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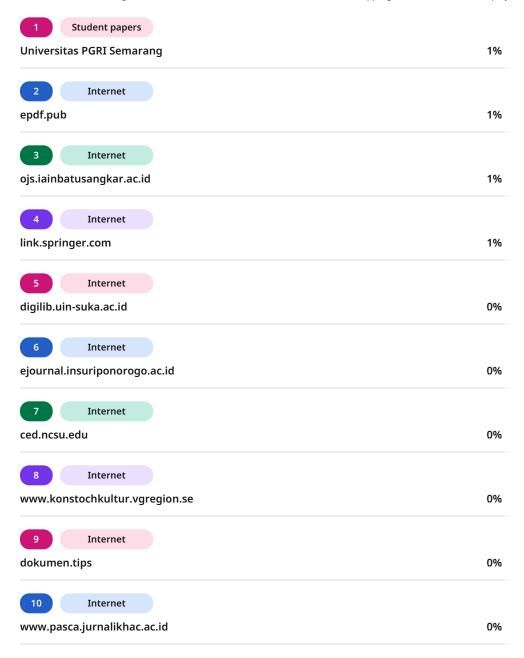Matches with in-text citation present, but no quotation marks

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Intellectual Capital of Islamic Boarding Schools to Build Multicultural Education Epistemology

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Abstract

This research intends to discover the multicultural epistemology at Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). So far, Westerners and some university graduates have dominated the discourse on multicultural education, even though pesantren, with their distinctive intellectual capital, have their own perspectives on understanding, developing, and practicing multicultural education. Using phenomenological qualitative research on two pesantrens in Indonesia, this study uncovered that pesantrens have significant multicultural capital through personal, structural, or relational knowledge. For pesantren, multicultural education is not only an anthropological issue but rather a manifestation of the theology of humanity. Multicultural education for pesantren is a legacy of traditions of freedom of opinion, openness to differences, and the essence of humanity.

Keywords: intellectual capital; pesantren; epistemology; multicultural education

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A. Introduction

Many experts from various perspectives have conducted multicultural studies in the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). However, the research findings have not shown a single pesantren epistemological building regarding multicultural education. In contrast, pesantrens have multicultural knowledge roots, which are inherently part of the pesantren education discourse (Naim & Qomar, 2021). Several studies show that pesantren is a miniature of Islamic moderation (Wildan & Muttaqin, 2022). For example, pesantrens recognize many traditions of debate and differing views in the Fiqh tradition. This difference of opinion is rooted in a multicultural intellectual root owned and developed in pesantren (Arif, 2016; Latif & Hafid, 2021).

This research found that the epistemological building of multicultural education is typical of pesantren. Research reveals that epistemological understanding has crucial implications for learning: for instance, beliefs about the nature of knowledge can influence strategic use, understanding, cognitive processing, and learning conceptual change (Hofer, 2008). Referring to studies in two pesantrens, the researchers wanted to find out what knowledge capital was and where the pesantrens obtained this knowledge.

The construction of pesantren's multicultural knowledge displays a unique style of thinking. This study is critical because Western, mainly American, scholars seem to dominate the primary literature on multicultural education. This assumption is inconsistent with the goal of critical education, which seeks to counteract power imbalances and provide visibility to less popular individuals along with their culture, understanding, and perspectives (R'boul & Bueno-Alastuey, 2021). This study argues that it is necessary to include the epistemology of pesantren in the theory and practice of multicultural education to realize justice. Its main aim is to explain the possibility of further developing multicultural education by integrating knowledge and other ways of knowing.

Based on the findings of researchers, pesantren have a unique way of thinking, behaving, and acting regarding multicultural education. Multiculturalism is seen not only as an anthropological problem but also as a theological and cosmological problem (Mustafied, interview, March 8, 2019). For pesantren, differences are natural and therefore have become a provision humans cannot avoid (Masrur, Interview, January 10, 2019). Consequently, humans cannot be separated from differences; respecting differences is a godly person's belief and attitude. In the indigenization of Islam in Java, the construction of knowledge, especially concerning pesantren, can be seen from the mindset of people who think

critically, have transformative teachings, and think inclusively (Fauzan & Rohmadi, 2021).

This research was conducted in two pesantrens, i.e., Pesantren Al-Qodir and Pesantren Aswaja Nusantara, in Yogyakarta. These two pesantrens are very concerned with the discourse of multicultural education. Several thoughts and practices of multicultural education also appear in pesantren activities. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, the researchers used observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The data were then analyzed using the constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to generate comprehensive findings from the two research sites.

In this study, the researchers first employed the perspective of intellectual capital to see the ownership of knowledge about diversity. This knowledge develops dynamically as part of the pesantren's knowledge contestation with the outside world. Therefore, the researchers used the perspectives of individual/personal knowledge, structural (institutional), and relational knowledge (Basile, 2010; J. L. Chatzkel, 2003). The researchers used the three forms of knowledge to see the body of knowledge of multicultural pesantren.

The ownership of this knowledge was analyzed to understand the construction of pesantren's multicultural knowledge. After describing the construction of multicultural knowledge, the researchers explain the epistemological foundation of pesantren in understanding and developing thoughts about multicultural education. This epistemological building looks at not only how they understand but also how they act practically in responding to diversity.

B. Method

The researchers used a qualitative-phenomenological approach to research intellectual capital and multicultural education epistemology (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Saldana, 2011). Data were collected using in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The researchers interviewed 28 informants: 14 at Pesantren Al-Qodir and 14 at Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara. One informant was interviewed as often as needed for information, from once to three times. Interviews took an average of an hour and a half. In this regard, the researchers dug up data for 1.5 years between 2019 and 2020.

Apart from the data from interviews, the researchers also made observations one week every month. During the observation, the researchers mostly observed the intellectual activities of Kiai, the teachers (*ustadz*), and the

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students (*santri*). The researchers also observed *santri*s from other religions who stayed for two weeks at the pesantren. The practical aspect is the activities of *santri*s learning with *santri*s from other religions to live together and collaborate.

Documents about pesantren are also an essential source of data. The researchers collected several documents, including pesantren profile documents, reference books, rules applied in pesantren, photos of inter-religious and cross-social community activities, documentary films containing messages of peace, and letters (invitations, MoUs) related to relational knowledge.

Since this study was conducted at two sites, the researchers used cross-site analysis. The researchers employed the Constant Comparative Method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to find a universal relationship between each site. In this case, the researchers first interpreted and concluded the data related to intellectual capital to get an overview of the pesantren's knowledge. The conclusions from the two sites were then combined, resulting in integrated findings related to multicultural education epistemology.

C. Results and Discussion
1. Pesantren's Multicultural Intellectual Capital

Pesantren is an institution of Islamic religious education with many Islamic scientific bodies of knowledge. The scientific body of knowledge of pesantren consists of many scientific perspectives (Manshur, 2020; Ni'am, 2015), and these various scientific perspectives are essential assets related to multicultural studies. This capital can be referred to as the intellectual capital of multicultural pesantren. Intellectual capital can be understood as individual or institutional ownership of knowledge. All forms of knowledge owned by individuals or institutions, including pesantren, are assets for them. In this sense, pesantren can be seen as an Islamic boarding school with knowledge capital owned by individuals, relations, or accumulated knowledge institutionally (J. L. Chatzkel, 2003). Meanwhile, the intellectual capital of multiculturalism in this study is intended for knowledge capital related to multiculturalism and knowledge capital that contributes to developing multicultural understanding and attitudes.

These two definitions give a thorough overview of pesantren's various types of multicultural knowledge. In studying the ownership of intellectual capital, the researchers considered three forms of knowledge inherent in a pesantren environment. These three forms include personal knowledge (Kiai, *ustadz,* and *santri*), structural knowledge (curriculum, scientific activities,

discussions, and others, which are institutional knowledge assets), and relational knowledge (experts, work partners, and other communities) (Basile, 2010; J. L. Chatzkel, 2003).

This intellectual capital initially became a concentration in management research. However, the terminology has recently been used in several fields, including education. Conceptually, intellectual capital is an intangible asset related to the accumulation of knowledge. According to Chatzkel, intellectual capital is material knowledge that assumes these resources can be processed into a profit (J. Chatzkel, 2006). In the context of educational institutions, Basile sees intellectual capital as consisting of three main components: external capital (such as educational institutions, parents, companies, and other external organizations that play a role in educational institutions), internal capital (such as government structures, curriculum development, management processes, recruitment, and administrative procedures), and human capital (such as teacher knowledge and professional development processes) (Basile 2010, 1-2). Specifically, human capital is the sum of several capabilities in a pesantren. These capabilities include the individual's organizational knowledge, skills, and experience (Bontis & Fitz-enz, 2002; J. L. Chatzkel, 2003; Wright, 2021).

In the study of epistemology, personal knowledge becomes a study of personal epistemology (Hofer, 2008). The goal is to find each individual's worldview (Feucht et al., 2017). Meanwhile, structural capital is the knowledge embedded, empowered, and institutionalized for individual development, such as curriculum, learning, scientific activities, availability of references, and others, which become the knowledge infrastructure of pesantren. Moreover, relational capital refers to knowledge obtained through relationships with institutions outside the organization. Relational capital is almost the same as social networks but is oriented toward acquiring knowledge.

The three forms of multicultural knowledge will show the ownership of pesantren knowledge capital related to multiculturalism. It is based on the argument that pesantren can build multicultural awareness more or less against their knowledge background. The more knowledge one has, the more open one is to differences. Further, being more open to multicultural realities helps pesantren gain knowledge.

1) Individual/Personal Knowledge (Human Capital) of Pesantren

Pesantren Al-Qodir and Aswaja Nusantara mainly rely on Kiai as a vital source of information. The *santri's* understanding of diversity also often

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makes the knowledge of the Kiai a reference, both through his work and advice, especially the example shown through the daily behavior of the Kiai.

Individually, the Kiai has an intellectual capital of multiculturalism, as shown by several works written by the Kiai, both in the form of books, scientific articles, and popular writings. Some of the works written by Kiai at Pesantren Al-Qodir are *Tauhid Kemanusiaan* [Monotheism of Humanity] (Published in Pustaka Pesantren, 2018); *Islam Hijau: Mendayung Kebersamaan dalam Keberagaman* [Green Islam: Rowing Togetherness in Diversity] (2016); *Islam Hijau: Merangkul Budaya dan Menyambut Kearifan Lokal* [Green Islam: Embracing Culture and Welcoming Local Wisdom] (2014); and *Islam Hijau: Refleksi Keagamaan dan Kebangsaan NU* [Green Islam: Reflections on Religion and Nationality of NU] (2014). The four books, especially *Tauhid Kemanusiaan,* show an understanding that religion is humane.

Kiai Mustafied, the leader of Pesantren Aswaja Nusantara, has also produced significant works related to multicultural issues, namely *Sufisme dan Radikalisme: Perspektif Orientalis dan Tradisi Sufi Nusantara* [Sufism and Radicalism: Orientalist Perspectives and the Indonesian Sufi Tradition], International Conference on Sufism, Friday, November 18, 2016, Faculty of Philosophy, Gadjah Mada University; *Islam dan Politik Kewaraganegaraan: Modul Belajar Bersama* [Islam and Citizenship Politics: Collaborative Learning Module] (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2007); *Mencari Pijakan Strategi Kebudayaan NU* [Searching for the Foundation of NU's Cultural Strategy] (*Tashwirul Afkar* 21, 2007); and *Pesantren dan Transformasi Keilmuan: Mencari Pijakan Pemaknaan Pendidikan Tinggi Berbasis Pesantren* [Islamic Boarding Schools and Scientific Transformation: Finding the Meaning of Islamic Boarding School-Based Higher Education]. In addition to the works above, many of Kiai's writings have been published in several mass media.

The two Kiai's knowledge above exhibit that pesantren is very concerned about multicultural knowledge. This knowledge produces pesantren knowledge, which can be crucial in building multicultural awareness (Latif, 2016), and even pesantren displays inclusive and tolerant thinking (van Bruinessen, 2011). The ownership of this multicultural knowledge tradition shows the typical pesantren epistemological building.

Kiai's intellectual capital is the principal capital of the pesantren because he is the top leader in the pesantren structure. Moreover, the pesantren context often makes the Kiai a role model in thinking and behaving

(Maárif, 2015). If Kiai shows a capital of multicultural knowledge, his *santris* will slowly follow him. In fact, in the phenomenon that occurred at Pesantren Aswaja Nusantara, this role was also played by *Bu Nyai* (female Ulama/Kiai's wife). *Bu Nyai* also has great concern for multicultural issues.

Apart from Kiai's and Bu Nyai's knowledge, some of *ustadz* and *santri's* knowledge also became the capital of the pesantren for developing multicultural knowledge. What is most striking about the *santri* is that their multicultural knowledge tends to be in the style of popular knowledge. However, this popular knowledge produces a reasonably good understanding. One of them is the ability of the *santris* to produce documentary films. Of course, this work requires quite good multicultural skills because, in its production, the *santris* visit houses of worship of other religions and interact with them (Pesantren Document on Tolerance Week Activities, accessed on November 9, 2018).

2) Pesantren's Structural Knowledge

Structure-related information about the multicultural themes in Pesantren Al-Qodir and Aswaja Nusantara could be found in the Yellow Book by looking up Fiqh, interpretation, and Sufism in different places. In the structure of the pesantren curriculum, the Yellow Book has become the primary reference and is mainstream pedagogical and academic knowledge (Millie, 2008; Nilan, 2009).

The study of the Yellow Book (*Kitab Kuning*), a reference for pesantrens, can recognize and find the seeds of understanding pluralism and multiculturalism. The epistemology of Fiqh itself recognizes the differences in schools of thought, and Muslims are allowed to follow one of them (Latif & Hafid, 2021; Yani et al., 2018). Many Sufi books present the attitude of Sufis, who tend to be tolerant of differences (Hodgson, 2009). Kiai Masrur also conveyed that multiculturalism is commonly found in the discipline of Sufism. He said, "The higher one's spirituality, the more accepting and appreciative one is diversity" (Masrur, interview, January 10, 2019).

For the two pesantrens, the structural knowledge of pesantren is mainly found in references to *Tasawuf* (mysticism) books containing many multicultural values. Knowledge about humility, resignation, sincerity, self-sacrifice, and others becomes the basis of knowledge about the relationship between servants and God and humans. Thus, Kiai's works on human monotheism, Sufism, radicalism, and several other themes were born.

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The seeds of multiculturalism in the Yellow Book (*Kitab Kuning*) are growing along with the openness of the Kiai to various book references. Some external knowledge sources provide additional material for learning in pesantrens. Structurally, much knowledge about multiculturalism is obtained through meeting Kiai and *santri* from other communities. A scientific activity related to multiculturalism was born from these encounters and meetings. One of them was when Catholic students wanted to cooperate with pesantrens. A Week of Tolerance Activity was formed with the theme "Building Relations in a Multicultural Society" on October 10–13, 2017. In this activity, Catholic students and *santri*s conducted dialogue and joint discussions to exchange knowledge from each other's religious traditions. Apart from this, there was also material on building peace in a multi-religious society.

The *santri*s gained much knowledge about multiculturalism, including producing documentaries collaborating with Catholic Youth (OMK) (Samson, interview, January 11, 2019). The film included the title *"Indonesia Rumah Bersama."* The film's content indicates the *santri*s' visits to several places of worship of other religions while communicating with religious leaders. In addition to this film, the pesantren had a video entitled "Reciting Tolerance". A guest made this video of the pesantren to show that the pesantren has a high level of concern for tolerance. The video also exhibited how interfaith dialogue activities were carried out by *santri*s (Pesantren Video "Ngaji Tolerance," accessed on January 12, 2019).

The *santri*s at Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara also did the same thing. They often made short videos covering various aspects of pesantren life. Among the several videos documented, one short video contained education on multicultural values. One of the short films that won a national competition organized by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) was a video entitled *"Not the Firm Line".* The film displays content that counters radicalism among *santri*s.

One of the prominent characteristics of the two pesantrens was studied in scientific discussion. As is common practice in many pesantrens, deliberation (discussion) is a significant concern. These discussions were held almost daily after the *diniyah* (classical Islamic learning that only contains Islamic religious subjects through the Yellow Book). Each *santri* gathered in one room to discuss various materials about the school (for those at school), lecture materials for *santri*s, and materials for the *diniyah*. The

discussions that arose in this series were constantly related to contextual issues.

In addition to discussions related to school, lectures, and *diniyah* topics, discussions among *santri*s often raised general topics, such as the issue of hoaxes, terrorism, radicalism, and several other issues. Discussions or deliberations held in this pesantren were different from deliberations in general. The difference that stood out was the type of literature used. Aside from the classic Islamic literature (classical books), there were several references to white books (non-Arabic textbooks) in Indonesian and English. The references to the white papers were from various scientific disciplines, including philosophy, social sciences-humanities, religion, and others.

3) Relational Knowledge of *Pesantren*

Following the characteristics of pesantren, the knowledge generated from relations is not intended to change the structure of the curriculum entirely but rather to provide additional knowledge for *santri*s in addition to the classic books regularly held in pesantren. Relational knowledge was naturally formed when activities occurred with communities outside the pesantren. One of them was when Catholic students or youth lived in the pesantren for a few days. Pesantren usually held dialogues, discussions, and training together and had them as resource persons when they lived.

At Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara, activities that showed the form of knowledge from this relationship were often carried out. The themes raised also varied widely, depending on the development of the discourse and the actual issues (Mustafied, Interview, March 8, 2019). The knowledge presented from several sources is an intellectual tradition being developed. Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara did this to develop the *santri*'s capacity and introduce various scientific traditions.

For pesantren, pesantren dialectic and multidisciplinary knowledge are urgent needs amid the development of the world of knowledge (Hefner, 2022). Many call the current era the "knowledge era" (Daim et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2021), so pesantren must equip *santri*s with many scientific perspectives. In addition to these discussions, the pesantrens have also held joint discussion activities with non-Muslim communities.

The intellectual dialectic between non-Muslims and pesantrens provides impetus to build a complementary and cooperative relationship. This relationship can be a valuable asset for pesantren in improving the

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quality of science. This intellectual growth can happen because of an inclusive attitude. Therefore, it can be said that openness to differences is the primary key to opening the cultural and scientific gates of pesantrens (Hefner, 2008).

In addition, pesantren needs innovative approaches to modern Muslim intellectualism that can build on traditional strengths. Islamic studies that consider contemporary realities add a new dimension to the complexity of knowledge's production and transmission processes. Apart from the formal content of legal, theological, and social texts, the approach to Muslim thought in the modern period also needs to pay attention to the dynamics of new educational and publishing structures, new forms of media, and cross-cultural discussion contexts, all complemented by methodological flexibility that is theoretically aware and moves back and forth between the text-specific dimensions of cultural analysis and the broader culture (Feener, 2007). Multicultural issues also need to be raised in the framework of reflection on the latest work on mapping the history of Islamic intellectuals, especially in pesantrens in Indonesia.

2. Types of Pesantren's Multicultural Knowledge

Some of pesantren's intellectual capital in multiculturalism can be analyzed using the five types of knowledge put forward by James A. Banks: 1) personal/cultural knowledge, (2) popular knowledge, (3) mainstream academic knowledge, (4) transformative academic knowledge, and (5) pedagogical knowledge (Banks, 1993, 2015, 2020). The five types of knowledge display the characteristics and dynamics of knowledge in pesantrens.

First, personal knowledge is the concepts, ideas, and interpretations obtained by Kiai, Ibu Nyai (female Ulama), *Ustadz*, and *Santri* from personal experience, both at home, in their families, and in their regional culture (Banks, 1993; Banks & Banks, 2019). The *santris* also have diverse backgrounds in language, tradition, socio-economic background, and regional origins. They cannot escape the culture they bring from home, family, and region, and they bring their knowledge.

Second, popular knowledge consists of facts, interpretations, and beliefs institutionalized in films, videos, DVDs, CDs, and other forms of mass media (Banks 1993, 7; Banks and Banks 2019). At Pesantren Al-Qodir, this popular knowledge occurred in the *santri*'s daily activities. This knowledge was also institutionalized by producing videos containing multicultural issues, such as

"Ngaji Toleransi" (Study Tolerance) and *"Indonesia Rumah Bersama"* (Indonesia is Home Together) (Samson, interview, January 11, 2019). Apart from videos, this popular knowledge was obtained through several shows and content published on the pesantren's website. The *santri*s could access it at any time to obtain this knowledge.

Third, mainstream academic knowledge consists of concepts, paradigms, theories, and explanations that are traditional and well-established behavioral and social sciences knowledge. Like the other forms of knowledge discussed, mainstream academic knowledge is not static but dynamic, complex, and changing (Banks, 1993; Banks & Banks, 2019). Pesantrens cannot be separated from mainstream academic knowledge. *Kitab Kuning* is one type of mainstream academic knowledge among pesantrens. However, regarding multicultural knowledge, pesantrens still use it as the primary reference and integrate it with the social context of Indonesian society, resulting in several writings that discuss tolerance, overcoming radicalism, the monotheism of humanity, and others. This work was born because this type of knowledge is not static but can change according to the development of discourse and the social context faced by pesantren.

Modern pesantrens are also increasingly open to the development of science. Religious and general knowledge integration began to be discussed in the pesantren environment (Mashudi, 2020). Moral education, for example, has interacted with discourses on character education, tolerance, and nationalism (Mujahid, 2021).

Fourth, transformative academic knowledge consists of concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge and expand on historical and literary canons. Transformative academic knowledge challenges some of the main assumptions that mainstream scholars make about the nature of knowledge. Transformative and mainstream academic knowledge are based on different epistemological assumptions about the nature of knowledge, the construction of knowledge, and the purpose of knowledge (Banks, 1993; Banks & Banks, 2019).

The two pesantrens often used transformative terms due to the backgrounds of the readings and movements that interest Kiai and Ustadz. Several discussion themes showed a pesantren transformation movement, especially in scientific methodology. This need was to provide the driving force of pesantrens in giving birth to social transformation. In fact, in viewing

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multicultural education, pesantrens also viewed it as a transformational movement.

This role is a logical consequence of the existence of pesantrens as a strategic component in shaping community members' awareness. Pesantren is one of the social institutions that move to give birth to a generation of youth. Therefore, it is very appropriate that multicultural education wants to contribute to laying the foundations of multicultural awareness in a multicultural society.

As Gosrki stated, this transformative role aligns with the idea that multicultural education is a progressive approach to transforming education that holistically criticizes and responds to discriminatory educational policies and practices (Gorski, 2010; Gorski & Parekh, 2020). It is based on social justice, equality in education, critical pedagogy, and a high degree of dedication to providing an educational experience where all *santris* can reach their full potential as learners and as conscious and active social beings locally, nationally, and globally.

This transformative multicultural education does not assume that transformative knowledge and approaches can easily replace canonized structures and processes. When transformative academic knowledge is introduced, it is common to experience unrest in practice, with mainstream knowledge becoming the status quo. Thus, the purpose of multicultural education is none other than to influence social change. This goal aligns with Islam's mission as a transformative religion (Kuntowijoyo, 2008), namely changing from dark to light (*min adz-dzulumati ila an-nur*), from exclusive to inclusive.

Fifth, pedagogical knowledge consists of facts, concepts, and generalizations presented in textbooks, *ustadz* guides, and other media designed for teaching. Pedagogical knowledge also involves mediating and interpreting information in teaching materials and resources (Banks, 1993, 2013, 2020). In the context of pesantrens, pedagogical knowledge can be seen using books, which are the primary references in studying *diniyah* and *bandongan* recitation with the Kiai. However, this pedagogical knowledge has no specific material related to multicultural education. They obtain scientific reference books through *diniyah* learning and various additional programs outside of *diniyah* learning.

3. Efforts to Build Multicultural Education Epistemology

Multicultural intellectuality in pesantrens can be developed for several reasons. First, Kiai and Bu Nyai are interested in intellectual aspects and are open to various scientific disciplines, which are inseparable from multicultural issues. Second, the students consist of students and *santri*s, so many activities support intellectual development. Third, there is a reasonably good literacy tradition with various scientific activities. Pesantren often uses Kiai's intellectual network by presenting several experts from various scientific disciplines. This tradition allows the *santris* to have many scientific perspectives, not just the Yellow Book of Knowledge.

Kiai's attention to the academic world also provides a good understanding of multicultural discourse. Kiai himself provides a perspective on multicultural epistemology. The term multicultural epistemology first appeared when researchers conducted interviews with caregivers at Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara. It turned out that multicultural discourse had also received a severe response from Kiai when observing the development of multicultural discourse.

The term multicultural education epistemology in this research needs to be clarified first. Multicultural epistemology, according to Ruitenberg, is open to many interpretations that depend on the underlying conceptions of both "epistemology" and "multiculturalism" that are held (Ruitenberg 2014, 286). Entering this term begins by discussing the difference between multicultural society as a phenomenon and multiculturalism as a policy or attitude. It then discusses three interpretations of "epistemology" and how people have manifested themselves using multicultural epistemology terms concerning education (Phillips & Ruitenberg, 2012; Ruitenberg, 2014).

The first interpretation views epistemology as a philosophical practice. If epistemology is considered a philosophical practice, part of a more considerable philosophical discipline concerned with the study of knowledge and how claims to know something are justified or supported, then "multicultural epistemology" can refer to "multicultural sensibility." Doing epistemology with a multicultural sensibility means philosophical practice with a multiculturalist awareness of how traditional understandings of knowledge and knowledge have sidelined those from different backgrounds (Ruitenberg 2014, 287).

The second interpretation uses the term epistemology to refer not to a philosophical practice but to a particular set of beliefs about knowledge resulting from this practice. In this way, scholars can refer to "epistemology" in various forms. If epistemology is taken this way, "multicultural epistemology" can refer to beliefs about knowledge that coexist in multicultural societies. If the

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multiculturalist principle in the first interpretation is that different cultural groups within a society are entitled to their values, beliefs, and practices, "multicultural epistemology" can refer to the idea that various cultural groups within a society have and are entitled to their ideas about knowledge (Ruitenberg 2014, 287).

The third interpretation of "multicultural epistemology" is an epistemology (a set of beliefs about knowledge) that those practicing multicultural education assume. In other words, what do they consider knowledgeable about multicultural education, especially multicultural society? Lesko and Bloom argue that students' subjective experiences should be taken seriously as a type of knowledge. A dialogical approach to constructing shared knowledge is more appropriate than focusing on accurate knowledge about multicultural societies based on objective goals (Ruitenberg 2014, 288). Research shows that epistemological understanding has important implications for learning: for example, beliefs about the nature of knowledge can influence strategic use, understanding, cognitive processing, and learning conceptual change (Hofer, 2008).

In pesantren epistemology, the interpretation above can be seen in two interpretations at once: epistemology as a philosophical practice that examines multiculturalism and epistemology as a set of beliefs regarding the opinions of pesantrens that practice multicultural education. In this case, pesantrens also have their own knowledge base regarding multicultural education. Through this pesantren, we want to show the outside world that Islam is cosmopolitan, not closed, not anti-plurality, and always open to dialogue and civilization. Those who are anti-plurality are those who do not understand Islamic values. Islam has values that drive social transformation. Islam contains a transformative movement. This pesantren also concentrates on strategic public issues (Mustafied, interview, March 8, 2019).

Epistemologically, multiculturalism for Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara is rooted in their view of Aswaja as the foundation of social epistemology. Aswaja as a social epistemology contains three main aspects: ways of thinking, behaving, and acting (Mustafied, interview, March 8, 2019). First, the way of thinking according to Aswaja is a critical-dialectical thinking method that combines *naqli* propositions (doctrine/revelation), *aqli* propositions (ratio/reason), *irfani* propositions (intuition, inspiration), and *waqi'i* propositions (empiric). Combining these four propositions, Aswaja

epistemology rejects pure rationalism, as developed by liberal thinkers who glorify theoretical reason; rejects orthodox positivism, as developed by materialists who ignore metaphysical reality; and rejects spiritualists who reject empirical reality. Aswaja's epistemology also rejects the understanding of *dhahiriyah* and scripturalist groups because it does not allow a deep understanding of religion and social reality.

With this way of thinking, Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara sees the concept of multiculturalism as combining four sources of knowledge: the *naqli* proposition (doctrine/revelation), the *aqli* proposition (ratio/reason), the *irfani* proposition (intuition, inspiration), and the *waqi'I* proposition (empiric). These four sources of knowledge are used because pesantren cannot be separated from the revelations and *Irfan''s* arguments. This thinking paradigm aligns with the three classifications of thinking framework put forward by Abed Al-Jabiri: *burhani* reasoning, *bayani* reasoning, and *irfani* reasoning (Al-Jabiri, 2014).

Second, regarding attitude, Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara believes that Aswaja views the world as a plural and multilevel reality. Therefore, plurality is accepted as a reality. However, being active also maintains this plurality so that life becomes harmonious by knowing each other (*lita''rofu*) and enriching culture. Moderation and tolerance are the keys to managing this plurality. Thus, Aswaja rejects all attitudes that damage and destroy cultural diversity or plurality (Mustafied 2019). Thus, multicultural education is a consequence of thinking about plural reality as reality.

Third, in acting, pesantren recognizes the existence of Allah's will (*taqdir*), but Aswaja also recognizes that Allah has gifted humans with minds and wills. Therefore, Aswaja does not act passively and fatally in the face of Allah's will but strives to achieve His destiny, which is known as *Kasab* (struggle) in theology (Mustafied, 2019). Aswaja also believes that historical changes do not come from the sky. Change is also not anthropocentric in that humans are the center of everything, the center of value measurement, and therefore free will (like the Qadariyah). Since history and nature will inevitably limit human action, there is no need for strict restrictions. However, those limitations do not apply to Allah SWT. In Aswaja's view, this action is not secular but a dialectic of faith that manifests in all aspects of life (Mustafied, 2019). Thus, multiculturalism is not purely due to anthropological issues and human freedom, nor is it solely God's will that must be carried out, but instead tries to carry out a dialectic between faith and humanity.

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Moreover, the epistemology of multicultural education does not only depart from the anthropological reality of humans that humans are indeed different from one another but there is also a belief in *sunnatullah* (God's provision for multicultural reality). This argument has the consequence of being true in science. For pesantren, the discourse of multicultural education contains aspects of transcendence rooted in knowledge of human monotheism. Appreciation for diversity is a manifestation of the recognition of the oneness of God. Research indicates that epistemological understanding has important implications for learning; for example, beliefs about the nature of knowledge can influence strategic use, understanding, cognitive processing, and learning conceptual change.

The study that needs to be pointed out here is when Yusuf (2020) looks at the construction of knowledge of tolerance in pesantrens. Tolerance studies indirectly develop in the discourse of pesantren knowledge. This knowledge tradition mainly occurs in several *bahtsul masa'il* (Yusuf 2020, 216-217). However, in its development, especially at Pesantren Aswaja-Nusantara, developing scientific discourse also involves contemporary scientific developments. Various scientific perspectives are opened as wide as possible to get a more diverse picture. *Santris* must be more open to scientific perspectives outside mainstream academic knowledge for pesantren.

D. Conclusion

Dissecting the epistemology of multicultural education in pesantrens is an attempt to see how pesantrens understand multicultural education. This understanding is rooted in the intellectual tradition of the pesantren. This understanding can also be seen from pesantren's multicultural knowledge capital: individual/personal, structural, and relational knowledge. These three types of knowledge show a multicultural knowledge base based on the intellectual culture of the pesantren.

The epistemology of pesantren multicultural education does not only depart from human anthropological reality that humans are indeed different from one another but also a belief in *sunnatullah* (God's provision for multicultural reality). This belief has the consequence of being true in science. For pesantren, the discourse of multicultural education contains aspects of transcendence rooted in knowledge of human monotheism. Appreciation for diversity is a manifestation of the recognition of the oneness of God.

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Research in the context of pesantrens also shows that epistemological understanding has important implications for implementing multicultural education. For pesantren, the epistemology of Sufism requires the appreciation and practice of spiritual values, so multicultural education is not only an intellectual discourse but also needs to be applied in daily activities. Within this framework, multicultural education is a habituation process of multicultural valuesas part of practicing substantive Islamic teachings.

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