations. 2 of them are heads of PPK Districts, OP/KPU, and KDP members in several sub-districts/villages, including Panakkukang, Bolang Raya, Untia, Jongaya, Biringkanaya and Karampuang.

As for 2020, there was a decrease in the number of violations of the Code of Ethics by election organizers, namely, six people. The violator was Asriadi, a member of PPS Malimongan Tua, who was sanctioned with permanent dismissal. Then Syamsuddin Dali, a member of PPS Tammua, Gustamin a member of PPS Malimongan Baru, Radiatusa Chairman of PPK Ujung Pandang; Handayani Hasan, Chairman of PPK Mariso, and Dedy Miswar, Chairman of PPK Panakkukang who all violated the Code of ethics/Code of conduct and were given rehabilitation sanctions and provided recommendations.

In the implementation of the 2024 election stage, there have been 8 cases of violations of the Code of ethics. PPK and PPS do this within the scope of Tamalate Sub-district consisting of the Head of PPS Tanjung Merdeka Village, Chairman of PPS Ballang Baru Village, Chairman and Member of PPS Bongaya Village, PPS Member of Tambung Village, PPS Member of Maccini Sombala Village, Chairman of PPS Parang Tambung Village and Head of PPS Pa'baeng-baeng Village.

This ethical violation cannot be separated from the leadership in Makassar city KPU. The KPU Commissioner is responsible for consolidating legitimacy and credibility towards the goals and vision of the organization, creating trust, and developing personal relationships with election organizers. Therefore, it is important to know how the ethical leadership of the Makassar City KPU is in handling violations of the code of ethics in Makassar City.

## Literature Review

### *Public Organization*

Organization is an essential thing in human survival. So, according to Bryner, people tend to organize themselves in trying to harmonize personal and common affairs. According to Bryner in Wicaksono W.K (2015), public organization members must comply with laws that generally regulate administration and policies, specifically those that regulate matters being implemented in the organization. Thus, public organizations can be interpreted in policy and accountability.

### *Organizational Ethics*

Organizational ethics is a set of values that identify an organization from within (or, in other words, how those who work in that organization understand it) and from its point of view without perception of the organization by those who deal with it. (Lozano, 2003).

Organizational ethics consists of top management support for ethical behavior, the ethical climate in the organization, and the association between ethical behavior and career success. Regarding top management, support for ethical behavior is a condition in which members receive and execute orders from top management, even if they are contrary to the provisions considered correct by the members. The ethical climate in the organization is the moral climate that prevails in the organization, so it affects the ethical perception of the members. As for the association between ethical behavior and career success, there is consistency between the ethical values of the individuals in it and the established organizational ethics. (Chye Koh & Boo, 2004).

### *Ethical Leadership*

Ethical leadership results from actions in accordance with the norms between individuals or subordinates by considering balanced and actual decisions. An ethical leader has characteristics including people orientation, visible ethical actions and traits, doing the right thing, open communicators and receptive listeners, setting ethical standards and accountability, broad ethical awareness, and decision-making processes. (Trevino et al., 2003).

### *Election Organizing Organization*

Article 1 Paragraph (7) of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections reads:

*“Election Organizer is an institution that organizes elections consisting of the General Election Commission, the Election Supervisory Board, and the Honorary Board of Election Organizers as a unit of election implementation functions to elect members of the People's Representative Council, members of the Regional Representative Council, President, and Vice President, and to elect members of the Regional Ralryat Representative Council directly by the people.”*

Based on this regulation, it is known that the election organizing organization consists of three, namely the General Elections Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu), and the Election Organizing Honor Board (DKPP).

In carrying out the task of conducting elections, the KPU is assisted by an ad hoc body that is temporary. This body consists of the District Election Committee (PPK), the Voting Committee (PPS), and the Voting Organizing Group (KPPS).

### *Violation of Election Ethics*

The Code of Ethics for election organizers contains various rules, such as Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, DKPP Regulation No. 2 of 2019, and KPU Regulation No. 13 of 2012 concerning the Code of Ethics for General Election Organizers. Election Organizers who do not obey and implement the rules related to the Code of Ethics will be followed up following the rules for handling violations of the Code of Ethics contained in the General Election Commission (KPU) Decree Number 337/HK.06.2-Kpt/01/KPU/VII/2020 concerning Technical Guidelines for Handling Violations of the Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Oaths/Promises, and/or Integrity Pacts of Members of the District Election Committee, Voting Committee, and the Voting Organizing Group.

### **Research Methods**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research design. The data collection technique was carried out by in-depth interviews with the Chairman of the Makassar City KPU, the KPU Commissioner for Legal Affairs, the Head of the Makassar City KPU Secretariat, the Makassar City Bawaslu, the Chairmen/Members of the KDP and PPS, PPK/PPS pitted, Political Parties and NGO representatives from JPPR South Sulawesi. In addition to interviews as primary data, this study also uses secondary data from various documents published by institutions/agencies and journals relevant to the research focus. The data that has been collected is then analyzed based on the model of Miles & Huberman (2014), which consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.

The main focus of this research is the ethical leadership of the Makassar City KPU in handling violations of the Code of Ethics by looking at its characteristics based on the approach Trevino et al. (2003), which posits seven ethical characteristics. Of the seven characteristics, this study focuses on the characteristics of setting ethical standards and accountability.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### *Ethical Standards and Accountability of Election Organizers in Handling Code of Ethics Violations in Makassar City*

Ethical standards and accountability is one of the characteristics of ethical leadership that can be seen in the leadership process in various public organizations, including the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Makassar

City. This standard is not only sourced from applicable laws and regulations, but also the values of the Bugis-Makassar community (siri'). In reality, the ethical standards set to regulate election organizers' behavior are also violated by many organizers. Thus, the attitude of the Makassar City KPU leadership in handling violations of the Code of ethics is also a reflection of his leadership characteristics.

To see further the analysis of ethical standards and accountability at the Makassar City KPU, it can be explained in the description below:

#### *Ethical Standards for Election Organizers*

Various rules regulate the ethics of election organizers. The rules continue to evolve along with the complexity of issues related to election administration and adjustments to current conditions. That occurs in the process of holding elections associated with the organizer of elections. Changes that often happen related to the rules regarding the Code of Conduct for election organizers have the potential to cause confusion and lack of understanding of these rules by election organizers, including the KPU and ad hoc organizers. This was also confirmed by informant N, Chairman of the Makassar City Bawaslu in 2020:

*"The new rules on the code of ethics make us, including the KPU, have to continue to strive to provide understanding regarding the code of ethics to the organizers because there may be updates that are poorly understood and make mistakes." (10/10/2023)*

Based on the interview results above, the rules related to the Code of ethics that continue to develop and change need to be clarified for election organizers. This can affect the organizers' understanding of the current Code of conduct rules. For this reason, the Makassar City KPU has made various efforts to provide election organizers with a sense of the current ethical standards.

In general, the Code of ethics for election organizers is regulated in DKPP Regulation No. 2 of 2017 concerning the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for General Election Organizers and KPU Regulation No. 8 of 2022 concerning the Establishment and Work Procedures of Ad hoc Election Organizing Bodies. This is in line with the results of an interview with the Makassar City KPU Commissioner:

*"We refer to DKPP No. 2 of 2017 and PKPU No. 8 of 2020. This rule is already the latest, but the challenge is that many organizers still need to understand this rule. But we always try to socialize and so on." (3/10/2023)*

From the interview results above, it is known that the rules that generally must be understood by election organizers are DKPP No. 2 of 2018 and PKPU No. 8 of 2022. This rule generally applies to all election organizers. However, the challenge is the election organizer's understanding of the rules.

The understanding of election organizers, especially ad hoc bodies as technical organizers who assist the KPU in organizing elections, is the responsibility of the Makassar City KPU. The growing rules are one of the factors causing the need for more understanding of election organizers regarding applicable ethical standards. This is a challenge for the Makassar City KPU in increasing knowledge of the Code

of ethics to election organizers. The Makassar City KPU Commissioner also confirmed this:

*“Rules are evolving and numerous, so we are always making efforts to ensure election organizers are familiar with the rules of the code of conduct.” (17/10/2023)*

The results of the interview showed that there were efforts made by the Makassar City KPU to improve the understanding of election organizers, especially ad hoc. This is done with activities such as socialization, technical guidance, and periodic delivery through regular meetings between the Makassar City KPU and ad hoc organizers.

In addition to the changing and evolving rules, other factors cause the need for more understanding of election organizers regarding the Code of ethics. This was also conveyed by informant N, as an NGO:

*“The recruitment process of ad hoc bodies is not qualified, so there is still a lack of understanding of the Code of ethics. Recruitment with this quality is also accompanied by a need for better assistance to increase knowledge related to the Code of ethics.” (1/11/2023)*

The above shows that efforts to increase understanding of the Code of ethics carried out by the Makassar City KPU need to be optimized. Apart from the efforts made during the implementation of the election stages, the Makassar City KPU also needs to improve the quality of the recruitment process. Thus, the selected ad hoc organizers already have qualities under the qualifications, especially regarding understanding related to the Code of ethics for election organizers.

#### *Handling Code of Conduct Violations in Makassar City*

Handling violations of the Code of ethics becomes a process of accountability for election organizers suspected and proven to have committed violations. The handling of alleged violations of the current election organizer's Code of ethics, especially ad hoc organizers, is technically guided by KPU Decree No. 337/HK.06-2-Kpt/01/KPU/VII/2020 concerning Handling Violations of the Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Oath/Promise, and/or Integrity Pact of Members of the District Election Committee, Voting Committee, and Voting Organizing Group.

In KPT 337/HK.06-2-Kpt/01/KPU/VII/2020, it is explained that the handling of alleged violations of ethics is followed up if it is found in the internal examination process or there is a report to Bawaslu or the Makassar City KPU. The follow-up process begins by calling the relevant parties to clarify and verify, and during the implementation period, the alleged organizer is temporarily dismissed from his duties. In this process, an examination team from the KPU is also formed, and if it meets certain elements, it will be continued at ethics sessions and plenary meetings for decision making and sanctions against organizers who commit ethical violations.

In implementing the 2019 Elections, the 2020 Regional Elections, and the 2023 Election stages, several violations of the Code of Ethics have occurred. In the 2020 Makassar Mayor Election, there were allegations of ethical violations committed by



PPS member Mariso. However, in the process, the Makassar City KPU and the head of the KDP Kec. Mariso was reported back because they were considered unprofessional and not neutral in the recruitment process, causing the suspect to be followed up in an ethics hearing. The Makassar City KPU received a stern warning from the DKPP in the report.

In addition to the 2020 regional elections, the Makassar City KPU could not implement rules related to handling alleged ethical violations. This is because the Makassar City KPU was again reported to the DKPP this year regarding non-compliance with KPT 337. The Makassar City KPU needs a mechanism for handling alleged ethics violations under these rules. This is in line with the explanation of informant I, a member of PPS as the complainant:

*"We reported the Makassar City KPU to DKPP for not carrying out procedures for handling violations according to the rules. The Makassar City KPU only called us to clarify and verify through a zoom meeting. After that, there was no further notice, so we continued to carry out our duties as organizers until there was a letter that we were dismissed as organizers without going through the trial stage." (6/11/2023)*

From the statement above, it is known that the handling of customer allegations is only carried out at the stage of calling for clarification and verification via online. However, the handling process only reaches that stage until the issuance of a termination letter.

Of course, handling alleged violations of the Code of Ethics must be in accordance with KPU Decree No. 337/HK.06.2-Kpt/01/KPU/VII/2020 and be carried out in an orderly manner according to the specified stage. However, the handling process carried out by the Makassar City KPU shows that some processes/stages still need to be implemented. First, there is no temporary suspension of the suspected organizer. This must be done after verification, where the organizer finds violations. Second, the stage of the ethics hearing was also not carried out by the Makassar City KPU, which immediately issued the Makassar City KPU Decree No. 335 of 2023 regarding the dismissal of the PPS. This is considered unprocedural and non-terrorizing, based on the non-procedural handling, the dismissed ad hoc organizers reported the KPU to the DKPP. The PPK/PPS members' report was accepted and registered by DKPP with Case Number 108-PKE-DKPP/VIII/2023. This report was filed by 5 of the 8 ad hoc bodies dismissed by the KPU of Makassar City in cases of alleged ethical violations.

This is in line with a statement by informant E, a member of the Indonesian Solidarity Party who said:

*"From this case, of course, there needs to be improvements in the implementation of handling alleged ethical violations. So that the same case does not happen again." (17/10/2023)*

The explanation above reveals that the Makassar City KPU's ability to implement mechanisms for handling alleged violations of the Code of ethics still needs to be addressed.

The points of complaints from the five ad hoc organizers were further discussed in the Code of Conduct hearing conducted by DKPP. The trial results concluded that the Makassar City KPU was proven to have violated the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for Election Organizers. Thus, it was decided to impose warning sanctions on 4 KPU commissioners related to handling violations of the complained Code of ethics.

Several processes for handling violations of the Code of Ethics, where the Makassar City KPU was again reported to the DKPP, indicated the lack of commitment of the Makassar City KPU in the process of handling violations of the Code of ethics in accordance with KPT 337/HK.06.2-Kpt/01/KPU/VII/2020.

#### *Siri' Culture in Ethical Standards and Handling Ethical Violations of Election Organizers in Makassar City*

In the practice of implementing ethics and handling ethical violations, it should also reflect cultural values and local wisdom, such as Siri'. Generally, the ethical standards of election organizers in various regions refer to the same rules, which have indeed been adapted to Eastern culture. This is in line with what was explained by the Makassar City KPU Commissioner:

*"The rules made by the KPU are sourced and adapted to the culture and customs of Indonesian people in general and we always try to also practice siri' in the handling process. (3/11/2023)*

This information shows that the rules related to the Code of ethics do not contain cultural aspects. In the process, the Makassar City KPU strives to continue to pay attention to the practice of siri' culture in handling violations.

However, the reality is that this needs to be adequately practiced. This is in line with what was conveyed by informant I, PPS complainant:

*"... We were immediately dismissed without going through clear procedures and no evidence of our wrongdoing. This certainly offends us, who are also the organizers." (6/11/2023)*

The dismissal made by the Makassar City KPU of 8 ad hoc organizers was considered something that did not respect them. This happens because the dismissal/dismissal is not through the mechanism according to the rules, and there is no evidence of violations.

The ethical and accountability standards used by the Makassar City KPU are also still more dominant in the application based on the Code of Ethics regulated in DKPP and PKPU regulations. While in practice, ethical standards must also emphasize the region's cultural aspects, in this case, a culture that highly upholds siri' (self-respect). So, miscommunication and offense are prone to occur, especially in several instances of violations handled by the Makassar City KPU.

A dismissal that is carried out unprocedurally based on existing rules certainly shows the non-compliance of the Makassar City KPU with applicable regulations. In addition, this is not in accordance with the Siri' culture in Makassar society. This

can undoubtedly offend various parties, especially public opinion against the leadership of the Makassar City KPU.

Thus, the Makassar City KPU does not comply with standard rules related to handling violations of the Code of Conduct committed by ad hoc organizers based on PKPU No. 8 of 2022. In addition, wisdom/culture in Makassar City needs to be better practiced by the Makassar City KPU in handling violations of the Code of ethics.

## Conclusion

Ethical standards and handling violations of the Code of ethics for election organizers refer to the same rules, namely DKPP Regulation No. 2 of 2019, PKPU No. 8 of 2022, and KPT 337/HK.06-2-Kpt/01/KPU/VII/2020. However, in its implementation, the Makassar City KPU often shows non-compliance in handling ethical violations in accordance with applicable regulations. Non-compliance with the implementation of handling with the rules has the potential to cause offense and miscommunication, especially to the complainant. Thus, this indicates the need for better practices of Siri' culture in handling violations of the Code of Ethics for election organizers in Makassar City.

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