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## Short Review Report

# Anthropology of Friendship: A Preliminary Review

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**Abstract** - This paper elaborates studies related to the anthropology of friendship and relates the findings to the locus of the intellectual community named INSISTS. Various anthropological studies of friendship can be categorized into studies of friendship construction, interaction between actors in friendship, interests between actors in friendship and exchange between actors in friendship. In these various studies, this paper shows that for the context of the study of religious intellectual communities, friendship studies do not only focus on shared beliefs, concerns, sentiments, and so on, but also need to elaborate on the interests of religious actors. So far, actor interests have only been defined in terms of emotional and instrumental interests. This paper adds another type of actor's interest, namely intellectual interest, which is inherent in the interaction between actors. The intellectual interest is indeed based on the locus of the intellectual community, but it is possible that the 'intellectual interest' is also present in other communities in which there is an exchange of ideas between actors.

**Keywords:** anthropology of friendship, intellectual community, Muslim community, INSISTS

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## Introduction

Anthropology, as a science that studies humans holistically, shows various developments, including the development of studies from kinship to friendship. Kinship studies focus on 'biological relations' while friendship studies are based on 'non-biological relations'. Along with the development of humanity, it can be said that anthropological explanations related to kinship are very useful for enriching understanding of relations between people or between actors. Based on that, this paper will focus on conducting a preliminary study related to the anthropology of friendship.

To enrich the study, this paper is also accompanied by the author's research on the Indonesian Muslim intellectual community founded while in Malaysia and now active in Indonesia called the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought and Civilizations or INSISTS (Bachtiar 2017; Mumtazi 2020; Mustofa 2019) as a community built on friendship between actors. Thus, this paper intends to conceptually enrich studies related to the anthropology of friendship as well as enrich the locus of anthropological studies of friendship by 'opening new avenues' of friendship studies in intellectual communities that synergize beliefs and knowledge.

## Methodology

This paper is a literature review enriched by the author's field study related to the locus of the INSISTS intellectual community in Jakarta, Indonesia from 2018-2024. The field study utilized an ethnographic approach that included interviews, participant-observation and desk research (Cresswell 2009; Emerson *et al.* 1995). For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the desk study in relation to some of the field findings. As a desk study, this paper collects several previous studies related to the anthropology of friendship, then looks for findings and gaps from these studies. After that, the paper continues by looking for the relative novelty of anthropological studies of friendship. In this paper, the relative novelty is exemplified through a field study of the INSISTS community. The friendship that emerged in the interaction between actors at INSISTS was born from a sense of respect between one actor and another as fellow Muslim intellectuals and a common idea about the importance of carrying out various intellectual works based on the Islamic worldview.

## Results and discussion

The discussion related to the exchange of interests will begin with previous studies related to interests in friendship in the anthropology of friendship. Genealogically, friendship studies in anthropology originated from kinship studies. At first, this study was “overshadowed by kinship studies”, but along with the development of studies and social theories, the anthropology of friendship became increasingly independent. [Pitt-Rivers \(1973\)](#), [Uhl \(1991\)](#), [Beer & Gardner \(2015\)](#), and [Stevenson & Lawthom \(2017\)](#) state that friendship studies initially tended to be discussed in the shadow of kinship studies as an important and fundamental classic study in the world of anthropology.

Subsequently, friendship studies became increasingly independent from kinship studies as humanity became richer and more diverse in global life and social theories developed as a result of ‘the interaction of theory with field findings’ (see for example [Bell & Coleman 1999](#); [Desai & Killick 2010](#); [van Roekel & Diphooorn 2019](#); [Killick 2009](#); [Fausto 2012](#)). These developments, according to [Paine \(1969\)](#), placed friendship on an independent path in ethnographic research and theoretical studies from the shadow of kinship studies. These studies have brought friendship studies ‘closer to the center stage of anthropology’ ([Beer & Gardner 2015](#)). So far, friendship studies in anthropology have focused on and has found the following.

### Friendship construction studies

In terms of friendship construction, friendships are formed due to insecurity in non-ideal situations, as found by [Dungey \(in Diphooorn & van Roekel 2019\)](#), [Meinert \(2015\)](#), and [Mortensen \(in Diphooorn & van Roekel 2019\)](#). [Claire Dungey’s](#) study (in [Diphooorn & van Roekel 2019](#)) suggests that insecurity is created by the ‘complexity of trust’ in others, which is the difficulty of trusting others in ambiguous situations. [Meinert \(2015\)](#) refers to this ambiguity as tricky trust, which despite actors’ efforts, full trust is difficult to achieve in economic hardship. An “insecurity in a non-ideal situation” forms a friendship that interacts with actors’ emotional and instrumental commonalities.

Anthropological studies of friendship have also found that feelings of insecurity among actors as shaping friendships. [Mortensen \(in Diphooorn & van Roekel 2019\)](#) found a continuum of trust and distrust in friendship which then introduced the concept of careful involvement in friendship. The ambiguous situation mainly occurs in unfavorable

situations - such as war - where mutual trust is difficult to apply fully, and therefore actors explore other actors at a safe distance.

Other studies by [Roseneil & Budgen \(2004\)](#) and [Owton & Allen-Collinson \(2014\)](#) found shared beliefs as a shaper of friendship. [Tillman \(2015\)](#) points out that common interests, a sense of alliance, and emotional affiliation (p.2) are the basis for friendship formation. [Rawlins](#) added that these commonalities are in the context of emotional and instrumental interests as a collective talking buddy, dependent friend, and fun buddy (1992: 271). The finding of these commonalities is fundamental to the formation of friendships. However, the studies did not look at the influence of these commonalities on changes in actors' capacities that occurred over time. I agree with [Whyte \(1993\)](#) and [Young & Willmot \(1961\)](#) who found a role for 'historical similarities' in maintaining friendships over time.

In my opinion, actor capacity can be understood as the capacity possessed by actors to act with a vision of Islamizing science. This ability includes the ability to make changes as an inspiration to others, as an accelerator that accelerates the formation of a network of 'new Muslim intellectuals', and to act creatively in various social situations. Changes in capacity as a result of interactions between actors also have an impact on the INSISTS organization in the form of strengthening the vision of Islamizing science in the INSISTS network, utilizing the socio-cultural situation of Indonesian religion for the spread of Islamization of science, and the emergence of new innovations in Islamic thought and movements based on the struggle for religious beliefs and knowledge. The actor's ability to make social changes through intellectual work is also influenced by his strong intention in Islamizing science, then made possible by the socio-cultural situation of Indonesian society which is open to Islamic thought, and the existence of the actor's intellectual ability that supports him in various activities.

Shared beliefs can relate to something that is considered a 'common enemy.' These shared beliefs shape how actors act. Thomas [Kiefer's \(1968\)](#) study discusses institutionalized friendship and warfare between the Tausug tribe in Jolo, Philippines. The Tausug consider foreigners and all people who are not related to them as potential enemies. In this context, friendship - formally sworn by an oath in the Qur'an - is essential for forming alliances among kinship groups, and also at a higher regional level, among local leaders. Formal friendship in Tausug society derives its meaning from enmity, or what is referred to as "friends are allies against common enemies" ([Kiefer 1968](#)). According to [Beer \(2001\)](#), Kiefer's research focuses too much on highly

formalized male friendship patterns. I agree with Kiefer's view of 'common enemies', but unlike Kiefer, I see friendships between male and female actors who are not formally sworn in by the Qur'an but practice the values of religious piety.

Other studies found that friendships are formed due to shared beliefs found in the studies of [Roseneil & Budgen \(2004\)](#), [Owton & Allen-Collinson \(2014\)](#), [Tillman \(2015\)](#), [Rawlins \(1992\)](#), [Whyte \(1993\)](#), and [Young & Willmot \(1961\)](#). Whereas [Carrier \(1999\)](#) and [Killick & Desai \(2010\)](#) found that friendships are formed due to the operation of sentiment. [Tillman \(2015\)](#) points out that common interests, a sense of alliance, and emotional affiliation are the basis for friendship formation (p.2). [Rawlins \(1992\)](#), in his study added these commonalities in the context of emotional and instrumental interests as, "...friends to talk to, friends to depend on, and friends to have fun with collectively" (p.271). The finding of these commonalities is the basis for the formation of friendships, but the above studies unfortunately do not see the influence of these commonalities on actors and organizations. I agree with [Whyte \(1993\)](#) and [Young & Willmot \(1961\)](#) who found the role of 'historical commonalities' in sustaining friendships.

Based on my field study, it shows that intellectual actors from various Islamic organizational affiliations are driven by shared beliefs. The actors are students of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and his deputy, Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud who focus on a shared belief in Islam and the struggle for the Islamization of science which is then followed by their students. The actors positioned the two intellectual figures as respected teachers, references, and shared and explored their thoughts in various creative content. Actor Adian [Husaini](#), for example, wrote Wan Daud's intellectual biography entitled *Scientific Rihlah [Rihlah ilmiah]* (2012), and Hamid Fahmy [Zarkasyi](#) translated Wan Daud's book entitled *Philosophy and Practice of Islamic Education Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas [Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan Islam Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas]* (1998). These actors have different study specializations, such as philosophy and economics, but are united in the same Islamic thought, especially in the urgency of the Islamization of science. The same orientation of thought becomes a common interest that takes precedence over the personal interests of different actors from the background of Islamic organizational orientation. According to [Zarkasyi \(2016\)](#), the Islamization intended by INSISTS is to replace the secular concept that tends to separate the world and the afterlife by replacing it with the concept of the Islamic worldview related to the world (*al-dunya*) and the afterlife (*al-akhirah*). In my opinion, as a spirit of 'searching for alternative non-western ideas', the Islamization of science, or even 'de-

westernization of knowledge' is an option, especially for Muslim intellectuals who base their thinking on revelation as the main reference in thinking (see for example [Al Attas 1995](#); [Zarkasyi 2016](#)).

### **Inter-actor interaction in friendship**

Inter-actor interaction in friendship studies tends to be seen that the interaction is driven by concern to increase competition, individual ambition and achievement, explorative abilities and shared sentiments found by Frossard & Jeursen (in [Diphoom & van Roekel 2019](#)). Carolina Frossard and Thijs Jeursen (in [Diphoom & van Roekel 2019](#)) found the existence of care factors as drivers of interactions between actors which then gave birth to relationships of care. Their study tends to focus on Western culture where care between actors is intended to increase competition and generate individual ambition and achievement. In the INSISTS locus, I see that friendships between actors are also driven by care, but are less intent on competition between actors and more on cooperation, synergy and collaboration rather than creating the competitive situations that tend to develop in the Western tradition.

[Carrier's \(1999\)](#) study shows the operation of sentiment in friendship formation. However, [Killick & Desai's \(2010\)](#) study of inter-ethnic relations in the Peruvian Amazon suggests that while sentiment has a role in friendship formation, "friendship need not be understood as involving sentiment as a primary element." [Killick & Desai \(2010\)](#) point out that instrumental values in the form of reciprocal exchange of objects shape interactions more than sentiments. Carrier's study is actually relevant to religious emotions, as sentiment is inseparable from the emotions of the actors. However, [Carrier \(1999\)](#) does not see religious emotion as a sentiment that is actually important in the formation and establishment of friendships. In fact, religious emotion is a controller in the interaction between actors in order to remain in a religious situation in their various activities.

In my opinion, [Killick & Desai](#) focus too much on material value and do not see that the mutual exchange of objects is based on religious intentions. Most scholars argue that without sentiment, one cannot talk about friendship ([Killick & Desai 2010](#)). Sentiments are related to feelings, and feelings are relationships. This means that the similarity of feelings or sentiments between actors in the organization is one of the building blocks of friendship. Sentiment in my observations at the INSISTS locus is understood in the form of religious sentiment or religious thinking that is the key to the

similarities that led INSISTS to form. Without the sentiment of religious thought, INSISTS would not have been formed. In fact, sentiment by Carrier (1999) is seen as the ability to make friends, even “without people who can be friends ... we cannot speak of friendship” (p.21).

Dyson (in Schut 2020), Strickland (2010), Gratz (2004), Jeffrey (2010), Mizen & Ofosu-Kusi (2010) and Martin-Iverson (2012) tend to see that the interaction between actors aims to empower the potential of actors in order to produce ‘alternative formulations’ against the dominant social structure. Meanwhile, Paine (1969) found that “explorative ability is present in the interaction between actors to achieve ideal relationships” which is also relevant to the interaction between INSISTS actors to achieve ideal relationships through the ability to explore the idea of Islamization of science in forms such as oral (lectures) or written (writing articles, books, or journals). Interaction according to Schneider (in Outhwaite, ed. 2008: 397) is the actions, actions, activities, and movements of two or more individuals that are interrelated with each other. Here there is the term ‘the act of influencing each other’. Individuals behave based on the “meaning” of social interactions where the meaning is modified through a continuous process of interpretation by the individuals participating in the interaction (Blumer 1969). The actor's self is then seen as the result of the interaction. Referring to Schneider (in Outhwaite, ed. 2008: 398), I see that the interactional behavior of an individual can be understood only based on reciprocal acts of interpretation between actors involved in the interaction within a specific situational, historical, and cultural context.

I see that in their interactions, actors are oriented to see others as well as themselves. This is different from the view of Parsons & Shills (in Paine 1969) who see that the orientation of actor friendship is for others and not for themselves. Robert Paine wrote in *In Search of Friendship* (1969), that “If I dare to explain it further, I would say that what is ‘special’ about the affective aspect of friendship is that a friend is someone who understands someone, who can explain someone to himself; alternatively, someone can see himself in his friend. Friendship in that context is placing the common interest for the Islamization of science as the main priority rather than the personal interests of the actors who are emotional and instrumental. In the event of a conflict between common interests and personal interests, the common interest to maintain integration is prioritized and personal interests are set aside.’ I found that the orientation of friendship for others and not for oneself is also reflected in the behavior of ‘minimizing primordial

interests for the sake of common interests' in INSISTS. Friendly interactions between actors in forming, maintaining, and developing organizations that include interactions in sharing information, knowledge, opportunities and acting creatively in expressing thoughts orally and in writing that are oriented towards common interests for the struggle of Islam, especially in the realm of the Islamization of science that is the interest of the actors.

In the INSISTS locus, what knowledge is shared in the interaction? Knowledge shared in the interaction between actors related to the affirmation of Islamic worldviews (for example the nature of God, revelation, the Qur'an, creation, the nature of the human soul, freedom, values and virtues, and happiness) and criticism of un-Islamic views (for example pluralism, liberalism, nihilism, and secularism). This knowledge is also shared in the interaction of actors with the general public through written media such as websites, bulletins, magazines, social media, journals, and books as well as through various forums such as seminars, workshops, *tabligh akbar* or mass religious rally, and conferences both organized by INSISTS and other organizations where INSISTS actors are actively involved. Researchers at INSISTS generally focus on studies related to Islamic thought from disciplinary backgrounds such as philosophy, economics, history, management, politics, and others. All of their study intentions are in order to de-westernize western concepts and replace them with Islamic concepts.

My field findings show that the behavior of defeating primordial interests for the sake of common interests includes emotional, instrumental, and intellectual interests that are intended. The personal views of actors towards others, for example, are not always the same. For certain actors, an intellectual outside INSISTS may be important to be present at the INSISTS forum to find out their thoughts but for other actors this may not be the case. Emotional interests between one and another vary because each actor has a situation that is not necessarily the same, including in memories related to something. Regarding reading *qunut* (prayer read in the second rak'ah of the Fajr prayer) and not reading *qunut* which is different between the two largest Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, is not considered something big, therefore the actors minimize these interests for the sake of integration and balance in the organization.



### Interests between actors in friendship

There is a view that the interests of actors only revolve around emotional and instrumental, for example shown in the studies of Wolf (in Paine 1969), Murphy, Lazaroska, de Regt, Dungey, Frossad, and Jeursen (in Diphooorn & van Roekel 2019), Dundes (1971), and Jacobson (1975). In my opinion, the interests of actors are not only related to emotional and instrumental, but ‘there is an open possibility’ to add intellectual interests based on the locus of study in a socio-religious movement that focuses on the exchange of ideas. These intellectual interests have actually become the bond of togetherness of the actors since Malaysia to Indonesia. The interests of actors tend to revolve around two things, namely emotional and instrumental which are intertwined simultaneously, but it is possible to add intellectual interests based on the locus of study in organizations that focus on the exchange of ideas at INSISTS.

Various previous studies have shown that the emotional and instrumental interests of actors occur simultaneously, mutually influence and are interrelated. The same thing was also found in the studies of Dundes (1971) and Jacobson (1975) related to the ‘mutuality’ of emotions and instrumentals. Through the INSISTS locus, I found that there is a tendency for actors to share intellectual interests that are not enough to be included in the two variants of interest, because in ‘intellectual exchange’ various academic or intellectual activities are involved in it which are different from mere emotions or material gain. This tendency, according to my assumption, could be not only in the intellectual community, but also in the non-intellectual community which contains sharing between friends. This means that the interests of actors are not only limited to emotions and instrumental but also include intellectual interests.

The interests in friendship are inseparable from the various choices that an actor must make. Roseneil & Budgen (2004) see “friends as the family we choose”, while Pahl & Spencer (in Killick & Desai 2010) associate friends as “chosen relatives”. Both views tend to see the closeness between friendship and kinship, especially in the choice of actors. As a ‘chosen family’, in the INSISTS intellectual movement there is also a tendency to place ‘friends as brothers’ within certain limits, for example in the expression *akhi* (brother) which contains appreciation, respect, hope, as well as trust between one brother and another. Interest is interpreted as an internal motivation that is personal or primordial - based on the influence of the original organization - which consists of

emotional interests that are non-material in nature such as attention, empathy, concern on the one hand and on the other hand contains instrumental interests that are material in nature such as direct assistance that is real and practical. Both of these motivations refer to Paine's view (1969) can be called interests. In the case of INSISTS, these primordial interests are 'defeated' for the common interest of the Islamic struggle through INSISTS.

The actor's interest can be defined as part of the motivational structure of human action which Habermas defines as a motivation that 'remains stable giving him potential or actual reasons to act' (Hindess in Outhwaite 2008: 401). In religious belief-based organizations, the motive of personal interest to gain instrumental (material) benefits is indeed not apparent, because the most important interests developed are emotional (non-material) interests such as increasing intellectuality, networks, the meaning of life as a Muslim, or blessings. Based on the INSISTS study, it was found that interests in friendship include three things, namely: emotional interests, namely feelings, personality, and motivation; instrumental interests, namely pleasure, advantages, and utility; and intellectual interests, namely curiosity, deep understanding, and commitment to lifelong learning. Operationally, these three interests are used to explain findings in the field related to the behavior of defeating primordial interests for the common good.

I also believe that all humans, including INSISTS intellectual actors, have interests (material and non-material), but what is more apparent is the non-material interest, because of the intention of da'wah which requires sacrifice (time, energy, even material) to spread Islamic thought which will then have a long-term impact on the realization of an Islamic civilized society. This difference is caused by the background of INSISTS intellectual actors consisting of various backgrounds in religious studies such as Islamic thought, ushuluddin, economics, general history, history of the Prophet Muhammad (*sirah nabawiyah*). In addition, there are also actors who are graduates of management, gender studies, veterinary medicine, and politics and international relations, but completed their doctoral education in Islamic thought studies. Among the backgrounds of Islamic mass organizations or Islamic educational institutions of INSISTS actors are Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, DDII, Al-Washliyah, Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), and Rabithah Alawiyah (an association of Arab descendants in Indonesia).

### Inter-actor exchange in friendship

Inter-actor exchange tends to be seen as material exchange as something important in friendship. For example, it can be seen from the studies of Sahlins (in [Beer & Gardner 2015](#)), [Killick & Desai \(2010\)](#), and [Uhl \(1991\)](#). In fact, the exchange of interests also involves the religious side in it which is actually an important study in the study of friendship at the INSISTS locus. In religious-based intellectual movements, exchange occurs because it is based on religious awareness that the consequence of believing in God is to exchange knowledge, resources, and even finances to achieve common goals.

I agree with the findings of [Lazaroska \(2019\)](#) and de Regt (in [Diphooorn & van Roekel 2019](#)) that exchange exists because of trust between actors. The concept of exchange in friendship studies tends to be approached only as an exchange in the material realm, whereas the exchange of interests also involves the religious side in it. Sahlins' study (in [Beer & Gardner 2015](#)) found a 'material exchange' that was reciprocal, for example in the form of giving gifts; that 'if a friend gives a gift then the gift will give him a friend', or 'whoever gives, he will get a friend'.

In line with that, in friendship there is also a reciprocal exchange ([Killick & Desai 2010](#)) which aims to strengthen friendship. [Uhl \(1991\)](#) sees reciprocal exchange 'as an obligation in ritual relationships, exchanges, or work relationships in friendship' (p.90). This study has the same view as Sahlins regarding the 'reciprocal exchange', but Sahlins does not highlight that as religious beings, in human exchanges there are religious interests embedded in the actors. In intellectual organizations based on Islam, exchanges occur because they are based on religious awareness that the consequence of believing in God is to exchange knowledge, resources, and even finances to achieve common goals.

Studies related to the concept of exchange have found that exchanges in friendship occur because of the presence of trust as something central to friendship. The presence of trust allows actors to make their organization a 'mutually beneficial organization' where influence, assets and knowledge can be exchanged ([Lazaroska 2019](#)). In this interaction, De Regt (in [Diphooorn & van Roekel 2019](#)) includes an element of intimacy that has a positive impact on maintaining friendship. De Regt focuses too much on the 'financial role' in intimacy and maintaining friendship, but does not see the non-financial

role such as religious emotions which actually influence the creation and maintenance of friendship.

Referring to [Paine \(1969\)](#), friendship is "...an informal social relationship that is affective, varied and based on choice and voluntariness, something that is sought and must be won, a status that is earned, not a status that is given" (p.507). Therefore, in line with that definition, according to [Kennedy \(1986\)](#), trust and loyalty are basic requirements for friendship (p.128). In INSISTS, trust and loyalty to Islamic teachings and the Islamization of knowledge become a strong bond in joint activities. Friendship contains mutuality. Quoting [Beer \(2001\)](#), friendship is based on sharing: in addition to things of material value, friends share time, problems, plans, hopes, and thoughts. This view is different from Sara Ahmed (in [Diphorn & van Roekl 2019](#)) who stated, "... a relationship 'friendship' can conceal as much as it reveals" or a relationship as a 'friendship' can hide many things that are true. Indeed, there are things that are hidden in friendship, but my field findings show that friendships between actors share more of the real things that are 'true' and that are based on the actor's subjective beliefs regarding Islam. Actors share Islamic knowledge, but not all actors are happy to share life experiences, for example, expressively in text or non-text such as on social media.

In friendship there are clear expectations regarding the roles of members (in terms of roles and functions) in the friendship, although some theorists note that such expectations do exist, as [Beer \(2001\)](#) states, "Some authors note that generally no fixed role expectations are attached to friendship. But in fact many societies do have well-defined expectations." I am of the view that in friendship there are still roles and functions for each actor to complement the emotional and instrumental sides of the friendship members. Friendship also contains relatedness. Kinship issues related to biological assumptions used in anthropological studies of kinship must eventually see that there is a shift in ideas from the idea of kinship based on reproduction and genealogical relationships to more general concepts such as relatedness (Carsten, in [Killick & Desai 2010](#)). [Killick & Desai \(2010\)](#) refer to the views of [Pitt-Rivers](#) in 1973 who proposed the use of the concept of amiable relations and the ideas of [Brain](#) in 1977 who suggested the use of the term friendship itself with amiable relations. For [Brain](#), friendship refers to feelings of 'friendship' or 'love', and he argues that, "There would even be a case for maintaining that all kin relations within our kinship group are based on friendship and personal choice ([Killick & Desai 2010](#)). I agree with [Brain](#) that all kinship relationships are based on friendship and personal choice.

Based on my observation, actors engage in an exchange of interests. The interests of actors are varied (Paine 1969; Beer 2001) and are personal (Uhl 2001). The variety of personal interests is built on a reciprocal relationship that is continuously established. The interests of actors are formed by common intellectual interests (including perception, memory, logic, training, knowledge base or education), emotional similarities (including a place to share feelings, concerns, hopes without fear of being judged, or self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and motivation to work; spiritual similarities (shared beliefs related to certain truths that have implications for deep bonds and commitments to struggle together to achieve true goals and meanings of life). The interests of these actors are generally divided into personal interests and common interests that are maintained and developed in interactions between actors over time.

## Conclusion

The above article has elaborated on studies related to the anthropology of friendship and linked these findings to the locus of an intellectual community called INSISTS. Various studies of the anthropology of friendship can be categorized into studies of the construction of friendship, interactions between actors in friendship, interests between actors in friendship and exchanges between actors in friendship. In these studies, this article has shown that for the context of studying religious intellectual communities, friendship studies do not only focus on shared beliefs, concerns, sentiments, and so on, but also need to elaborate on the interests of religious actors. Based on the explanation above, the actor's interests are only defined in the context of emotional and instrumental interests, two important things in friendship. However, these two things alone are not enough to explain the phenomenon of friendship, for example in the INSISTS locus. Therefore, this paper adds another type of actor's interests, namely intellectual interests, which are inherent in interactions between actors. These intellectual interests are indeed based on the locus of the intellectual community, but it is possible that 'intellectual interests' are also present in other communities in which there is a continuous exchange of ideas between actors in their various activities.

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