multicultural attitudes in an Islamic boarding school of South Sulawesi – Indonesia

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Abstract: This qualitative study examines examples of multicultural attitudes in pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. It employs focus group discussions (FGD), in-depth interviews and participatory observations research methods to figure out multicultural life at Pesantren Darul Istiqamah (DI), a non-denominational pesantren in Maros, South Sulawesi—Indonesia. The research subjects were ustad (teacher), students (santri), and kyai (religious leaders) of the pesantren. The data were analyzed, contrasted and compared systematically through an inductive qualitative approach. The researchers conclude that pesantren have their own perspectives about multiculturalism derived from the holy Koran without adopting Western theories. Their views fundamentally reflect an opinion that human beings are created with differences, so, diversities in language, race, and religion are inevitable and therefore people should respect each other. This philosophy underpins curriculum, teaching-learning process and interactions inside/ outside of the pesantren which are inclusive and equally valued all diversity.

Subjects: Asian Education; Educational Research; Philosophy; Religion; Religion & Education; Cultural Studies

Keywords: Multicultural attitudes; Islamic Boarding School; differences; pesantren; Indonesia Introduction

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
Pesantren as a model of Islamic educational institutions derives from the fourteenth-century Islamic education system, especially in Southeast Asia. Pesantren has a long history that even preceded inceptions of all countries in the region, including Indonesia. Following the western media and policymakers, pesantren is frequently regarded as the center of teaching extremism and radicalism to Indonesia’s young generation. This research showed that pesantren strongly promoted the importance of empathizing to others regardless of their races, colors, languages and religions. In other words, pesantren accentuated multicultural attitudes, such as respect, tolerance, and recognition of diversities inside and outside of their contexts. These values are embedded and highly emphasized in pesantren’s daily life and activities. The pesantren’s principle of diversity is taken from the Holy Koran and prophetic traditions without considering Western multiculturalism theories.
Since the prohibition of pluralism, liberalism, and secularism issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council in 2005 (Keputusan Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2005; Raihani, 2012), diversity issues, especially that of religion, has attracted considerable debate in Indonesia. The emergence of this prohibition, a fatwa or decree by collective ulama, might indicate that the diversity issue is still a severe problem in Indonesia. One relevant argument in terms of this prohibition is that those ideologies are assumed to be the product of a Western culture which may lead to breaking the local wisdom of Indonesia (Munawar-Rachman, 2010). The resistance toward those ideologies, especially the concept of pluralism, was also considered to stem from confusion among other Muslims who misperceived the pluralist notion that all religions are correct and have similar visions and objectives. This misunderstanding, under certain circumstances, will come in opposition with a range of religious perspectives which believe the truth of a single religion only, not all religions. Therefore, the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council found widespread support among a particular group of Indonesian Muslims (Husain, 2005).

However, some argue that this fatwa may threaten the wide range of religious, cultural and ethnic diversities within Indonesia (Sirry, 2013). Although 90% of the Indonesian citizen are Muslims, around 9% are Christians, while the rest are Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians (Mulya & Aditomo, 2019), Indonesia is not an Islamic state which only acknowledges its majority religion (Laksana & Wood, 2019). In line with this, Parker (2014) argues that Indonesia is neither an Islamic state nor a secular state, but rather a religious state which accommodates all recognized religions (Islam, Catholic, Protestant, Buddha, Hindu, and Kong Hucu). This fact implies that all religions should be equally treated in public places as long as they believe in one Supreme God. This notion is clearly stated in the first principle of Pancasila, believe in one God, regardless of religious differences (Parker, 2014). In this sense, pancasila as the ideology of the state should embrace six different religions without prioritizing one religion above the others. This ideology is regarded as the main foundation of the state to manage the differences based on religions, ethnicities, languages, and cultures. Hence, the emergence of this fatwa was believed to further create religious intolerance within Indonesia. Moreover, this fatwa was followed by other fatwas, for example, forbidding Muslims to pray with non-Muslims, banning Muslims to get marry with non-Muslims, and excluding Ahmadiyah as a recognized group of Islamic thoughts in Indonesia (Hoon, 2017).

Furthermore, a problem of diversity can also become an issue in political context in Indonesia. For example, in 2007 Jakarta’s governor election, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (popularly called Ahok) ran for the position became a target of negative campaigns. His rivals and particular group of Muslims addressed his religious belief and ethnic background to accuse him anti-Islam, disrespect Jakarta’s indigenous people, unsympathetic and inarticulate figure (Harjatanaya & Chang-Yau, 2020). These negative campaigns further escalated massive protests especially from various Muslim groups which resided in Jakarta. Ironically, these protests appear to gain support by several elites in Indonesia Ulama Council who further triggered a massive strike from a certain group of Muslims within the country. Based on these series of fatwa as well as contesting politics of identity, it can be regarded that Indonesia government still encounter a strong barrier to manage diversity.

Although the fatwa, as firstly mentioned, doesn’t literally mention the term “multiculturalism”, many people assume that pluralism and multiculturalism have similar meanings. Banks (2009) argue that these terms are often used interchangeably in the public sphere, a perception which Hoon (2017) suggests cannot be avoided because the two concepts encompass many similar perspectives. Broadly, both terms similarly deal with the discourse of differences regarding religions, ethnicities, languages, races, and colors (Yilmaz & Boylan, 2016). However, the issue of multiculturalism attracts wider discussion among the scholars compared to pluralism (Banks, 2013; Howard et al., 2000). Multiculturalism is not merely the issue of celebrating diversity but also a movement process to bring changes in the society, particularly, creating equal treatment among the human being regardless of cultural and religious diversity (Nye, 2007). In other words, multiculturalism strongly associates with the recognition from the state or political authority.
While numerous studies exist on this issue (Banks, 2013, 2020; Parker, 2014; Raihani, 2012, 2014; Raihani, 2012) this paper will shed light on the multicultural attitudes that are present in pesantren. Focusing on pesantren will allow us to deeply explore the institutions’ practices which usually perceived by Western media and Western policymakers as sources of extremism and radicalism (Lukens-Bull, 2008), especially after the September 112,001 attacks (Hamdi et al., 2015; Pohl, 2006). In Indonesia context, a series of terrorist attacks including Bali Bombing in 2002 and 2005 as well as 2009 tragic bombing at two luxurious hotels (Ritz Carton and JW Mariott) in Jakarta further stigmatized pesantren. This is because all the attacks main actors had an affiliation with a particular pesantren in Java (Bruinessen et al., 2008).

Contrary to these perceptions, this article will delineate pesantren Darul Istiqamah Maccopa Maros (hereafter DI) as a moderate pesantren which acknowledges different cultures, languages and religions. This pesantren can be categorized as an example of best practice in implementing multicultural attitudes within pesantren without learning from multicultural theories developed by Western scholars. They have their own perspectives which come from the Holy Koran as well as prophetic traditions, particularly in looking at the differences, and how to treat others on the basis of diversities within pesantren.

The researchers believe that DI is a good example of a positive multicultural attitude in Indonesian Islamic schools. To mentions few reasons, it can be seen how this kind of pesantren consistently welcome new santri coming from different ethnicities, races, and languages. This practice reassures that DI is open to accommodate all students from different Islamic organisations, especially students who are from Nahdatul Ulama or Muhammadiyah's background. These characteristics make up DI survive and sustain until recent days even significantly grow in terms of santri numbers as well as branches since its establishment in 1970. Another reason that might be illustrated is pesantren DI recently built intimate cooperation with various international organizations to promote democratic governance and human rights. Through these collaborations, DI learns a wide range of different cultures and various customs which lead to create sympathetic insights to the difference among the pesantren stakeholders. All these attributes become the researchers’ main consideration when choosing multicultural attitudes at DI as the topic for this study.

Theoretical Framework

Historically, the ideas paralleling the broad notion of multiculturalism have existed for millennia. Such ideas are present in the works of classical thinkers like Augustine and Aquinas, and later by Montesquieu, John Stuart Mill, and other leading Western philosophers (Farrar et al., 2012). Parekh (2006) moreover points out that the idea of multiculturalism has been widely discussed in the early history of culture differences either in Europe or America. He argued that the concept of monism, adopted from the Greeks and Christianity, does not fit with the current era where a diversity of cultures presents in most societies. Therefore, as contended by Piper (2001) Parekh posited that multiculturalism is an inherent part of human life. However, multiculturalism is seriously taken into account with a specific ideology for change occurred in 1960s, for example, in UK, multiculturalism has become a contested concept, but it has nevertheless also come to be viewed as a soft weapon for creating change through establishing equitable policies across different levels of society (Nye, 2007). Similarly, in Canada in 1965, an effort to accommodate the different ethnicities into consideration arose and pressured one of the recommendations in the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to include a range of different cultural groups rather than just the two main one, the British and the French (Wieviorka, 1998). Comparable demands for equality before the state was also shown in civil rights movement in the USA in the 1960s, when African-Americans fought for recognition in the face of institutionalized racial segregation (Banks, 1977; Alexander, 2013; Banks, 2013; Yilmaz & Boylan, 2016; Howard et al., 2000). This demand was also mentioned as the ethnic revitalization movements (Banks, 2011). These are examples
multiculturalism becoming institutionalized, and all indicate that multicultural ideas often face significant opposition.

Multiculturalism should not be seen just as a theoretical concept; it also drives policies to fight against discrimination or favor certain groups over others. These endeavors might be called as a fighting for “politics of recognition”, referring to Taylor (1994), which strongly need a particular implementation to create multicultural policies. That is why, as Nye (2007) continues to state that there are three different layers of multiculturalism which need to be addressed: it can be an ideology, a social issue, and an academic study. The first two layers demonstrate that multiculturalism calls for action to challenge societal inequalities, while the last mainly concerns on the theoretical contest.

Referring to Parekh (2006), the meaning of multiculturalism itself strongly relies on the respect and recognition of cultural diversity including different practices and systems of beliefs. The presence of diversity is inherent to life in any social and cultural context (Wetherly et al., 2012). Building collective awareness and respect for diversity, according to Piper (2001), should start with respect intra-culture before subsequently building appreciation of other cultures.

Parekh (2006) suggests that intra-dialogue within a cultural is required, because all coherent cultural groups are nevertheless internally plural. In this regard, Harjatanaya and Chang-Yau (2020) outline four fundamental requirements for such dialogue: (1) same status in the internal culture, there is no single culture acts as the dominant within the situation, (2) moving forward with the shared objectives and goals on behalf of human rights (3) strong intergroup collaboration, (4) the support of cultural authorities, laws and norms. All these requirements underpin the suggestion that respect and recognition can be successfully achieved where the relationship between different cultures and intra-culture is created on the basis of equality and equity. Both internal and external dialogues must work together to create a mutual sense of solidarity. This theory is relevant to one of the categories of multiculturalism, that is liberal multiculturalism which emphasize on similarities and the ideas of equality and humanity (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).

Another critical issue is the relationship between multiculturalism and education. Education represents a crucial site in which to put multiculturalism into practice. Banks (2013) argues that multicultural education is an expansion of multi-ethnic education, which only concerns racial and ethnic diversities. Multicultural education, according to Banks (2013), also covers genders differences and should generate social actions. Raihani (2018) contends that multicultural education is a meaningful strategy to teach pupils about diversity. However, in Indonesian contexts, the government does not have a clear or effective strategy to teach students the importance of multiculturalism (Raihani, 2017).

Banks (1992) notes five characteristics that comprise a “best practice” approach in delivering effective multicultural education including content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and empowering school culture. These principles represent useful measures when analyzing multicultural education. However, it should be noted that these principles might not all needed when examining pesantren due to the institution characteristic as a religious institution. Furthermore, these principles that reflect Western education system often consider religious education institutions a less important subject. Consequently, referring to Nye (2007), it is necessary to understand multiculturalism with a particular context, here being that of Islamic education in South Sulawesi, because “multiculturalism” does not refer to a single universal idea.

Ideas mirroring multiculturalism have historically been present in pesantren in Indonesia, in some cases. Pesantren is a traditional type of Islamic education in Indonesia, considered to have become prominent in the 18th century (Srimulyani, 2007), but with roots going back far further. Lukens-Bull (2010) argues that the pesantren system can be traced back to coming of Islam to the Indonesian archipelago, along with the age of Wali Sanga (nine Sufis who propagated Islam in
Java) in 14th century. This of the first known pesantren which was established by Sunan Maulana Malik Ibrahim (the first sufī) in Java in 1399 (Lukens-Bull, 2008).

Historically, the main objective of pesantren, as Lukens-Bull. (2008) points out, is preparing santri to be preachers, to further spread Islam in Java. The term pesantren, is derived from the word santri, and is defined as a place where the religious students stay and learn Islam, while living in the pondok (dormitory) under the guidance of a kyai or religious leader (Bruinessen, 1994; Dhofier, 1980; Effendi, 2008; Geertz, 1960; Mas’ud, 2019). Pesantren are therefore commonly also called as Islamic boarding schools; both terms are used interchangeably. Today, there are 27,722 pesantren across Indonesia, with the highest number located in West Java with 8410 pesantren. In South Sulawesi, where pesantren DI situated, there are 297 pesantren, the most concentrated amount in the east part of Indonesia (Pangkalan Data Pondok Pesantren, 2020). South Sulawesi therefore could be called a land of pesantren, in addition to Java.

Concerning multiculturalism in Indonesian education, it is interesting to note that Clifford Geertz’ influential text The Religion of Java (1960) suggests that the pesantren model of education would decline rather than adapt to new challenges. Geertz is of the opinion that pesantren will be outmoded by modernity and kyai (pesantren leader) and therefore cannot act as a cultural broker between tradition and modernity in Indonesia. Thus, assuming that multiculturalism is an inescapable product of the modern era (Baidhawy, 2010), pesantran can to some extent be viewed as lacking adaptability to a more inclusive attitudes to diversity. However, others believe that pesantren are compatible with modernity in that curriculum can be and are being adjusted in alignment with values of multiculturalism, pluralism, and tolerance of difference (Lukens-Bull, 1970; Dhofier, 1980; Lukens-Bull, 2001; Yunanto et al., 2005).

These values, according to Lukens-Bull. (2008), have been contested by pesantren since they first emerged, through accommodating aspects of the applicable local values into Islam. This is for example, evident in the way kyai (pesantren leader) consistently accommodate local cultures, such as wayang (shadow puppet theatre), to spread Islam by reinterpreting some Hindu epics into Islam, such as Kalinasada (Arjuna’s weapon) in Mahabarata epic is changed to Kalimah Shahada (Muslim confession of faith). Another example is the use of beduk (large drum) as a marking of prayer times. Such accommodations represent function as a form of cultural enrichment, arguably embodying institutionalized examples of multiculturalism, as integrations of Islamic practices and values with traditions that predate the arrival of Islam in the archipelago. In different contexts, such accommodation is also presented in the UK, especially in the post-war period where immigrants from India and the Caribbean were accommodated as a part of British identity (Wetherly et al., 2012).

So, multiculturalism, as the broad notion of putting diverse groups and practices together, do exist within the pesantren system. Pesantren moreover promote their values, such as, tolerance and respect, regardless of races, ethnicities, and language differences, and multiculturalism might foster attitudes in pesantren to change inequality among different groups in society.

Pesantren have historically given birth to many social movements, and as such could in future represent significant instruments for societal change concerning differences, inequalities and intolerance. Steenbrink (1984) notes that the vast majority of opposition to and fighting against colonialism or imperialism across the archipelago during 19th century began in pesantren, such as Prince Diponegoro in Java, Prince Antasari in South Kalimantan, and Syekh Yusuf in Banten. These prominent national heroes made pesantren their headquarters to fight against the colonial powers to gain recognition and respect as human beings. The last mentioned strongly mirrors a key objective of multiculturalism, as stated by Gollnick (1983), to maintain human dignity.

Methods
1. Research goal
The main objective of this study is exploring the perspective of pesantren toward multiculturalism and how the values of multiculturalism practiced within pesantren Darul Istiqmah Maccopa, Maros, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The current study also aims to examine the way in which the administration of the Pesantren deal with multiculturalism.

2. Sample and data collection
The research is case study based on FGD, interviews, observations conducted at the pesantren in 2019. Case study, as contended by Yin (2009) is a good strategy to link between theory and practice. In this sense, the theory of multiculturalism is expected to link with the practice of pesantren. The researchers started with FGD that divided into two different sample groups, teachers and students. Each group consist of twenty participants. For the group of students, the researchers mainly focused on grade 12 considering that they are more mature and able to follow this issue. Having done with FGD, the researchers picked up four important participants from the different groups to do in-depth interview because it frequently happened during interview in which some teachers or students are reluctant to speak in front of public sphere. The researchers also conducted interviews with three pesantren leaders (kyai), five alumni and five people who live in the pesantren area. So, the total interviews were fifty-three. As an addition to FGD and interviews, observations were also conducted for three months. Through this data collection process the researchers following the research participants’ activities, such as praying together with the santri in their mosque, joining pengajian (reading yellow books) that usually held after dhuhur prayer and magrib prayer, or engaging with their extra-curricular activities. The researchers also collected documents related to multiculturalism issue either from international journal or books related to it. These combine strategies, as contended by Maxwell (1996), can generate extensive data which is more reliable.

3. Data analysis
The data found during FGD, interview, observation was transcribed and then categorized based on the problem underlying the study. To analyze the data, the researchers used the triangulation method which comprises of data verification and double checking to get original data. The researchers then compared, contrasted, and synthesized the data from interviews, FGD, and participatory observation notes in order to gain comprehensive information related to the core issue.

4. Results
The establishment of pesantren DI cannot be separated from the role of its founder, Ahmad Marzuki Hasan, who previously spent most of his life in a number of pesantren, such as Gontar Pesantren and As’adiyah Pesantren, before establishing his own pesantren which is further called Pesantren Darul Istiqmah (Fathurrahman, 2006). The term istiqmah was chosen because it refers to consistency on truth or commitment on stance. This term also guides and inspires DI to be a center (Darul) for excellence in producing santri who consistently commit to behave well under the code of Islamic conduct. Currently, DI auspices 22 branches scattered in different regions of Sulawesi, but, this research solely focused on the main center of DI which is situated in Maccopa, Maros regency. It is 23 km to the north from Makassar, which is the most significant urban center in all of Sulawesi even in the eastern part of Indonesia. According to spokesman of DI, nowadays, DI runs different levels of education, ranging from kindergarten (ibtidaiyah) to senior high school (Aliyah). Besides, it has also a vocational school which mainly concerned on memorizing Holy Koran. The total number of santri is currently 1120. All santri, as the spokesman continues, are living in gender segregated dormitories within the pesantren area.

As mentioned earlier, one of the distinguishing features of DI is that it does not represent the two largest mainstream Muslim organizations—NU and Muhammadiyah—as pesantren normally do (Fathurrahman, 2006). The vast majority of pesantren which exist in Indonesia are affiliated to either Nahdhatul Ulama (the largest) or Muhammadiyah (the second largest). DI identify
themselves as an inclusive pesantren which welcomes all different organizations. This commitment was frequently emphasized by the pesantren leaders in every meeting with the researchers, stating that DI is opened to all different cultures, races and colors. One of the pesantren leaders stated:

“DI’s inception was to accommodate all Muslim communities despite their organizations or school of thoughts as long as they are Muslim. DI does not look at differences among Muslim, DI focuses on similarities among them. Being a good Muslim means we should ensure that every Muslim are truly like brothers and sisters. Islam teaches us that there are three different types of brotherhood, relating to biological, religion, and more importantly human being. As a human being, we need to respect all people regardless of the differences. This is what we call it as ukhuwah basyariah (human’s brotherhood)”. This teaching is strongly stressed in the Holy Koran, Surah al-Isra, verse 70. (interview, 5 September 2019)

Although the leader pointed out the importance of accommodating Muslim communities in the pesantren’s internal activities, indeed, the DI’s values are not only oriented for Muslim communities, but also for general community regardless of religious differences. This value is clearly supported by one teacher who is also a preacher. He states that:

“Generally speaking, the taught values at DI are generally for all people, not only for Muslim communities. I was personally encouraged by the pesantren leader to deliver the universal values among the people, such as tolerance, appreciation to all people regardless of their religion. I often mention this issue in jumat prayer (weekly congregation) where various people may hear my messages regarding the importance of strengthening human’s brotherhood (ukhuwah basyariyah) in the real life. (interview, 10 October 2019)

The concept of Ukhuwah basyariah or human’s brotherhood as a motto of DI has attracted general people (ummah) to be keen on DI pesantren. This character has also made DI as one of many prominent pesantren in the eastern part of Indonesia, evident in the many santri who come from out of Sulawesi, such as Ambon, Papua, Flores and Sorong, among other places. In addition, since its establishment, DI was often visited by notable persons from different cultural backgrounds, such as Muhammad Natsir (Prime Minister of Indonesia 1950–1951), K.H. Abdur Razak Fachruin (Leader of Muhammadiyah 1969–1990), Muhammad Sanusi (Chief of the Indonesian National Police 1986–1991), Akbar Tanjung (Chairman of The People’s Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia 1999–2004), M. Yusuf Kalla (Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia 2014–2019) and a number of notable public figures (Syukur, 2017). These visits indicated that DI has played a large contribution to development of society not only in the regional context but also reached nationally. In addition, pesantren DI is also internationally recognized by its network to Saudi Arabia which provide scholarship annually for the graduate of DI to pursue their studies in Saudi universities.

Discussion

The findings show that the term “multiculturalism” is not widely known by pesantren stakeholders, even though they understand ideas that might depict the term. This finding was confirmed from information which was collected from FGDs with the DI’s teachers. When the term of multiculturalism was presented to them, most of teachers were unable to detailly express their conception about the term. One teacher stated:

the term multiculturalism is not familiar with the Pesantren DI. If multiculturalism is meant to respect the others, pesantren use term tasamuh which means tolerance toward diversities regardless of races, ethnicities, and language differences. Here, at Pesantren DI, we have already implemented these concepts in practical context. So, multiculturalism as a term, it is not so important because the life of pesantren represents the concept of multiculturalism. (FGD, 3 December 2019)
The comparable concept tasamuh is more widely understood in the pesantren than multiculturalism. This term is frequently stressed by the ustad, especially in pengajian (religious learning) that usually held after dhuhur (midday prayer) and maghrib (sunset prayer). I found this conclusion when I joined this activity. The teacher said:

there are several characteristics of tasamuh, such as, respecting the others on behalf of same human being and recognizing their existence, keep helping each other especially in difficult times without looking at the differences, and also having sense of belonging among the people. All these things are the part of implementing Islamic teaching which is not only taught by Prophet Muhammad peace be upon Him but also clearly stated in Holy Koran, Surah al-Maidah verse 8. (Observation, 15 September 2019).

The concept of tasamuh aligns with the notion identified by Parekh (2006), that respect and recognition are important elements of multiculturalism. In addition, tasamuh encourages action generated from respect, especially to increase awareness among every single Muslim toward diversity. This strongly parallels Piper (2001) who states that diversities lead to the creation of cultural awareness. Furthermore, teachers pointed out that tasamuh, which is literally translated as tolerance, stresses that diversities among human beings and ability to deal with diversities are blessing from the God. This value is also clearly stated in the two mains sources of Islam (The Holy Kuran and the prophetic tradition). The Holy Koran mentions that the creation of mankind from male and female with diversities in tribes, languages, ethnicity has a purpose to allow them know one another, whereas in the prophetic tradition, Muhammad states that differences of perspectives among Muslims constitute a form of blessing. Although, the prophet only mentions differences of opinion or perspective, but it does mean that other existed diversities among mankind are neglected. It can be inferred that if different perspectives should be accepted and treated as a blessing from the God, diversities due to system of beliefs, ethnicity, language and so forth should have a greater proportion among human beings’ interactions. Therefore, they will realize that human existence on this earth requires others in almost all aspects of life. This view will further increase an awareness to recognize, respect and fairly treat each other. In this regard, one of the DI teachers uttered:

“For me, [I believe] no one can live alone in this world, we need to fulfill our needs through sharing them to each other. That is why, at DI, we showed our respects to all human beings because we think that we need to support each other now and in the future. To prove our respect, we open schools that are tuition-free to those who have a strong commitment to study but are from poverty-stricken family. So, we do not only encourage Muslim to help each other or building sense of belonging among them but we also must do something in practical that is directly beneficial to them. An awareness that should be followed by a practical thing” (FGD, 3 December 2019)

Besides tasamuh, another term commonly used in the pesantren is keragaman (bahasa: diversity). This is an interesting issue because the term “diversity” is preferred than the term of multiculturalism in European countries (Hoon, 2017). According to one of pesantren leaders, keragaman is embedded at DI, because it is an inclusive pesantren and also a symbol of culturally diverse life where a huge number of people who come from various ethnicities and races live in the land of pesantren without any charging. Almost all major ethnicities in South Sulawesi even out of the region, such as Bugis, Makassar, Mandar, Duri, Luwu, Papua and so forth, inhabit DI area, which is about 65 hectares. So far, these different ethnicities live in a harmonious life within pesantren, away from clash or conflict. This strength makes DI as a unique pesantren compare to others because not only santri stay and learn but also common people are permitted to stay inside pesantren. Interestingly, these people are taught numerous skills by pesantren management such as tailoring, farming, and animal husbandry. That is why, referring to Fathurrahman (2006), DI might be called as a community-based Islamic education institution. However, when I asked several people about multiculturalism during my visit to this pesantren, none of them understand about this issue. Thus, the perspective of multiculturalism among the pesantren is not a crucial
issue that need to be addressed because they have already implemented it in practical context. This view was stated during an interview with one of the community leaders, he affirmed:

“I think multiculturalism is still an alien term here, at DI, even in Indonesia, in general. I believe that if you ask people who live here [at DI], only few of them will be able to express their understanding about the meaning of multiculturalism. However, if you ask them about respect, tolerance, or recognition, you will find that people in this community can explain them well. All these principles have been applied since we live here” (Interview, 10 December 2019).

These people’s notion is strongly relevant with Parker’s (2014) observation during her research in many provinces in Indonesia. She found that the term of multiculturalism is not popular within the country. She argues that the local terms such as “kemajemukan” (plurality), “keragaman” (diversity), and “kebhinekaan” (heterogeneity) are frequently used in public places.

In addition, most of the santri were not familiar with the term “multiculturalism”; some of them heard it for the first time. Notwithstanding, as concluded from my observation, the values inherent to multiculturalism, such as respect, recognition, or tolerance, had been generally implemented in their daily activities within pesantren. For example, in the process of social interaction among santri, they are encouraged to call their friend with a good name, not yelling out a friend with the bad title or appellation related to racism, for example, students from Flores may have darker skin, and teachers discourage racist language or name-calling. This finding emerges during my observation.

“I observed that the interaction among students, especially during a leisure time, I found that if santri call their friends, they often addressed a male santri as akhi (Arabic term: my brother) or ukhty (means my sister) for a female santri. They seldom called their friends’ names. Similarly, I noticed the way teachers call their santri, they also frequently called yaa walad (Arabic: Hi son). Besides, I also noted a number of quotes and proverbs on the school rooms and dormitory, such as “a truly friendship comes from our heart”, “being difference in opinion is normal, but neglecting the difference is abnormal”, and “the more knowledgeable person is the more tolerant to others”. During pengajian (religious learning), I saw ustad always remind santri to not call their friends with inappropriate nicknames as stated in holy Koran, surah al-hujurat, verse 11 (observation, 15 September 2019).

These suggestions are aimed at strengthening their friendship like brothers and sisters. It is crucially important to have this internal friendship. As demonstrated earlier, building traditions of respect and tolerance from within is mainly required before bridging them to other cultures or religions (Piper, 2001). In other words, being tolerant in internal culture or religion is a social capital to build up tolerance in inter-culture or cross-religions. Besides, through strengthening internal tolerance, the emergence of bullying among santri at DI can be avoided. This is because level of understanding of cultural diversity has a tight relationship with number and types of bullying that could emerge in a community (Raines, 2017). However, the tendencies to build a group based on their ethnicities still influence santris’ daily activities in the pesantren. This can be seen from my observation:

“I observed a number of santri groups, such as study group, sport group, existed within pesantren, Unfortunately, I found that groups are occasionally influenced by their ethnicities in doing their daily activities. The relationship among them are working well, but I noticed the connection between one santri and others based on different ethnicities are not really tight. The boundaries are still there. I also found one ustad who provided different services among the santris. The ustad tend to served well and paid more attention for the rich santri or santri who came from elite family background than ordinary santri” (observation, 12 October 2019).
To avoid this type of discriminations, most of DI teachers and students perceive that respecting diversities internally is highly recommended in pesantren. This affirmation is always highlighted by the pesantren leaders especially in annual ceremony of welcoming new santri. The pesantren leader of DI stated, as narrated by the santri:

human being is naturally created by God with the differences, men and women, various nations and numerous ethnicities. The main objective of this differences is getting to know each other. There is no superior culture above the others. All is the same and one of the best characteristics among the common people who can benefit to human being regardless of ethnicities diversities. This foundation is clearly underpinned in Holy Koran surah al-Hujurat verse 17. (Interview, 10 December 2019)

These doctrines, as delivered by pesantren leader, appear to successfully color the first insight of new santri particularly their perspective regarding diversities. For them, multicultural values thus appear not to be considered a contested or contentious discourse. Their life and experience in the pesantren have shown that the difference is not the problem for them. Being different, as contended by them, is the consequences of human life in any nations. It supports their Bank’s assertion that difference is present virtually everywhere (Banks, 2011), a particularly pertinent consideration given that Indonesia is one of the most culturally-diverse countries in the world, with 250 million people spread over more than 13,000 inhabited islands, with a wide range of different ethnic groups speaking an estimated 600 languages (Paauw, 2009).

In addition, the placement of santri in their dormitories with others from diverse cultures is an example of DI fostering a culture supporting inclusive diversity reflecting the broad notion of multiculturalism. As previously mentioned, all santri who stay in DI dormitories are obliged to be mixed with different ethnicities in one room. In other words, based on my observation, neither santri (male) nor santriwati (female) stay in a room with only others of the same ethnicities, unlike some other pesantren where accommodation is sometimes segregated as such. Referring to Hoon (2017), providing regulation is one of the aims of multiculturalism to diminish tensions resulting from ethnic, racial, and cultural diversities. This is also certainly a good strategy for the santri to learn different cultures. In this sense, it is interesting to read the following excerpt from FGD with the santri.

“In my opinion, living with different ethnicities in one room is such a good way to know each other, because we then know different characters, languages, and foods. I myself come from Flores, a province that is situated in the east of Sumbawa and Komodo Island. My hometown is far away from here, and my skin colour is different to most of Indonesian, but here, at DI, I live in a room with santri from other tribes, such as Buginese, Makassares, and Konjonees. I am treated equally by pesantren and by other santri. Even, we sometimes cook different meals from our culinary traditions to strengthen our friendship”. (FGD, 4 December 2019)

This beautiful experience, as acknowledged by one santri, led him to realize that the diversities further make his life colorful. He gained a better understanding about other cultures, such as foods, languages, and traditions. This acknowledgment not only come from one santri, but most FGD participants appreciated the placement system in dormitory. However, it cannot be stated that DI is completely free from all types of discriminations, especially among the santri. This can be seen from the interview with one santri.

“In general, I enjoyed living at DI as a santri. I got many friends from different backgrounds, socially and culturally. We can learn and study together. But I sometimes feel uncomfortable when I started to have an interaction with the rich santri, I feel they are reluctant to intensely communicate with me because I came from family who is economically unfortune. So, in many events of santri competition, I was rarely involved because I was not really close with them (interview, 19 October 2019)
The acknowledgement above, as stated by santri, showed that negative attitudes cannot be totally eliminated. A type of discriminations can happen all the times and places, including in the pesantren. The DI teachers admitted their limitations to observe and to control santris’ attitudes for twenty-four hours although they live in the same place. However, santris who were convicted doing any kinds of discriminations, as it is stressed by a teacher, will receive a sanction. It is an example of pesantren’s efforts to minimize bullying among the students.

In addition, another example of DI actively encouraging respect for and understanding different cultures is asking santri to periodically visit certain communities for community service (Bakti Sosial) regardless of the communities’ the backgrounds. This example underlines the thought of Parekh (2006) who advanced that multiculturalism is an inherent part of human life. It is stated that despite having branches, DI also have, as presented by pesantren leaders, a huge number of different communities scattering in South Sulawesi. These communities are regularly visited by different group of DI santri to provide any type of services and also become the target of community engagement for alumni which must take one year living with them after graduation. Besides, santri also incidentally get engaged and help the victims of natural disasters, such as landslides, flooding, or earthquake regardless of the diversities. Furthermore, during the fasting of Ramadhan, santri annually initiated fundraising to collect money, foods, clothes, then share it in the orphan houses or to whoever need it. Interestingly, as stated by santri, during fundraising, they frequently receive donation from non-Muslim either come from individual or representing organization. One santri said during FGD:

“From my point of view, engaging in a fundraising activity is an unforgettable experience in my life, especially helping people who are economically impoverished or people who are victims of natural disasters. I feel satisfied when I am able to help them and truly feel sad if I cannot do it. That is why, I along with my colleagues always try to do fund raisings whenever we know that there are disasters. Interestingly, during this fundraising, we often receive funds from non-Muslim either from an individual or from an organization. Through this experience, as a human being, my sense of social solidarity has increased” (FGD, 4 December 2019).

The description of the santri above illustrates that the life of DI pesantren can be considered as a place of educating a social solidarity among the santri. This can be seen when it comes to the day of sacrifice (idul qurban), santri involved in the committee of sharing meats to the needy person resulted from sacrifice. These activities, according to the pesantren leaders, create a sense of belonging among the santri to the people on behalf of same human being, and more importantly, generate awareness of helping people regardless of ethnic, religious, linguistic differences. The last point, as Wetherly et al. (2012) points out, might be relevant to the one of the key issues of multiculturalism is bringing social benefit. With regard to this, DI teachers always remind their santri regarding the importance of being human being who is and could be beneficial to the others. This value is strongly highlighted by the teachers especially during pengajian (evening religious learning classes). DI teachers argue that emphasizing this value is inspired by the prophet Muhammad who stated that “The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to people”.

Another distinctive feature of DI, as mentioned, is its neutrality to all groups of Islamic organization. DI does not belong to specific social organization, such as Muhammadiyah, NU, or Wahdah Islamiyah, instead identifying themselves as an institute of Islamic education for all people (ummat). Even though Ahmad Marzuki Hasan as the founding father of DI was the early cadre of Muhammadiyah, DI does not represent this organization. However, the researchers found that the influence of Muhammadiyah still exists within the pesantren especially in relation to its doctrine as stated below:

“I observed a number of religious rituals which were performed in pesantren such as abolishing dua qunut during fajr (dawn) prayer and avoiding tahilihan for the dead person
and reading barazanjii (Prophet Story). These characteristics are identical with Muhammadiah’s doctrine. In the pesantren, I also found Tapak Suci, an independent martial art of Muhammadiah organization, conducting its regular exercise and a number of santris joined it. In addition, I also observed that DI followed the decision of Muhammadiah organization in terms of the beginning of Ramadhan rather than Indonesian government’s decision” (Observation, October 2019)

Nevertheless, as stressed by DI spokesman, DI is unaffiliated with any particular organization, and is welcoming toward all Muslims as long as they consistently commit to fight for humanism under the guidance of the Holy Koran and prophetic tradition regardless of religious, ethnicities, and cultural diversity. In this sense, DI stresses the importance of exemplary values, such as respect, tolerant, and recognition toward diversities, that must be maintained by all ustadz, mentors, and pesantren leaders within pesantren. That is why, pesantren put a strict regulation to those santri or ustaz who break the rules. The head of dormitory affairs stated as follow:

DI strongly emphasize the students to do good deeds in daily lives. Hence, once students found to insult other santri related to cultural background or language differences, Pesantren will give punishment to them. Here, at DI, we have santri court which mainly focus on taking care of students who misbehave. We try to follow the Prophet Muhammad as our best exemplary, particularly, the way He treat the others equally apart from religious, cultural, or ethnicities diversities. (Interview, 13 December 2019)

In relation to curriculum, it is required that all educational colleges in Indonesia follow the national curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and Cultural. Referring to implementation guidance for educational college (Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2020), it is noted that one of learning principles is inclusive which should be free from ethnic, race and religious discrimination. In this sense, learning process must illustrate cultural diversities in Indonesia context. DI as a part of Indonesia’s educational establishment also shows the importance of appreciation to differences. One of the teachers narrated how DI coped with this issue:

“Since its emergences, DI as an educational institute always follows the government regulation in term of curriculum, especially in providing an understanding about the importance of inclusive education. It is because we believe that it will be beneficial to our santri, particularly educating them to embrace tolerance or respect regardless of the difference. That is why, the founding father of DI, Ahmad Marzuki Hasan fought the local rebellion of DI/TII who radically and extremely wanted to build an Islamic state in the region. He repeatedly rejected their proposal to change the country system. We consistently support the government and acknowledge Pancasila as an ideology which accommodate all different religions and beliefs” (FGD, 3 December 2019)

In addition, I also noticed their references either in the morning class or night class. It is generally known, as perceived by Raihani (2012), that vast majority of pesantren used national curriculum in the morning classes which mainly concern secular knowledge, while afternoon or night classes followed the pesantren’s own curricula that strongly focus on religious subjects. This also happened at DI where almost all subjects taught in the morning come from the National Curriculum, such as Sociology, History and Civic Education (Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan, PKn). The last mentioned is a good subject to explore because some topics inside related to multiculturalism. PKn teacher said:

here, at DI, multiculturalism is not directly mentioned in PKn subject, not in grade 10, grade 11, or grade 12, but the discourse like Indonesia Archipelagic Vision (wawasan nusantara) might be a relevant topic in terms of multiculturalism. Through wawasan nusantara, santris are taught to learn the differences, diversities. Besides, PKn also taught santri to understand the official national motto of Indonesia, that is “unity in diversity” (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika). The last point is truly crucial to Indonesia’s younger generation at the moment, like our santri, to understand that Indonesia is constructed on the basis of ethnicities, religious, and even languages differences. (Interview, 17 December 2019)
In addition to the morning classes, I also found that the curriculum used at night (after maghrib and dawn prayer) also comprises of some Islamic subjects which support the importance of diversity. For example, as contended by teacher, the books of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqih) that has been taught within DI provide different school of thoughts. The book applied at DI is *Fiqhu Sunnah* which is written by Sayyid Sabiq. This book is popularly regarded as a moderate book in Islamic Jurisprudence. It discusses four major schools in Islamic jurisprudence, *Hanafi*, *Syafii*, *Maliki*, and *Hanbali*, without pushing the readers to follow one of them. In this regard, DI does not stick with a certain school but rather explores a wide range of sects that need to be addressed by the santri. Similarly, the book of Quranic Exegesis as another subject in the afternoon classes also encompass numerous thoughts in Quranic disciplines. Although DI tends to Ibn Kathir books in Quranic exegesis, a book written by Ibn Katsir in fourteenth centuries, the DI ustadz do not impose santri to learn from a specific book, even encourage santri to study more books from different schools. These freedoms permit santri to explore different school of thoughts in the Islamic discipline. Consequently, most DI santri have a moderate way of thinking in relation to Islamic understanding. This notion comes up after observing students who graduated from the DI pesantren and currently pursue their university education.

“I investigated several university students who previously studied at DI, I noticed that they have no problem with different opinions, various cultures or numerous languages during their life at university. It strongly suggested that they are more familiar with various perspectives of Islamic thoughts and demonstrate some sorts of sympathetic behaviors than their acquaintances who previously studied at non-pesantren” (observation, 15 December 2019)

Furthermore, the way DI cope with multiculturalism also has been shown in the political contest. In relation to this issue, the current head of pesantren strongly stresses the position of DI in relation to political affiliation by saying:

“Historically, DI never get involved in the political affiliation, we have to maintain this principle, DI officially has never supported a specific political party during general election. DI represents ummah (general people) regardless of their political background. So, if one of DI family members involves in a political party, he represents himself only not DI. Consequently, we have to release him or her from his/her duties in pesantren including from pesantren’s administration. We don’t want to unify between the pesantren’s objective and political interests. It is one of strategies to preserve the pure objective of DI, that is for ordinary people” (interview, 17 December 2019)

Nevertheless, as stated by pesantren spokesman, DI give a freedom to their santri, ustaz, mentors, or stakeholders to elect any political parties and senate candidates either in national level or local election. This freedom also occurs if one of DI people fight for senate member or being the regent candidate. This is clearly stressed by DI leaders that pesantren does not affiliate with a certain political party and never push DI stakeholder to vote the party or certain candidate. Its vision is open to all political parties regardless of ethnic, racial and religious differences, as long as the political party stands for human interests. However, as it is stated by informants who lived in the pesantren area, although there is no enforcement from pesantren to vote a certain candidate, pesantren community tend to elect a candidate who has kinship with the pesantren either in the local, regional, or national election levels. For example, in 2019 general and parliamentary elections, a grandson of DI’s founding father, as mentioned above, who competed to be a member of legislative at provincial level, gained tremendous votes in the pesantren area and surpassed all other candidates. This support was purely a willingness of the community to support the pesantren family member for a political position even without an instruction or recommendation from the pesantren.

5. Conclusion
In conclusion, this study comes to conclude that the term multiculturalism is not familiar with DI stakeholders; teachers, santri, community, but the values of multiculturalism, such as tolerance, respect,
and recognition, had been implemented in the practical context within DI. These examples represent DI as an inclusive educational institute which welcomes all different Islamic organizations regardless of their school of thoughts, stressing humanity as a foundation of interaction in either in the pesantren or out of pesantren, and applying inclusive curriculum that accommodate all the differences. These values were adopted from the Holy Koran and the prophet Muhammad’s tradition which are the two main sources from which DI apply multicultural ideas to how it operates. A number of relevant verses from the Koran might be considered including surah al-Isra, verse 70; surah al-Hujurat verse 17; surah al-maidah verse 8, and so forth. Similarly, the quotes of Prophet Muhammad, such as “the most beloved person is the most beneficial to others”, “God will be with the people who always help their brothers or sisters”, also become a guidance in implementing the values of multiculturalism. The research also suggests that DI tends to use tasamuh rather than multiculturalism which encourage people to respect each other regardless of races, languages, and ethnicities diversity. They believe that human beings were naturally created with differences that cannot be avoided, therefore necessitating respect for diversity that parallels the fundamental notions inherent to Western multicultural ideas. Moreover, DI in dealing with multiculturalism attempts to create strict regulation through providing punishment to those who misbehave in terms of cultural diversities. Furthermore, DI also present a moderate curriculum either in the morning class or night activities through providing literatures that embracing and promoting multiculturalism and moderate thoughts either in Islamic jurisprudence or in Quranic exegesis.

6. Recommendations
This study will firstly enrich the academic sources on multiculturalism within pesantren, especially in the east part of Indonesia considering that existing studies on pesantren are mostly from Java. Secondly, this study could inform local and national governments in future public policy considerations regarding pesantren.

7. Limitations
This study has two major limitations. One relates to the behavior and cooperation of the pesantren leaders. Leaders may have tried to show only a positive image by conveying their success in implementing strategies and hiding their failure in running the organization. The other limitation relates to the limited prior academic resources available and limited discourse in general related to multiculturalism in pesantren, because most research on pesantren to date focused on Java and very rarely on South Sulawesi. The unprecedentedness of this work provided a challenge for the researchers, as there was some opposition to the importance of the topic being explored, which meant that some potential participants were not interested in participating therefore limiting the perspectives gathered in the data.

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