

The Implications of Money Politics on the Neutrality of General Election Votes as an Embodiment of Democracy in Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia is a democratic country where the supreme power of government is in the hands of the people. Therefore, the people also participate in general elections as a manifestation of democracy. This study aims to examine the implications of the impact of money politics on the neutrality of election votes. The research method used is normative juridical research used in legal science to analyze applicable legal regulations. This method focuses on research on legal texts and other legal documents, to identify and interpret current legal norms. This research aims to analyze the impact of money politics on vote neutrality in general elections as a reflection of a healthy democracy. The focus is on understanding how money politics affects voter behavior and evaluating the integrity of the democratic process. The main objective is to contribute to developing policy recommendations that can improve fairness and maintain neutrality in elections, strengthening the foundations of an equitable and transparent democracy. The study results indicate that money politics is a form of fraud committed to influence the vote. The conclusion of this study shows that money politics has significant implications for neutrality in general elections.

Keywords: democracy; general election; money politics

Abstrak

Indonesia merupakan negara demokrasi yang kekuasaan tertinggi pemerintahannya berada di tangan rakyat, maka dari itu rakyat juga turut ikut serta dalam pemilihan umum sebagai perwujudan demokrasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implikasi dampak politik uang terhadap netralitas suara pemilu. Metode penelitian yang digunakan yaitu penelitian yuridis normatif yang merupakan jenis penelitian yang digunakan dalam ilmu hukum untuk menganalisis peraturan-peraturan hukum yang berlaku. Metode ini fokus pada penelitian terhadap teks-teks hukum dan dokumen-dokumen hukum lainnya, dengan tujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menafsirkan norma-norma hukum yang berlaku saat ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dampak praktik politik uang terhadap netralitas suara dalam pemilihan umum sebagai cerminan dari demokrasi yang sehat. Fokusnya adalah untuk memahami bagaimana politik uang mempengaruhi perilaku pemilih dan evaluasi terhadap integritas proses demokrasi.

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Tujuan utama adalah memberikan kontribusi dalam menyusun rekomendasi kebijakan yang dapat meningkatkan keadilan dan menjaga netralitas suara dalam pemilihan umum, sehingga memperkuat fondasi demokrasi yang berkeadilan dan transparan. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukan bahwa politik uang merupakan bentuk kecurangan yang dilakukan untuk mempengaruhi perolehan suara. Kesimpulan dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa politik uang mempunyai implikasi yang signifikan terhadap netralitas dalam pemilihan umum.

Kata kunci: demokrasi, pemilihan umum, politik uang

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, a country based on the principle of popular sovereignty, places supreme power in the hands of its people. This is realized through democratic mechanisms such as free, fair, and transparent elections and the active participation of the public in decision-making processes relating to the public interest. This is regulated in Article 1, paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. As one of the countries that uses the principle of democracy, Indonesia states that a government is led by the people, from the people, and for the people.¹ Talking about democracy cannot be separated from its most fundamental element, namely the people. Democracy, in the context of the nation, is a system of government that prioritizes the people. This means that all policies implemented by the government come from the people, by the people, and for the benefit of the people.

In the context of democracy, citizens are positioned as both subjects and objects of system implementation. In many ways, all forms of political institutions implemented by democratic institutions and governments in countries that apply democratic ideology represent the people's aspirations.² The principles of democracy or popular sovereignty are upheld and practiced, guaranteeing community participation in the state decision-making process and ensuring that all laws applied and enforced reflect a sense of justice.³

¹ Marzellina Hardiyanti Et Al., "Urgensi Sistem E-Voting Dan Sirekap Dalam Penyelenggaraan Pemilu 2024," *Journal Equitable* 7, No. 2 (November 30, 2022): 249–71, <https://doi.org/10.37859/Jeq.V7i2.4257>.

² Fauzan Khairazi, "Implementasi Demokrasi Dan Hak Asasi Manusia Di Indonesia," *Inovatif* 8, no. 1 (2015): 72–94, <https://online-journal.unja.ac.id/jimih/article/view/2194>.

³ *Ibid.*

In a democratic country, political participation indicates the most legitimate exercise of state power sovereignty by the people. It is realized in the form of participation in the general election Party. Because policy decisions made and implemented by the government affect and impact the lives of citizens, citizens have the right to shape the content of policy decisions.⁴

As a democracy, elections are considered a means of electing representatives of the people who represent the interests of the people and fight for public welfare. Elections are held and planned simultaneously every five years, if necessary.⁵ In organizing general elections in Indonesia, the current system is that voters go to the polling stations directly (TPS) and vote in the traditional way or with ballots, then vote, thus providing fundamental voting rights. It has adopted the principles of organizing elections: direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair.⁶ Where the first is direct, meaning that the community as voters have the right to vote directly, without intermediaries, according to the wishes of their conscience. Second, general or universal means that, in principle, all citizens who meet the legal requirements have the right to participate in elections.

General elections guarantee full opportunities for all citizens without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, race, class, gender, regionality, occupation, or social status. Third, free means that all citizens with the right to vote can make their choices without pressure or coercion from anyone. All citizens are guaranteed security in exercising their right to vote according to their conscience and interests. Fourth, confidentiality means that in voting, voters have a guarantee that their choices will not be known by their party or in any way. Voters cast their votes without anyone else seeing them. Fifth, honest means that all election organizers, government officials, government participants,

4 Ruhadi Erisandi Arditama, Rafi Uddin, H., "Sosialisasi Tahapan Pemilu Serentak 2024 Dalam Meningkatkan Partisipasi Politik Bagi Pemilih Pemula Di Kecamatan Gunungpati Kota Semarang," *Jurnal Implementasi* 3, no. 2 (2023): 181–85, <https://jurnalilmiah.org/journal/index.php/ji/article/view/637>.

5 Andi Muhammad Safwan et al., "Analisis Hukum Asas Langsung, Umum, Bebas, Rahasia, Jujur, Adil Dalam Pemilihan Umum Serentak Tahun 2019," *Bhirawa Law Journal* 2, no. 2 (November 29, 2021): 136–44, <https://doi.org/10.26905/blj.v2i2.6825>.

6 Mhd Ansor Lubis, Muhammad Yasin Ali Gea, and Nur Muniifah, "Penerapan Asas Pemilu Terhadap Electronic Voting (E-Voting) Pada Pemilu Tahun 2024," *Jurnal Ilmiah Penegakan Hukum* 9, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 44–56, <https://doi.org/10.31289/jiph.v9i1.6491>.

election officials, election observers, voters, and all other parties must act and act with complete integrity in organizing elections by the law. Sixth, being fair means that when elections are held, all voters and voters receive the same treatment, and there is no fraud committed by any political party.

However, in practice, the elections have yet to be fully implemented in line with the electoral principles mentioned above, so the polls may lose the legitimacy of the voting methods. Money politics is an attempt by a candidate pair to influence the decision of voters or election organizers through goods or other rewards. From this understanding, money politics, often called money politics, is a form of bribery to influence election results.⁷ The trick is to give the public some money so they can vote. This is a deviation from democratic values. This is what damages the essence of democracy. However, some people take more rational action by taking advantage of this by continuing to accept money from parliamentary candidates while people do not vote for them in elections. They do not elect leaders based on transactional deals. Therefore, money politics is seen as a severe crime in politics and must be fought and eliminated together. Eradicating the practice of money politics itself requires the role of actual politicians who genuinely understand that the meaning of politics lies solely in the artistic task of managing a nation to create a common good for the benefit of its people.

Money politics in local elections hinders the possibility of producing good leaders. Because in the end, only those who have money and hold sovereignty and control will be elected. In the context of the economy, implementing democratic policies encourages corrupt practices that can hamper the economic growth of a country. Money politics can also fuel hatred and animosity among members of society. Moreover, even if their elections are successful, the local leaders who drive monetary policy are usually untrustworthy and corrupt officials.⁸ Holding fair elections is essential, as elections are

⁷ Daulat Nathanael Banjarnahor and Firinta Togatorop, "Pendidikan Anti Korupsi Dan Gerakan Anti Politik Uang Bagi Generasi Z Sebagai Pemilih Pemula Untuk Mewujudkan Pemilu Serentak Tahun 2024 Yang Berintegritas," *Nusantara Mengabdikan Kepada Negeri* 1, no. 1 (February 24, 2024): 09–16, <https://doi.org/10.62383/numeken.v1i1.71>.

⁸ M Eza Helyatha Begovic and Bayu Cuan, "Money Politik Pada Kepemiluan Di Indonesia," *Sol Justicia* 4, no. 2 (December 28, 2021): 105–22, <https://doi.org/10.54816/sj.v4i2.451>.

the most important instrument of democracy and a means of realizing the people's will. If elections are held fraudulently, then the true wishes of the people will not be realized.⁹

Previous research was conducted by Nisa Nabila, titled "The Effect of Money Politics in the Election of Legislative Members on the Sustainability of Democracy in Indonesia." The results of this study indicate that the factors that influence the occurrence of money politics are the electoral system, which is divided into a district system, namely an electoral system based on geographical unity, and a proportional system, namely a system in which the distribution of seats in the people's representative institutions is distributed to each political party according to the percentage of the number of votes obtained by each political party. The second type of factor is the institutional structure of the election, which consists of the General Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Board, a unitary function of organizing elections to elect DPRD members. The last factor is the community factor as participants and voters in the election. The occurrence of money politics cannot be separated from the community factor as the recipient of money and the community (election participants) as the giver of money. It is due to the political habits of the community, the economic condition, low political education, lack of understanding of the criminal provisions in the election, and not understanding the essence or purpose of holding elections.

Meanwhile, the difference from the research we discuss is that our study includes Government and Community Efforts in Handling Cases of Money Politic Practices. The government needs to strengthen strict and effective regulations related to campaign funding and impose strict sanctions for violators, as well as the impact of money politics on the neutrality of votes in general elections for the Indonesian people. By using normative juridical research methods, library research, and data from social media, this research aims to provide a fundamental understanding of the impact of money politics on the influence of vote acquisition and to maintain democratic integration in general elections in Indonesia.

⁹ Eric Salomon, Cees Passchier, and Daniel Koehn, "Asymmetric Continental Deformation during South Atlantic Rifting along Southern Brazil and Namibia," *Gondwana Research* 51 (November 2017): 170–76, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gr.2017.08.001>.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a type of normative juridical research. It refers to library research. Literature studies can examine various references and the results of similar previous studies, which help obtain a theoretical basis for the problems to be examined. Literature research collects data by understanding source documents and reports related to money politics.¹⁰ The case study method was chosen because this research focuses on the causes and solutions to overcome money politics as one of the controversies of a particular case or phenomenon that occurs in a place, namely, people's democracy in the context of elections in Indonesia. The sources of information used include journals and online media that discuss the causes and solutions to overcome money politics in the context of elections in Indonesia.¹¹ Furthermore, the analysis of causal factors, impacts, government and community efforts in handling cases of money politics practices in general elections in Indonesia, as community participation in exercising their rights in general elections as a form of democracy, it is necessary to maintain cleanliness in maintaining the neutrality of general election votes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. An Overview of Money Politics in Indonesia

This is evidenced in a 2019 survey by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), which found that people view the celebration of Democracy as a place to "share their wealth with the public." The survey found that 40% of respondents admitted to receiving money from voters but did not consider voting for them 37% considered accepting the funds or choosing to accept the bribe.¹² The impact of money politics can damage the democratic system that all Indonesian people aspire to. The use of money politics makes democracy unstable. Democracy that should be "free" is no longer free just by buying voting rights. Sovereignty that should belong to everyone, now only belongs to the owner

¹⁰ Dr. Muhaimin, "Metode Penelitian Hukum," Mataram University Press § (2020).

¹¹ Irwansyah, *Penelitian Hukum, Pilihan Metode & Praktik Penulisan Artikel, Edisi Revisi* (Yogyakarta: Mirra Buana Media, 2022).

¹² Daulat Nathanael Banjarnahor and Firinta Togatorop, "Pendidikan Anti Korupsi Dan Gerakan Anti Politik Uang Bagi Generasi Z Sebagai Pemilih Pemula Untuk Mewujudkan Pemilu Serentak Tahun 2024 Yang Berintegritas."

of the money. In addition, the practice of money politics here can also damage the morals of democracy because people are attracted to the individual, not because of the principle of leadership, not because of his performance, vision, or mission, because they choose leaders with funds allocated to increase voting rights for their interests.

The use of money politics can affect the stability of the Indonesian economy. The misuse of financial resources in elections can place critical economic resources, such as investment capital, labor, and infrastructure, in the hands of parties needing help to manage them effectively. This can hamper long-term economic growth and expose the Indonesian economy to significant risks. Therefore, handling the problem of money politics is not only the responsibility of law enforcement agencies but must be supported by the participation of all elements of society, including the government and political parties that address the problem of money politics through legal and political channels must be supported. This strategy is increasingly being used in the prevention and control of money politics. This is also the case in our country. This effort will not be easy, but with the determination and strong will of all elements of the nation, the government (executive, legislative, and judiciary), and the community, the domestic law we dream of, including freedom, will become a reality. Efforts are needed to prevent the use of money politics and to make people realize that the use of money politics harms society in the long run. In addition, money politics is a significant channel for the emergence of corrupt and anti-popular leaders. Therefore, it is essential to sensitize the public to reject money politics position the public as good citizens, and position the public as controllers of the wheels of government.¹³

As a democracy, now is the right time to increase voter turnout and limit the use of money politics in elections. Active voter participation helps ensure that political decisions consider everyone's wishes and ideas. However, low voter turnout can provide room for money politics and election results manipulation. The government needs to raise political awareness early on to increase voter participation. Civic education should happen early

¹³ Effendi Hasan et al., "The Practice of Money Politics in Village Head Elections and Its Effect on The Participation Level of Beginner Voters," *Journal of Governance and Public Policy* 10, no. 1 (January 24, 2023): PRESS, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jgpp.v10i1.15576>.

in life, whether in the family, school, or community. Strong political awareness allows people to understand better the importance of elections and participation in the democratic process. However, it is also essential to prevent fiscal policies from undermining democratic institutions, leading to fraud and weakening integrity. Therefore, political parties must ensure that their candidate supporters do not engage in financial politics during elections. As Indonesian citizens, we must take a clear stance on implementing money politics in elections. We must fight for a clean and honest election process. The practice of money politics not only weakens the integrity of elections but also undermines people's right to vote. Most voters vote based on the money they receive rather than their program, vision, or mission. In addition, preventive measures must be taken, such as raising public awareness about the importance of honest voter participation and integrity and involving election monitoring organizations to monitor the implementation of fair and clean elections. We also need to make wise decisions based on the party's plans, vision and mission rather than based on the money offered. We must elect leaders who respect the right to vote, maintain election integrity, and fight for the people's interests.¹⁴

Many factors contribute to money politics in Indonesia today, but why is it still a popular political campaign strategy among political elites and parties? From the people's point of view, here are the reasons why many people engage in money politics:¹⁵

1. Cultural Factors

Patrimonialism was the first cultural factor identified as a cause of money politics in rural areas. In communities with low levels of education and political knowledge, kinship politics has a negative impact when the current legal system is fragile, and the political system is not strong enough to allow for election money and all forms of money politics. It is considered a blessing to the community and will not be denied. And since this is inevitable, people must give

¹⁴ Junaedi Junaedi, Rumanul Hidayat, and Anas Yusuf, "The Dangers Of Political Money For A Clean Democracy Process Up To Elections For Village Heads, Regional Heads, Legislative Elections And General Elections In Indonesia," *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education* 4, no. 1 (April 14, 2023): 211–32, <https://doi.org/10.56442/ijble.v3i2.159>.

¹⁵ Muhammad Asyraff Abdiellah, Dany Rahmat Muharram, and Julianingsi Julianingsi, "The Impact of Money Politic in the Local Elections in Indonesia," *Journal of Contemporary Local Politics* 1, no. 1 (June 17, 2022): 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.46507/jclp.v1i1.74>.

something to win over voters. Therefore, they become the success team when they vote and contribute to the election's success.

2. Economic Factors

Economy and poverty cause the widespread use of money politics in discussing social reality and showing that elites use poverty to buy and sell votes. Poverty will always cause people to reason, even if politicians and candidates pay the allowances. It is easier to prevent or stop the application of money politics if our society continues to suffer from economic restrictions and poverty. Money politics is a place where people fight over money. Those who accept money do not consider the consequences, as bribery and vote buying are clearly against the law. Most importantly, they can earn money and make a living.

3. Weak Supervision

Stopping the practice of money politics will also be difficult, especially if there is still a need for more cooperation between the community and stakeholders in monitoring the practice of money politics, especially before voting day. The weakness of this supervision focuses on individual adaptation to the regulations that oversee the implementation of money politics itself, while the low level of education results in the community being unable to fully understand the supervision carried out and the regulations that have been internalized. The implementation of money politics in the community is evidenced by various cases of election fraud that are still unresolved. The main reason is that the case was dismissed because the organization (Bawaslu) did not have sufficient authority. Supervision (Bawaslu) of this process is complex due to a lack of evidence. This is due to the need for more public participation in proving the practice of Money Politics. If there are still subchapters within the first subchapter, then a small letter of the alphabet is used in the title. Authors are requested to avoid more than two levels of subchapters within subchapters.

4. Education Factors

Due to the low quality of education, people's knowledge of politics and electoral fraud is minimal. Public ignorance affects their behavior toward money politics

in general, as evidenced by the ease with which people accept different rewards. Elections are not just about determining whether a decision will be taken or not; they also serve to educate people politically. Civic education is the process of learning and understanding the rights, duties, and obligations of all citizens in the life of the nation and state.

5. Political Factors

Only some people know what politics is, how it happens, and the consequences. This is probably because parliamentary candidates only want to win and have no plan, while political parties only seek support. Therefore, although many people think it is customary to accept money and buy votes in every election, the proportion of money politics in every election is increasing, not decreasing.

6. Legal Factors

The lack of strict law enforcement remains a significant obstacle to tackling money politics in Indonesia. Money-politics perpetrators believe that they can implement these policies without incurring significant risks. This creates an environment where the practice of money politics can flourish freely and unhindered without fear of serious punitive consequences. However, existing laws lose their meaning if they are not consistently enforced. The lack of strong law enforcement can also undermine public confidence in the integrity of elections and the justice system.

3.2. The Implications of Money Politics for Indonesian Society

The lack of strict law enforcement remains a significant obstacle to tackling Indonesia's money politics problem. Money-politics perpetrators believe that they can implement these policies without risking the consequences of their actions. This creates an environment where the practice of money politics can spread freely and unhindered without fear of serious punitive consequences for perpetrators. However, existing laws lose their meaning if they are not consistently enforced. The lack of strong law enforcement can also undermine public confidence in the integrity of elections and the justice system. In principle, money politics in elections can negatively impact the democratic process and candidacy, which must be carried out transparently and fairly.

Such practices can weaken the democratic nature of politics, as voting is no longer based on candidates' plans, visions, and missions but is influenced by the material rewards offered.

In addition, money politics in elections can create conflicts of interest between the government, the private sector, and the community and influence the public policies of elected officials. Therefore, money in politics must be strictly regulated to ensure equality and justice in the political system. It is hoped that the public can deepen their understanding of money politics in elections so that people become more critical and vigilant against corruption and election fraud. Money political behavior in general elections can undoubtedly impact the government, society, and the quality of candidates. The effect of money politics on general elections can be seen through several forms of violations committed by candidates who practice money politics. The practice of money politics affects breaches of justice in general elections. Money politics is a behavior that can undermine electoral justice where every candidate is entitled to a vote because his vision and mission are by the community. The community should vote for the candidate, but one candidate practices money politics and gives a sum of money or goods to give his voting rights to the fraudulent candidate. Candidates who spend money to win elections may be perceived as unfair and lacking integrity.¹⁶

Furthermore, money politics affects the quality of candidates. Political funding can also affect the quality of candidates running for office. Candidates with large amounts of money will find it easier to garner support and win without showing the actual achievements or abilities of the candidate. People choose these candidates not by looking at their Vision and Mission but by the money they have given to pick them, even though their quality is similar to other candidates. Money politics is a cause of corruption; money politics is very vulnerable to government corruption. Candidates who use funds to win elections can use their power for personal gain, undermine government systems, or break the law to get more money to replace the funds spent on the campaign. Corruption is

¹⁶ Paisal Akbar et al., "The Face of the General Elections Commission in The Case of the Code of Conduct 2018-2020," *Journal of Government and Political Issues* 1, no. 1 (July 23, 2021): 26–34, <https://doi.org/10.53341/jgpi.v1i1.2>.

categorized as an Anti-Corruption crime, which is very harmful because it affects not only state finances but also morality, socio-culture, politics, the legal order, and social security.

Money politics is a serious threat to the integrity of democracy. It involves the unethical or illegal use of funds to influence political decisions such as elections. Preventing money politics is essential to ensure that democratic processes are fair and transparent and to strengthen public participation. There are several critical steps to stop money politics. Campaign finance transparency is the first step to stopping money politics. Political parties and candidates must report in detail the use of campaign funds. This information should be easily accessible to the public so that they can monitor and understand the financial resources that influence the political process. In addition, setting funding limits is an effective way to reduce the impact of money politics. Limiting the monetary donations that individuals, companies, and organizations can contribute can prevent economic domination by one party and avoid the potential for unhealthy influence in policy-making. Engaging independent institutions to audit and monitor campaign funds ensures that campaign finance rules and regulations are strictly adhered to and that independent oversight also ensures public confidence in the integrity of the political process.¹⁷

Improving political education and public awareness are fundamental steps to deterring money politics. By better understanding the risks of money politics, the public can be more alert to suspicious activities. Political education can be done through formal education programs and easily accessible information. Strict penalties for money politics offenses, such as fines and criminal sanctions, are essential to create a deterrent effect. Finally, by encouraging public participation in political decision-making, we can reduce the impact of money politics by ensuring that citizens have equal and meaningful access to the political process, thereby reducing the amount of significant campaign funds. Stopping money politics, therefore, requires a joint effort between the government,

¹⁷ Junaedi, Hidayat, and Yusuf, "The Dangers Of Political Money For A Clean Democracy Process Up To Elections For Village Heads, Regional Heads, Legislative Elections And General Elections In Indonesia."

independent institutions, and the public.¹⁸ By taking these steps, we can build a stronger foundation for a healthy democracy and reject practices that undermine the integrity of our political system. Money politics threatens the integrity of the political system and undermines the essence of democracy, which should represent the voices and interests of all people.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research results in the previous chapter, the Restorative Justice approach to handling traffic accidents has been implemented in the jurisdiction of the Bekasi City Resort Police. The three stages of the mechanism for resolving traffic accident cases with Restorative Justice carried out by the Bekasi City Resort Police are the stage of peace efforts with mediation between parties to find a mutual settlement, the stage of requesting termination of the legal process with Restorative Justice submitted by the victim to the police, and the stage of determining the Order to Terminate Investigation (SP3) provided that the perpetrator has fully fulfilled compensation and fulfillment of rights to victims. The obstacles in applying Restorative Justice to traffic accident cases, namely the Substance Component, where there are inconsistent regulations on Restorative Justice in handling traffic accident cases, need to be more consistent. In addition, there are also other inhibiting factors where the victim proposes a high amount of compensation. At the same time, the perpetrator cannot pay the whole, so the peace agreement fails.

Based on the research results, the author advises the Bekasi City Resort Police to make massive socialisation efforts to the community regarding the application of Restorative Justice. Thus, it is hoped that the community can better understand the provisions of Restorative Justice so that, in the future, this process can be better understood and accepted by all levels of society.

¹⁸ Nur Barokah Uswatun Khasanah Nita Permata, Chusnul Qotimah, "Budaya Money Politics Dan Identity Politics Dalam Pemilihan Umum Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Legislatif* 4, no. 1 (2020): 93–105, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20956/jl.v4i1.12323>.

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