

## ON THE LOGIC OF ISLAMIC FEMINISM: A CASE STUDY OF MINANGKABAUNESE MATRILINEALITY

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### **Abstrak**

*Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mencari (1) sebuah makna baru dari feminisme Islam dan (2) struktur logisnya apakah bersifat tradisional atau modern. Saya akan mengexaminasi distingsi Etin Anwar antara 'feminisme Islam' dan 'feminisme Muslim,' dan mendiskusikan potensi self-ownership untuk mengembangkan argumen yang mendukung keadilan gender. Sementara definisi Anwar tentang feminisme Islam mengeksklusikan feminis lelaki sedemikian rupa, saya berargumen bahwa hal itu tidak strategis untuk keadilan gender, dan lebih penting untuk mengadopsi self-ownership ke dalam diskursus feminisme Islam. Saran ini nampak jelas dalam situasi matrilineal Minangkabau di mana lelaki membagi kepemilikan dirinya dengan istri, ibu dan saudara perempuan karena institusi bundo kanduang. Salah satu akibatnya, lelaki Muslim Minangkabau memikul kewajiban kekeluargaan ekstra tetapi tidak menikmati apapun dari pembagian waris. Saya juga melakukan beberapa wawancara mendalam dengan para ahli mengenai isu ini. Hasilnya adalah feminisme Islam seharusnya bersifat inklusif pada para feminis lelaki, dan seharusnya memberikan perhatian pada logika modern dialetheia ketimbang logika tradisional.*

**Kata kunci:** *Feminisme Islam, Minangkabau, Dialetheia, Self-ownership.*

### **Abstract**

This article aims to seek (1) a new meaning of Islamic feminism and (2) its logical structure whether traditional or modern in its nature. I will examine Etin Anwar's distinction between 'Islamic feminism' and 'Muslim feminism' and discuss the potential of self-ownership for developing arguments in favor of gender justice. While Anwar's definition of Islamic feminism excludes male feminists in such a way, I argue that it is not strategic for gender justice, and it would

be necessary to adopt self-ownership into the discourse of Islamic feminism instead. This suggestion manifests in the Minangkabau matrilineal setting, in which case men share their self-ownership with their wives, mothers, and sisters due to the institution of *bundo kanduang*. As a consequence, Minangkabaunese Muslim men shoulder some extra filial duties but enjoy nothing from the inheritance division. I also conducted several in-depth interviews with some experts concerning this issue. The upshot is that Islamic feminism should be inclusive of male feminists, and it should pay attention to the modern logic of *dialetheia* instead of the traditional logic.

**Keywords:** *Islamic feminism, Minangkabau, dialetheia, self-ownership*

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## INTRODUCTION

If there is such a thing, namely Islamic feminism, then it should contain a logical structure to characterize its quality and identity. To reveal such a logical structure, I need to examine thoroughly its current concept and meaning, not to mention how it includes and excludes some necessary elements. In the case of Islamic feminism, things might be more challenging rather than other types of feminism. Margot Bardan argues that Muslim women have made feminism which is neither derivative of nor Western in its nature because Islam has been integrating feminism since the very beginning as opposed to various Western secular feminisms all of which operate without religious frameworks (Badran, 2009, p. 2). On the one hand, Islamic feminists have approached gender equality through an egalitarian model of society and family as well as a fluid private-public continuum. *Ijtihad* focused on developing arguments against the patriarchal model of family. On the other hand, secular feminism took a firm stand on the performance of gender equality in public while agreeing upon its implementation in the family (Badran, 2009, pp. 3-4).

Interestingly, Etin Anwar distinguishes between 'Islamic feminism' and 'Muslim feminism' on the basis of their sexual agency. On the one hand, she defines the former "as a myriad of social and intellectual movements by Muslim women who have deployed the tenets of Islam as a discursive reference for promoting gender equality and for eliminating oppression" (Anwar, 2018, pp. 14). On the other hand, Anwar defines "the term 'Muslim feminism' is used to subsume any individuals who pursue gender justice. The use of Muslim feminism is inclusive of men who promote gender justice" (Anwar, 2018, p. 15). In other words, Anwar believes that Islamic feminism is exclusive in the sense that its agency is limited to women, and men cannot join this kind of category because men who fight for gender justice, as she argues, belong to the category of Muslim feminism. Consequently, the scope of Islamic feminism is narrower compared to Muslim feminism, given that the latter includes male feminists.

However, the meanings of Islamic feminism have always been elusive from time to time. According to Badran, "In the 1990s, the notion of an Islamic feminism – and, indeed, the term itself – has been surfacing in parts of the Middle East. The term, however, is controversial and not necessarily well thought out, and there is no consensus about its meaning on the part of either advocates or adversaries" (Badran, 2009, pp. 221). In other words, one has the right to define Islamic feminism in a more inclusive way rather than establishing a sexual bias by putting male feminists into a category of Muslim feminists rather than Islamic feminists. Anwar's ideological prescription on the meaning of Islamic feminism and Muslim feminism recalls what Geary says is "to disrupt the formation of male coalitions, suppress male-male competition (i.e., suppress the establishment of dominance hierarchies), and, at the same time, increase female choice and female control of essential resources" (Geary, 2021, p. 283). If this is the case, then some efforts to define Islamic feminism seem to be more like a political strategy rather than an academic investigation.

Such a distinction between Islam and Muslim feminism is not strategic because it presents the logic of sexual discrimination instead of promoting and strengthening the fight for gender justice. By separating females and males into two different categories of feminism, I am afraid it would mislead the struggle for the justice of gender into the binary logic of right and wrong in the Aristotelian logic. Consequently, it is always wrong to claim A is non-A according to this principle) and the Aristotelian principle of excluded middle (which encourages us to take it for granted that there are only two preferences, and there is no third possibility in between, for instance, A and non-A.). With respect to Anwar's distinction between 'Islamic feminism' that is exclusive only for Muslim women, and 'Muslim feminism' that is inclusive to Muslim men, then the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction could never allow Muslim men to be part of Islamic feminism due to Anwar's strict definition.

Given that Anwar puts her investigation in a specific context of "philosophy can serve as a method of inquiry into the question of gender and self," and she "approach[es] the question of gender from an Islamic philosophical standpoint" (Anwar, 2006, p. 9); thus it is necessary to seek the meaning of Islamic feminism in relation to both peripatetic and perennial approaches of Islamic philosophy, especially its logical structure. If this is the case, then the research questions are: What is this thing called Islamic feminism? Should the logical structure of Islamic feminism be Aristotelian or modern in its nature?

What I mean by 'traditional' is in the sense of embracing the Aristotelian principles of non-contradiction and excluded middle. One should bear in mind that the principle of non-contradiction is different from William of Soisson's principle of *ex contradictione quodlibet*. While the former encourages us to always think coherently, the latter suggests us to totally avoid all contradictions for its "arbitrary" consequences. However, this is not the case in modern logic. In contrast, what I mean by 'modern' is in the sense of allowing some true contradictions or *dialetheia* in modern logic.

By putting the question word 'should' instead of 'is' in the second question, I try to make an impression that there is a distinction between *das Sollen*/the ought/the ideals and *das Sein*/the is/the fact. In contrast to Anwar's definition of Islamic feminism which excludes male feminists, I strive to cohere both female and male feminists into a new meaning of Islamic feminism. In order to do so, I need to insert the concept of self-ownership into account.

Moreover, this research investigates those questions by conducting two approaches. First, an extensive literature review concerning Islamic feminism, Minangkabaunese, self-ownership, and logic was conducted. Books, journal articles, and media coverage are part of this stage. Second, some in-depth interviews with women who are part of a feminist movement or an academic who works on the issue of gender justice and Minangkabaunese. I will transform the interviews into some transcripts, and thus, I will proceed with the data reduction, in which case I will look for some relevant keywords to the research question. These keywords would be beneficial to identify a potential logical structure for a new definition of Islamic feminism that is not biased toward sexual differences. If there is a gap between the first approach and the second one, then I would overcome it by generating a possible common ground between the two approaches or by taking sides with either of them. For instance, there is a possibility that the experts are not familiar with the discourse of Islamic feminism, the Minangkabaunese history, and the discourse of logic. Consequently, I would be prone to the first rather than the second approach. In addition to such a gap, it is possible that the experts only have a *general* impression of Minangkabau, but the literature might report some *specific* accounts, which might be in opposition to the interviewees' views. On this occasion, my analysis would rely upon the combination between literature review and some in-depth interviews.

## GENDER AND SELF-OWNERSHIP

If Islamic feminism “captures the conflicting values of gender egalitarianism and social hierarchy and proposes solutions that meet the needs of women” (Anwar, 2018, p. 252), then it might be the case where Islamic feminism strives to reverse the gender inequality and oppression into the opposite direction due to “the needs of women” instead of ‘justice for women.’ This conjecture resonates with Anwar’s claim, “Islamic feminism, therefore, strives to claim the production of knowledge and to experience Islam as women’s rights to religious beliefs and practices” (Anwar, 2018, p. 14). However, a prominent Indonesian figure of women emancipation like Kartini clearly distinguishes that, “Our struggle is not against men, but against the old inherited beliefs, the adats, which are no longer relevant for the Java of the future; it is a struggle in which there are some others who, together with us, are the forerunners” (Kartini, 2014, p. 113). In my view, female and male Muslim feminists should work hand in hand to diminish the oppressive structure of gender injustices rather than strengthening a sexual bias against men through a distinction like ‘Islamic feminism’ and ‘Muslim feminism.’ This view is in line with Wadud’s view, “While Islamic feminism centers on the lived realities of Muslim women, it is not just about women. It is about moving the understanding of gender from hegemony and control to equality and reciprocity” (Wadud, 2021, p. 2). In other words, Islamic feminism should not be limited only for women but also male feminists.

On the logic of female sexuality, Etin Anwar reveals an attractive hypothetical syllogism that a wife's genitalia belongs to her husband due to the latter's financial support, and this is the logic of control of women's sexuality (Anwar, 2006, p. 37). In other words, the Muslim husbands have a kind of property in person (Locke, 2008, pp. 287-288) or self-ownership (Cohen, 1995, pp. 209, 229, 230) over their wives, and self-ownership might be the underlying logical structure of control over female sexuality. According to a male feminist, *Kiai* (alim) Husein Muhammad of Cirebon, the

definition of Islamic marriage in four Sunni schools of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) actually approves the legal transaction for owning the body of women (Rahman, 2017, p. 310). Interestingly, Kiai Husein considers the Islamic marriage more as a *mu'amalah* (a mutual contract) instead of an *'ibadah* (a religious worship) (Rahman, 2017, p. 312). According to Rahman, "Kiai Husein believes that the success of gender mainstreaming in *pesantren* depends on the role of *kiai* because he is the most authoritative in *pesantren*. The openness of *kiai* with new ideas will pave the way for social change in the community" (Muhammad in Rahman, 2017, p. 321). In other words, patriarchy is not always the eternal enemy of feminism because there is a specific context in which case patriarchy in the sense of male leadership in *pesantren* could be a potential partner for feminism. Consequently, it implies feminism to redirect their criticism against masculinism instead of patriarchy in general. Interestingly, *Kiai* Husein also argues that "By challenging the patriarchal ideology, it does not necessarily mean applying the matriarchal ideology" (Muhammad, 2019, p. 51). This view justifies an illustration concerning feminism as follows:

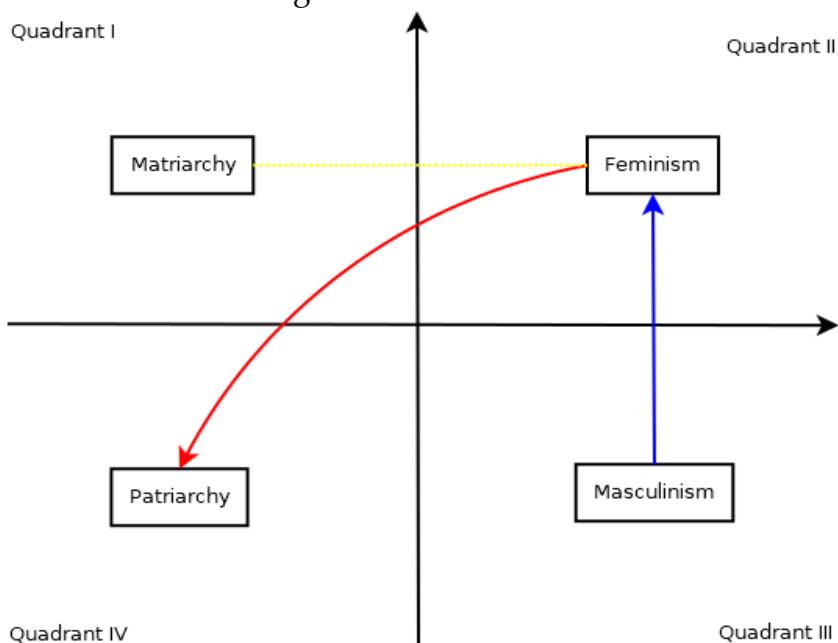


Fig. 1. Orientation of Feminism and Other Ideologies

This diagram strives to say a few things. First, feminism always quarrels against patriarchy though, its real enemy might actually be masculinism. On the one hand, patriarchy is “A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). In short, patriarchy excludes women on a large scale, and this fact provides a justification for feminism to fight against patriarchy. On the other hand, masculinism means “Advocacy of the rights of men; adherence to or promotion of opinions, values, etc., regarded as typical of men; (more generally) anti-feminism, machismo” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). In other words, masculinism has a real opposition and resistance against feminism, and it is not merely a matter of exclusion as what patriarchy has been doing. Therefore, masculinism takes feminism as its own enemy, but it does not seem to be the other way around. Second, feminism does not consider matriarchy as a stepping stone or a partner in fighting for the advocacy of women’s rights and gender equality. Matriarchy is “A system of society or government ruled by a woman or women” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). If this is the case, then does not matriarchy grant a significant amount of power so that feminists could endeavor their own agenda? If feminism agrees with the saying, ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend,’ then should feminism not consider matriarchy as its fellow given that the latter is in opposition to patriarchy? Third, the way feminism picks patriarchy as its enemy reflects that it does not apply the Aristotelian logic but the modern logic. Had feminism done reasoning on the grounds of Aristotelian logic, thus it should have fought against masculinism rather than patriarchy. However, this might not be the case with all types of feminism, including Islamic ones.

It is a common mistake or a fallacy of dramatic instance to overgeneralize that feminism should always fight against patriarchy because the latter might pave the way for the former, as is the case of *Kiai Husein’s* view on gender and *pesantren*. Instead of patriarchy, why not put masculinism as the enemy of feminism as



well as taking patriarchy as either a stepping stone, a role model, or a partner for realizing the feminist agenda? On this occasion, I conceive both patriarchy and masculinism are two different concepts or ideologies. On the one hand, patriarchy means a societal or governmental system whose leaders are males. On the other hand, masculinism means the advocacy of men's rights, and it preserves both machismo (a sort of aggressive or strong masculine pride) and anti-feminism sentiment. If this is the case, then I am afraid some, if not most, feminists fallaciously feud against the wrong enemy, or feminists might erroneously consider patriarchy and masculinism to be the same.

Following Aristotle, Anwar interestingly offers an attractive definition: "Ownership is an innate need of every being, since it is a means to have pleasure, to live well, and to be generous to family, relatives, and friends. Lack of property, according to Aristotle, will diminish temperance toward women and hinder the liberality of using property" (Anwar, 2006, p. 36). Such a definition of ownership is connotative in its nature because it refers to some implications of ownership as an institution rather than describing its constitutive elements, substances, and essence. However, ownership is not merely a means for being generous, living well, or having pleasure.

In general, ownership necessarily means a set of rights, states, and acts to possess a thing in the sense of either property or, following John Locke's words, property in person. The easiest way to think about this notion of 'property in person' is the old fashion, chattel slaves. Although modern life generally refuses human slavery, advanced capitalism might keep preserving it through, for example, the shifting of 'human resources' to 'human capital.' The latter considers and counts the human labor and talents as the companies' assets rather than the workers' properties. Given that Islam did not totally eradicate slavery in the past, I suspect that Islam also allows property in person. To possess is either to enjoy one's belonging exclusively or to share it with others. Whether such possession should be exclusive or inclusive is a matter of context and justification. For instance, Islamic marriage gives some

advantages to a man for sharing comfort and pleasures with his wife (or wives) insofar as there is a quality of being fair and reasonable in sharing their bodies, thoughts, and power in the family. On this occasion, male feminists might differ from their female counterparts on whether to agree or disagree on the issue of polygyny in Islam though Islam, itself gives a sphere for polygyny with some tight terms and conditions. A polygynous family reflects a greater portion of self-ownership sharing among its members compared to a monogamous family. In specific, the concept of self-ownership is individuals own themselves, and it takes root in Robert Nozick's libertarianism. The main idea of Nozick's libertarianism is that "individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights)." On this occasion, Nozick refuses the adoption of principles of distributive justice into the legal structure of a society because it grants "each person has a claim to the activities and the products of other persons." Consequently, Nozick believes that "these principles involve a shift from the classical liberals' notion of self-ownership to a notion of (partial) property rights in other people" (Nozick, 1974, pp. ix, 171-172). In other words, Nozick does not make a clear and distinct difference between Locke's property in person and his idea of self-ownership. In the case of polygyny, a husband's self-ownership is *practically* shared with more than one female self-owners instead of the other way around, where he *theoretically* "owns" more than a wife. Had wives been full and sovereign self-owners, there could have been more potential for oppression against men in a polygynous family compared to a monogamous one. However, such oppression does not uniquely happen under the banner of a polygynous family.

Moreover, Anwar argues "that the hierarchical gender system fosters the self-relational dependency to the family and society and this dependency has an impact on self-perception. I propose to call this relation an extensional and reciprocal dependency. 'Extensional dependency' refers to the way the self is constructed as an extension of family that carries with it the rights of certain family members

over others, such as the parents' rights over their children or the children's obligation toward parents. 'Reciprocal dependency' promotes mutual and equal gender relationship with everyone involved in such a relation" (Anwar, 2006, p. 124). Such extensional and reciprocal dependencies might indicate the lack of female self-ownership. Women do not fully own themselves, so they cannot be independent nor sovereign over their own bodies and power. However, women may keep their self-ownership intact if they give consent prior to accomplishing both extensional and reciprocal dependencies. By giving consent, women show their full consciousness whenever they are fulfilling some filial duties. Otherwise, such filial duties are actually oppression and repression.

### **MATRILINEALITY, MATRIARCHY AND DIALETHEIA**

Islamic feminism should not be exclusive only for Muslim women. Women have a special position in Islam. Islam *theoretically* honors and respects women, though it might *historically* be the other way around. According to Simone de Beauvoir, "Bedouin women of the pre-Islamic period enjoyed a status quite superior to that assigned them by the Koran[sic!]. These facts have led to the supposition that in primitive times a veritable reign of women existed: the matriarchy" (Beauvoir, 1975, p. 102). However, she does not explain the reference nor the argument in favor of such pre-Islamic matriarchal Bedouin communities. Moreover, if one strictly distinguishes between matriarchy and matrilineality, then he or she should come to an understanding that the pre-Islamic Bedouin acknowledged that women were in charge of (absolute or partial) power as opposed to matrilineality which might still allow patriarchy to exist as it is available in the case of Minangkabau. Either such power is absolute or partial in matriarchy is a matter of different discussion.

Moreover, Hamka has an interesting account with respect to matriarchy. To put it in his own words, "In modern countries which enthrone women, a female king does not have absolute power in her kingdom. They were merely symbols, while the ruling party is the

cabinet and its prime minister. King only signs the government's decision" (Hamka, 2020, p. 95). If Hamka refers to England, then he might miss that it has been the case since the Magna Charta in the thirteenth century, and it is not exclusively due to matriarchy nor a female king. If it is true, then Islam flipped from matriarchy into patriarchy in Bedouin history. Moreover, de Beauvoir acknowledges that a woman's "ambivalence is evident in the way woman regards her body. It is a burden...it is no certain source of pleasure and it creates lacerating pains; it contains menaces: woman feels endangered by her 'insides'" (Beauvoir, 1975, p. 630). Instead of providing a logical framework for feminine logic, she argues that women do not have sufficient experience to teach themselves logic and techniques, and it leads to the situation where women do not grasp the world of men. Women's suspicion over the constant identity, according to Beauvoir, is due to the combination of the changing nature of life, the masculine world and their doubts about causality (Beauvoir, 1975, pp. 622-624). In short, women overthrow the Aristotelian principles of identity, non-contradiction, and excluded middle though she does not provide an alternative system of logic for women. To render a logic for women is equal to understanding their situation. According to de Beauvoir, women have a paradox in which case they live in a world of no peace as well as the male world but they are not familiar with masculine logic. She radically puts it as, "A syllogism is of no help in making a successful mayonnaise, nor in quieting a child in tears; masculine reasoning is quite inadequate to the reality with which she deals" (Beauvoir, 1975, p. 608-611). In other words, de Beauvoir despises the Aristotelian logic because it is useless for women's daily life.

It is obvious from the Qur'anic verses that Islam honors and respects women. According to Anwar, "the hierarchical reading of the Qur'ān only emerges strongly in the areas of male economic responsibility (Q.S. al-Nisā', 4:34), the reduced value of the testimony of a female, divorce (Q.S. al-Baqarah, 2:233) and the half share inheritance (Q.S. al-Nisā', 4:176)" (Anwar, 2006, p. 142). However, I am afraid that Q. S. al-Baqarah verse 233 is not the

appropriate Qur'anic verse for what Anwar supposed to mean. Perhaps she should have written the Qur'anic Chapter of Al-Baqarah verse 282 concerning the female testimony on economic transactions and future obligations, in which case the verse tells us that the female testimony is only half the value of male testimony. In contrast to verse 282, the Qur'anic Chapter of Al-Baqarah verse 233 talks about breastfeeding, weaning and a foster-mother instead. The fact that there are only three out of more than 6,000 (less than five percent) Qur'anic verses strengthens a view that Islam theoretically honors gender equality. In contrast, Anwar also claims that, "Women in almost every Muslim culture continue to suffer oppression at the hands of the patriarchal and hierarchical gender system" (Anwar, 2006, p. 142).

On this occasion, the discourse of Islamic feminism should pay more attention to a unique cultural practice in Indonesia. According to Hadler, "Anthropologists and feminists from Europe and the United States descended on West Sumatra to report on the fading glory of a survival of matriarchy" (Hadler, 2008, p. 103). Apparently, Hadler believes that the Minangkabaunese matriarchy and matrilineal are coherent with the idea of Islamic feminism, though there is an exception on the practice of inheritance in which case Minangkabaunese Muslims are likely to ignore the Islamic sharia and comply to the customary law. In other words, Minangkabaunese matriarchy used to attract the attention of some feminists in the US and Europe, and it tells us that matriarchy might derive a benefit from the fight for gender justice. Indeed, it is very interesting that Hadler discovers that "The earliest women's newspapers redefined Minangkabau society, and rewrote conventional gender roles...The congressional issue of the newspaper is a remarkable record of Sumatran feminism in the late 1920s" (Hadler, 2008, pp. 156, 162). On this occasion, Hanani reveals that there were eight women newspapers out of 209 total newspapers published by the Minangkabaunese ethnic groups between 1900-1942 or prior to the Indonesian independence. She claims that "substantially, the major themes of these newspapers

were feminist movement against gender discrimination and inequality” (Hanani, 2018, pp. 75-76). Those eight newspapers are *Soenting Melayoe*, *Asjraq*, *Soera Perempoean*, *Djauharah Oentoek Bangsa Perempuan*, *Soera Kaoem Iboe Seoemoenja*, *Menara Poetri*, *Medan Poetri*, *Soera Kaoem Iboe Soematra*. Hanani indeed argues that “newspapers and writings were some of the possible media with the potential to go against these unjust perspectives, acts, and treatment as was proven in the movement of women between the years 1900-1942. The success of newspapers as the media to facilitate women’s equality movement needs to be put forward and analyzed so that it can be a reference in the current movement for equality” (Hanani, 2018, pp. 75-76). If this is the case, then Minangkabaunese matriarchal and matrilineal settings were used to allow such a feminist movement prior to the Indonesian independence. Among those eight women media, Hadler attributes *Asjraq* with an adjective “the Islamic-feminist” (Hadler, 2008, p. 83). Therefore, it is not merely a feminist movement but indeed an Islamic feminist movement used to exist in a Minangkabaunese cultural setting through the existence of *Asjraq* newspaper. The historical fact that *Asjraq*’s editors and writers include men; indicates that an Islamic feminist movement should not be exclusive only for Muslim women like the one Anwar has been claiming.

Given that Minangkabaunese women have been well literate long before Indonesian independence in 1945, they seem to be female self-owners, and they are not the property in person of their husbands. Anwar partially explains it as, “In this maternal relationship, authority resides within the mother’s older brother (mamak), whose responsibility is to support his sister and her children” (Anwar, 2018, p. 53). I put it ‘partially’ because Anwar misses the fact that mamak is subject to *bundo kanduang* or the personification of well-respected women or sisters in the extended family due to her intelligence, experience, and charisma. In short, *bundo kanduang* is the institutionalization of matrilineality in the Minangkabaunese cultural setting. This is the reason why all Minangkabaunese uncles bear the burden of responsibility towards

their nephews and nieces as much as their own biological fathers. For example, I will shoulder a greater responsibility towards my future nieces and nephews compared to my future brother in law simply because I am subject to my mother and my sister, both of whom reign over my self-ownership under the cultural institution of *bundo kanduang*. So did my uncles from the side of my mother. In contrast, my daughters would not enjoy the guardianship of a *mamak* because I have no brothers, and my male cousins are reluctant to play the role of a *mamak* simply because my wife is not a Minangkabaunese woman. Therefore, the authority resides within *bundo kanduang* rather than *mamak*, as Anwar claims, and my self-ownership is partially shared not only with my wife but also with my mother and my sister. These cultural practices might have neither references nor foundation in Islam, and indeed, there is a thought-provoking claim established by Tono et al., in which case saying that “The thinking was that Islamic law can only come into force when it is channeled through customary institutions” (Tono et al., 2019, p. 48). Moreover, matriarchy implies that, “The Minangkabau woman has confidence in herself because she does not have to depend on her husband whom she has culturally taken into the maternal home” (Tono et al., 2019, p. 44).

This matrilineal system also encourages male Minangkabaunese to sleep outside their homes since they are approximately ten years old on the pretext of preparing themselves prior to doing *merantau* or going overseas for making a living or studying. This cultural practice might be an explanation of why, for instance, most Indonesian founding fathers are Minangkabaunese. In short, most, if not all, male Minangkabaunese are inevitably male Islamic feminists due to such institution of *bundo kanduang* and matrilineality, if not matriarchy. Moreover, Minangkabaunese Muslims have been implementing the cultural inheritance law (in the sense of bequeathing wealth only to daughters, and leaving nothing to sons) as opposed to the Islamic one (in which case giving sons twice as much as what daughters inherit.). Anwar explains this phenomenon as “It does not offer any deeper reason for questions

such as why a woman receives less inheritance in comparison to her brothers” (Anwar, 2006, p. 8). Indeed, Minangkabaunese Muslims have been disregarding a fatwa enacted by the late Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi (1860-1916) who used to be the Head of Syafi'i school of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) in the Masjidil Haram, Mecca. The Syekh issued the fatwa in his book entitled *al-Dâ'i al-Masmû` Fî al-Raddi `Alâ Man Yuwarritsu al-Ikhwah Wa Aulâda al-Akhâwat Ma`a Wujûdi al-Usûl Wa al-Furû`* some of which is below:

“There is no doubt that you O inheritors, your love for custom, you have usurped and wronged the wealth of the heirs, your love for the law, without the consent of the inheritors, and it is accepted that there is no disagreement on the matter of usurpation is a grave sin, and the perpetrators deserve severe punishments whether the property is little or many, whether land or other things, because it is the right and wealth of others though it is few it cannot be ignored” (Al-Minangkabawi in Ahsin, 2020, p. 103).

This is inevitably a very strong fatwa enacted by the Syekh. The historical context is, according to Tono et al., “It should be noted that in the time of Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, there was only one inheritance which had not been separated into higher and lower inheritance as an effort to resolve the conflict of inheritance between custom and religion” (Tono et al., 2019, p. 52). So necessary is this point so that Tono et al., dares to make a presupposition that “Had he returned home after the distinction was made, he might have changed his opinion” (Tono et al., 2019, p. 52). In other words, the customary law of inheritance causes Shaykh Ahmad Khatib to do what the Minangkabaunese people call as *marantau Cino* which means migrating forever and no chance to go back for good. The critical distinction between the higher inheritance and the lower one was not available prior to 4–5th May 1952 during the Congress of *Ninik Mamak, Alim Ulama* and Minangkabau scholars (Tono et al., 2019, p. 53). However, it finds almost no real-life application in most Minangkabaunese families.

On this occasion, Minangkabaunese matriarchy and matrilinealism triumph over an Islamic fatwa, and it gives abundant



privileges to Minangkabaunese women while their men have never been criticized the way the Syekh did. This usurpation has been encouraging male Minangkabaunese to go abroad to make their living or get an education. Had Minangkabaunese Muslims followed the fatwa, current Indonesians would not have known some prominent figures like Hatta, Sjahrir, Tan Malaka and other founding mothers and fathers because they might have preferred to stay and live in Minangkabau instead of going abroad and fighting for the Indonesian independence. Having said that, not only matrilineal kinship but also patrilineal, and bilinear kinship did influence the Indonesian Muslim women's movement in the twentieth century (Kusmana, 2019, p. 85). Therefore, taking male feminists out of the corridor of Islamic feminism seems like degrading their contribution in the twentieth century's women struggle in Indonesia.

The contradiction between the Minangkabaunese adat law of inheritance and the Islamic one is apparent when one perceives it only by the Aristotelian logic in which case urging the principle of non-contradiction and excluded middle. It means that there should be no conflicting values, and there should be no third option between true and false. However, we should conceive this issue from the modern logic of *dialetheia*, which acknowledges that there are some true contradictions. Graham Priest indeed explains that this true contradiction is metaphysical in its nature, and it should not only be semantic. Although Priest considers metaphysical dialetheism "is simply a consequence of dialetheism," he also provides three suppositions for metaphysical dialetheism. First, there should be an extra-linguistic reality. Second, facts constitute reality. Third, facts contain polarities. These three suppositions are actually a response towards Mares' definition of metaphysical dialetheism as "there are things in the world that are actually inconsistent" as opposed to semantic dialetheism, which holds that "there are no inconsistencies in things but...inconsistencies arise because of the relationship between language and the world" (Mares in Priest, 2006, pp. 299-302). This metaphysical dialetheism

has its token in the perennial Islamic philosophy such as Ibn 'Arabi's divine concept of *Huwa la Huwa* (He is He is not) and his concept of Perfect Man which requires *maqam la maqam* (the station of no station). In contrast, Muslims would struggle to understand Ibn 'Arabi's arguments if they hold the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction fanatically.

Some, if not all, feminists might argue that they do not share the same agenda with matriarchy. When women reign, it does not always work hand in hand with the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of sexual equality. Just as patriarchy does not always guarantee the advocacy of men's rights, such feminist claims against matriarchy seem to be compelling. However, it is contradictory for some feminists to fight against patriarchy, but they do not consider matriarchy as a good stepping stone for achieving their goals. While the linguistic counterpart of patriarchy is matriarchy, the linguistic counterpart of feminism is masculinism. Perhaps feminists should start to think about whether or not masculinism is their real and specific enemy or it is whethrt part and parcel of patriarchy. Just as they also need to rethink whether or not matriarchy could be a good ally for gender justice.

Instead of excluding male feminists from the scope of Islamic feminism, I propose both female and male feminists pay attention to self-ownership because it increases control and sovereignty over bodies and personalities. This is not impossible because there is a clue from the story of Lot. On this occasion, Wadud interestingly claims, "The daughters of Lut lack agency over their own bodies and are offered in sacrifice to those whose behavior their father had condemned" (Wadud, 2021, p. 9). The notion of 'lack agency over their own bodies' resembles the deficiency of self-ownership given that they are Lot's property in person. Lot himself has the moral duty to persuade his people to leave aggressive sexual assaults behind. Had Lot not offered their daughters to them, he could have failed to accomplish his moral duty. Having said that, self-ownership might find its relevance in Islam insofar as Islamic feminists open their minds to this concept. Just as both libertarian

and Marxist philosophers have been arguing in favor and against self-ownership, I think that Islamic feminists could also take some benefits from this concept.

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

To check and balance over the literature reviews, I made several interviews with Kanti Pertiwi (K. Pertiwi, personal communication, April 25, 2022), Windy Botutihe (W. Botutihe, personal communication, May 8, 2022), and Silfia Hanani (S. Hanani, personal communication, May 25, 2022) respectively. Kanti Pertiwi is a founder of PhD Mama Indonesia, and it is a community of Indonesian mothers who have earned and have been pursuing a doctoral degree abroad and sharing their stories to encourage Indonesian women to study for doctoral degrees overseas (PhD Mama Indonesia, 2021). In other words, it is a movement for women education at its highest level viz., the doctoral degree. Pertiwi herself is also a Minangkabaunese by ethnic from both sides of her parents, and she teaches at the Faculty of Economics and Business, the Universitas Indonesia. Even though she has neither background nor training in feminism, she could simply tell that the issue of gender justice is far from ideal in Indonesia. She used to believe that there was no oppression towards Muslim women, and the Western media made some hoaxes concerning this issue. However, she then realizes that what Muslim women have been experiencing around the globe are various.

Her consciousness towards gender justice developed when she would like to accompany her husband who is assigned to serve at the Indonesian Consulate General in Perth, Western Australia. She said that, "My husband argued due to the fact that he is the provider so that he should be prioritized. Due to the one who is obliged to make a living is men. So, although I have a career, my career should give in. I have to try to fit in my job, my career around his job. My career comes secondary. That is the point...I felt unfair once it came to such conversation. How come?" Moreover, Pertiwi considers that there are various meanings of marriage, and those

who have been arguing in favor of marriage are no more than worship; are actually silencing a variety of interpretations towards marriage. It is as though we agree upon a view that marriage is worship, then all hurdles come through marriage; could not be questioned. Indeed, she mentions that “sexual intercourse is said as a worship. If the wife is reluctant, then she does not want to conduct worship. That is a mental illness. I think it is unfair. Only by one ultimate sentence of worship, then all things are done. No more debate. No more negotiation.” Pertiwi believes that this world is created for men to some extent because they acquire privileges for not doing some domestic duties.

Regarding the Minangkabaunese matrilineality, Pertiwi takes it as an interesting thing because all domestic issues still attach to women. However, there is an exception with respect to the grandfather of her husband, in which case he did not allow his wife to do heavy housework. He was a Minangkabaunese man, and he argued that “if your wife accomplished too much heavy housework, then her beauty would have been tarnished rapidly” when he talked to Pertiwi’s husband. Indeed, her grandfather in law suggested that a husband should ensure his wife to achieve orgasm while doing sexual intercourse. “He told it directly to me with the intention to make sure that I do know my own right as a wife...he was very influential in shaping the way my husband does reasoning so that my husband does not consider housework to be a sexual division,” Pertiwi explained. Interestingly, she thinks that the Minangkabaunese matriarchy is contingency or situational, and its matrilineality does not always give benefits to women. Her father and mother came from Payakumbuh, West Sumatera, and they did not give privilege nor benefits to Pertiwi. In contrast to the Minangkabaunese culture, her parents gave so much benefits and privileges to Pertiwi’s younger brother one of which is bequeathing the parents’ house with an equal division to Pertiwi and her brother; as opposed to the Minangkabaunese customary law. To put it in her own words, “as though they are being generous to me.” This is

inevitably unique because her Minangkabaunese parents do not comply with the Islamic law nor the customary one.

Furthermore, Pertiwi brings forth the discourse of post-feminism during the interview. She comprehends post-feminism as, "they celebrate the women agency ... ignoring the inter-sexual character of women's campaigns, and they refuse to consider class oppression, the racial oppression, and gender oppression. Post-feminism has a close connection with neoliberalism." Accordingly, intersectional feminists do not buy the idea of putting women in the CEO position as a part of the struggle of feminism. Instead, they wish to fight for all women who have been living under oppression. She argues that "feminism does not want matriarchy as a solution because, from the perspective of post-structuralism, they think that excellence and goodness do not attach only to one particular gender...Post-structuralism considers gender as fluid." There are some people, according to Pertiwi, who refuse the idea of a fixed gender identity (in the sense that men might have a feminine attribute but the social structure prevents them from doing so according to Pertiwi) though they have been paying attention to the issue of gender justice. She also criticizes the distinction between 'Islamic feminism' and 'Muslim feminism' in this way, "When we see the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) himself on many occasions speaking up for women's interests, then our own Prophet was not part of the Islamic feminism. It is peculiar and awkward because the best person was, he."

Windy Botutihe is a Behavior Change and Communication Coordinator at the Conservation International. She has been working for the issue of gender justice since the early 2000s through various women organizations across Indonesia. There are several interesting points during the interview. First, Indonesia has been providing a system and a sphere for people, especially women, to talk about gender justice nowadays. It is obvious from the Indonesian Ministry for Women and Children by which case this government agency establishes the special service for protecting women and children (the Dinas Khusus PPA (Perlindungan

Perempuan dan Anak) in Bahasa Indonesia.) in every regency across the archipelago. As a consequence, Botutihe is optimistic that gender justice in Indonesia is on the right track.

Second, most people have the consciousness of gender justice through various interventions and treatments though there are few who could recognize it by themselves. The more women organizations and NGOs exist, the more the government provides the sphere, the more people acquire the exposure of this issue. To those who live in remote areas, they are likely to recognize gender justice through interventions either through education or women's institutions. In contrast to interventions, young professionals are likely to seek information independently through social media because they wish to be well literate on various discourses including gender justice whose foundation is daily women's experience.

Third, matrilineality does not necessarily lead to matriarchy because there has always been a process of domestication towards women in the family. To compare Minangkabaunese women with their fellow counterparts in Papua, Botutihe argues that "if we discuss Papuan mamas for instance, the mama culture is so strong. This is not about income but the strength of a woman. Imagine that two men fight one another. If a mama comes to stop it, these feuding men would respect her. They really respect a mother or a mama. Amazing. But it does not necessarily make them have the perspective of gender justice because when it comes to their own wives, it is totally a different matter...If a husband throws a sandal, then a wife can retaliate by throwing a flat dish. She is strong. She could get revenge. Yet, it does not legitimize that the decision making is in her hands." In other words, the domestication process keeps happening even in the culture which allows women to be literally strong.

Fourth, although she does not pay more attention to the discourse of Islamic feminism, Botutihe acknowledges that there are many religious leaders who talk openly about this issue. "I think that they have strong arguments. Only by strong arguments that they can speak out loud," she explains. Back in the early 2000s,

Indonesian feminist activists were afraid of “toppling a wall” because people would easily stigmatize the movement. This was one reason for taking advantage of the ISO (the ISO 26000) instead of approaching religious leaders. When the government adopted MDGs, she thinks that it is beneficial for the Indonesian feminist movement because the MDGs include some issues like sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of mortality due to childbirth. These two issues, according to Botutihe, usually lead to gender issues.

Fifth, she argues that it is not necessary to distinguish between ‘Islamic feminism’ and ‘Muslim feminism’ because the former refers to the discourse while the latter means to the persons. Indeed, Botutihe distinguishes between ‘feminism’ and ‘feminine’ just as there is a difference between ‘masculinism’ and ‘masculine.’ Botutihe contends that feminism is a critical movement fighting for women’s rights while masculinism is the men’s version of feminism. Moreover, masculinism is a matter of men’s domination but patriarchy involves men and women to agree upon such domination. The feminist movements have never been paying attention to masculinism because it is more to men’s groups. She asserts that “It is similar to the Ku Klux Klan in the US. The white supremacists.” Masculinism is indeed more like a reactive, radical movement towards a particular issue. In other words, patriarchy includes masculinism. Botutihe also thinks that feminists do not expect matriarchy to shift patriarchy, and it is more to equity and no domination between women and men. There is neither patriarchy nor matriarchy.

Sixth, Botutihe is open to the possibility of Islamic feminism might allow the existence of more than two genders if and only if there is a sphere for it, and there is an argument in favor of more than two genders. Ideologically speaking, she approves the existence of non-binary sexes. “I don’t want to claim that there is a legal argument in favor of it. No, I can’t because I am not an Islamic scholar but I believe that there might be some people with their own academic qualifications and good thoughts (could justify it) one

day. I don't know. Maybe, right?" Moreover, whether or not the Islamic feminism should allow the LGBT issues, she thinks that it is highly controversial. Just as much as when people argue in favor and against a female Indonesian president in the past. "I am optimistic, and do not want to close a sphere for it," she argues.

Silfia Hanani teaches at the Faculty of *Ushuluddin*, Adab and Dakwah, IAIN Bukittinggi, West Sumatera. Her research entitled *Ulama Perempuan: A History of Feminism Movement in Minangkabau* is highly necessary for this research. During the interview, Hanani made several necessary points. First, she distinguishes between Minangkabau which refers to a cultural identity excluding Mentawai; and West Sumatera which refers to an administrative province including Mentawai.

Second, Hanani puts forward three stellar examples of female Minangkabau feminists, to wit, Rohana Kudus (1884-1972), Rasuna Said (1910-1965) and Rahmah El-Yunusiah (1900-1969). Rohana Kudus developed the spirit of entrepreneurship among women at her time through a school namely *Amai Setia* in which case it assisted women to connect with the outside world as well as acquiring some necessary skills for improving their economic level. She also established a newspaper called *Soenting Melaju* for allowing women to speak up about equality by writing. Moreover, Kudus also founded the female *koperasi* (the Indonesian word for a non-corporate economic organization which applies a sort of affirmative action towards its own members in terms of economic activities) for the women's welfare. In contrast to Rohana Kudus, Rasuna Said was purely an anti-colonial activist for which she paid more attention to politics and education. Besides these three feminists, there was also Siti Manggopoh who fought against the unjust Dutch policy of taxes (*belasting*) but Hanani believes that Manggopoh's movement is not based upon gender. These female figures represent three types of movement among *ulama perempuan* (both female and male Muslim scholars who pay attention to the women issue in Islam.) at the time viz., the media movement, the movement through education, and the political movement.



Third, Hanani claims that “Minang has been familiar with gender sensitivity but not yet with feminism though there is *bundo kanduang*.” Her observation indicates that many Minangkabaunese people oppose it. They are allergic to the words ‘gender’ and ‘feminist’ due to a partial understanding towards these words. She emphasizes that, “When we talk about gender, what laymen have in mind is homosexuality. So, that is the association. Therefore, do not mention ‘feminist,’ ‘gender’ in Minangkabau. Don’t!” People are likely to take for granted that men and women cannot be equalized. However, Hanani argues that there are some aspects of women and men which could and could not be equalized. For instance, the biological aspects are not equal between women and men due to God’s decision but other than the divine gifts could be equalized according to Hanani.

Fourth, she also explains that there are two meanings of *bundo kanduang* viz., the organizational and cultural ones. Organizationally speaking, *bundo kanduang* pays attention only to administrative duties and legal compliance. In contrast, the cultural *bundo kanduang* does position the gender roles of women and men as being equal, and this kind of *bundo kanduang*, according to Hanani, should be revived. In its ideals, *bundo kanduang* should be present in all filial meetings, and the absence of *bundo kanduang* does not validate the results of a meeting. Yet, this view might not always conform to reality.

Fifth, the Minangkabaunese matrilineal gives power to women but it is rather for the preservation of *harato pusako* (collective or common heirloom) instead of gender equality. Hanani claims that, “matrilineality does not necessarily lead to matriarchy,” and she rhetorically argues that if Minangkabaunese women or *bundo kanduang* leads to matriarchy, then why there has been neither a female regent nor a female major across the West Sumatera province? Among seven cities and twelve regencies in the West Sumatera, there has been no single female leader. In other words, women may have power to preserve the collective heirloom but not to the political power.

Sixth, the collective, common heirloom has a function of guardianship towards the extended family especially in the case of divorce where the mother has full custody of children according to Hanani. The utilization of this heirloom goes to women, but the supervision is in the hand of men. In other words, women should not utilize the heirloom arbitrarily. "We might think that the *harato pusako* still exists. Yet, the distinction between the two (the distinction between the collective, common heirloom [*harato pusako*] and the parental-acquired property [*harato pancahariaan*]) is obscure," said Hanani. What left from the Minangkabaunese matrilineal, according to Hanani, is merely the way to draw lineage and the tradition of *merantau* (going or staying abroad due to some educational or professional reasons).

Seventh, Hanani perceives the core of *mubādalah* perspective is welfare for which it requires two persons and reciprocity, and it is the main point of gender. She says, "When I check the *mubādalah*, the main point is welfare. Welfare requires equilibrium, equality." As a consequence, women are not objectified in the Islamic texts of Qur'an and hadiths.

Eight, with respect to the way women do reasoning, she believes that women have a different type of reasoning compared to men, and women do not have to be consistent all the time. Just as a Minangkabaunese proverb, "*iyo kan nan di urang, karajokan surang nan di awak* (to affirm others' opinions, but we carry out our own view). That is the logic," she emphasizes. Two out of three Minangkabaunese experts do not really bother with Anwar's arbitrary distinction between Islamic feminism and Muslim feminism because those two experts pay more attention to gender justice instead of gender equality with respect to religion, adat and culture.

## CONCLUSION

I have discussed both the literature reviews and the data reduction out of three in-depth interviews; it is highly necessary to sketch a brief reflection in accordance with some research questions.

The logical structure for Islamic feminism reflects the modern logic of *dialetheia*. It means that the Islamic feminism acknowledges that there are some true contradictions concerning the system of reasoning and arguments in favor of gender justice between Muslim men and women on the grounds of Qur'anic verses and hadiths. Such true contradictions manifest in, first, the existence of both the patriarchal and feminist interpretations towards the Holy Qur'an's verses and hadiths concerning women and men. Contemporary Muslims have been arguing in favor and against both interpretations here and there (Kodir, 2019, pp. 200-202). Insofar as the Holy Qur'an and hadiths are open for both feminist and patriarchal interpretations; thus, this situation reflects a true contradiction. Only with the modern logic of *dialetheia* could Muslim comprehend it easily rather than the Aristotelian logic. Second, the Islamic feminism discourse seems to be new to the Islamic communities but, on the contrary, the Minangkabaunese cultural setting has been showing how these matrilineal oriented communities have been fighting for gender justice through the institution of *bundo kanduang*. All Minangkabaunese families implement the matrilineal ideals but some of them might also exercise the idea of matrifocal where women lead their own household. If this is the case, then it is likely that this family is matriarchal as well in its nature. However, some of my interviewees such as Silfia Hanani, Kanti Pertiwi and Windy Botutihe argue in favor of a view saying that matrilineality does not always lead to matriarchy. Indeed, there were some printed media that used to conduct various campaigns for gender justice in Minangkabau. In other words, the issue of gender justice is not new for the Minangkabaunese ethnic whose people love to claim themselves as having a strong commitment to Islam except on the issue of inheritance where they are prone to exercise the adat or custom law instead of the shariah one. Third, a true contradiction is also available on the fact that Minangkabaunese people are familiar with gender justice whose token is *bundo kanduang* but they

contradictorily disdain some words like 'gender' and 'feminist' due to a misleading, linguistic association towards homosexuality.

Moreover, Etin Anwar's distinction is counterproductive to the feminist movement. Not only is it discriminatory towards sexual agencies but it also ignores the necessity of a logical structure whether it complies to Aristotelian logic or its modern counterpart. The self-ownership concept sheds some light on how Minangkabaunese men submit to the institution of *bundo kanduang* though they have been marginalized in terms of deriving benefits from the collective heirloom. Whether the Minangkabau culture is merely matrilineal or the combination of matrilineal and matriarchy; it does not change the historical fact where Minangkabau used to be the home ground for Islamic feminist movements either through education, the printed media, economic empowerment, and politics. It was massive because it did not put the label of feminism. If it is true that contemporary Minangkabaunese people are reluctant to some words like 'feminist' and 'feminism' due to misunderstanding, then the current Islamic feminist movement should adopt the "cultural language" of *bundo kanduang* in order to increase the quality of gender justice and equality in Minangkabau. With respect to such logical structure of *dialetheia*, a new meaning of Islamic feminism is the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the Holy Qur'an and hadiths, both of which might be either patriarchal or feminist in their own interpretations. These interpretations should also pay attention to the local culture in which an Islamic feminist movement has been operating, and it does not need to exclude all feminist men from its own struggles just as the Minangkabaunese feminist movement had shown in the past.

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