The Homophily of Teachers and Religious Intolerance: A Study of Two High Schools in Pisang Batu City, Indonesia

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Abstract
Religious intolerance is worsening in various countries, including in Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. In Indonesia, one of the actors of this phenomenon is teachers. According to several studies, it was caused by state policies, religious education, learning strategy and teacher's capacity. Based on the cases in two high schools in Pisang Batu City in Indonesia, this study discovered similar findings. However, it was caused not only by the factors explained in the studies mentioned, but also by homophily in social networks. The community in which the teachers were raised, their school background, friendships in the workplace and the religious groups they participate in, all showed a tendency of homogeneity, which became the basis of the growth of intolerance on the basis of religion among teachers.

Keywords: teacher, religious intolerance, homophily, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION
As is happening in various countries (Pew Research Center, 2018), religious intolerance is worsening in Indonesia (Hadiz 2016; Van Bruinessen 2013), a country with the largest Muslim population in the
world (207,176,162 people or 87.18% from the total population according to Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS] 2011), in the last several decades. In Indonesia, the phenomenon also happens to teachers, which can be seen from the discrimination by teachers to Ahmadiyya students (Human Right Watch 2013), and their tendency to have intolerant opinions (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah-United Nations Development Program Indonesia 2018a; 2018b).

How did this phenomenon happen? What are the causal factors? Many studies tried to answer these questions, analysing the case in both Indonesia and other countries; giving direct or indirect answers to them, but still in relation to the intolerance (and tolerance) issues.

These studies were organised into four groups. The first group is studies that focused on state policy, including curriculums that encouraged or prevented tolerance (Nurwanto & Cusack 2017; Künkler & Lerner 2016), ineffective tolerance policy in schools (Ntho-Ntho & Nieuwenhuis 2015), the majority bias in the standardisation of teachers and moral education (Balakrishnan 2017; Paniwani 2016). Second, various studies on religious education, including those on the insufficient substance on tolerance (Zuhdi 2018; Matemba & Addai-Mununkum 2017), religious education model that promotes tolerance (McCowan 2016; Parker 2014), the politicisation of religious education that strengthens intolerance (Zembylas et al. 2018). Third, studies that focused on learning strategy, including the tolerant learning strategy (Gill 2016; Dupper et al. 2014), students as subject to building tolerance (Szelei et al. 2018; Hammer & Schanke 2018). Fourth, studies on teacher’s capacity, which includes the teacher’s knowledge and ability to encourage tolerance or intolerance (Herbstrith et al. 2019; Zuhdi 2018), the importance of teacher’s impartiality in the midst of multicultural students (Aragona-Young & Sawyer 2018; Jackson & Everington 2016).

We don’t reject those studies. However, in our point of view, state policy, religious education, learning strategy and teacher’s capacity, are all shaped, applied, maintained, also likely rejected or changed, by concrete individuals, one of them are teachers, who grouped themselves in a homogenate entity based on the same interpretations of religious teaching.

This article basically agrees with studies that gives conclusion on the appearance of the religious intolerance phenomenon to teachers in Indonesia. However, for us, it is caused not only by state policy, learn-
ing strategy, and teacher’s capacity, but also by the homophily in the teacher’s social network. Homophily can be seen in the community in which the teachers were raised, their school background, friendships in the workplace and the religious groups they participate in, all showed a tendency of homogeneity, which became the basis of the growth of intolerance on the basis of religion among teachers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is written based on a study uses a qualitative approach. The study is conducted to teachers in Belimbing High School and Jambu Air High School in Pisang Batu City in Indonesia. Both are secular schools, not Islamic schools (see Kementerian Hukum dan Hak Azasi Manusia [Kemenkumham] 2010, for policies on secular and Islamic schools). The difference is that Jambu Air High School is a private school, while Belimbing High School is a public (state-owned) school (for policies on public and private schools, see Kemenkumham 2010). Teachers in Jambu Air High School are all Muslim, while the ones in Belimbing High School are mostly Muslim although there are several non-Muslim ones. Jambu Air High School has some kind of policy to only employ Muslim teachers, which is possible to be done since it is a private school. Based on the observation done in both schools on January 9, 10, and 12 in 2018, based on the attributes worn, there are students from various religions in both schools, although the majority of them are Muslims, and most female students wear a veil.

Both high schools are located in Pisang Batu City, whose population comes from various religious backgrounds, although the majority are Islam. This city also has a strong Islamic history and its residents are quite religious. Pisang Batu is one of the cities in Indonesia with a pretty high level of religious intolerance (Setara Institute 2015). There are several policies with religious nuances that are applied in the city (Alim 2010). Actions of intolerance also have happened several times here (Alim 2010).

Data in this study is gained from in-depth interviews, observation, and study of documents. In-depth interviews are conducted with 10 teachers as the main informants, consisting of 4 teachers from Belimbing High School (Sakti, Tika [female], Budi, and Bayu); 3 teachers from Jambu Air High School (Panji, Riyanto, Royo); and 3 teachers who taught in both schools (Yandi, Ina [female], Deana [female]). All of
them are Muslims. Based on their teaching subject, there are 3 Religious Studies teachers, 2 Citizenship Education teachers, 2 Sociology teachers, 2 History teachers, and 1 School Counsellor. They were chosen because (1) they are considered more familiar with the ideas of tolerance and intolerance compared to other teachers, for example mathematics or chemistry teachers, and (2) they are capable to deliver those ideas, both acceptance or rejection, to students through their classes or counselling that they give. Both main and supporting informants are determined purposively.

For observation, we observed the daily activities in both high schools, such as interaction between teachers, between teacher and students, and the attributes that were worn by the teachers and students, especially those who are female. The documents we studied are various state policies on the enforcement of education, religious education, marriage, construction of places of worship and worship itself, Ahmadiyya; the fatwa (religious order) from the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI) on Ahmadiyya, giving Christmas greetings, involvement in Christmas events, and the usage of Christmas attributes; newspaper articles on cases of intolerance and Christmas greetings. The data gathered from observation and studying documents are used to validate the result of the in-depth interviews.

INTOLERANCE AND HOMOPHILY

There are two concepts used in this article as the analytical knife to identify the intolerance of teachers in Indonesia, which are intolerance and homophily in the social network. Intolerance and tolerance are two inseparable concepts. We constructed the concept of intolerance based on the concept of tolerance, in the opposite sense. To put it simply, according to Vogt (1997:1), “Tolerance is putting up with something you do not like – often in order to get along better with others”, which in our point of view, intolerance is its opposite, which is rejection or unwillingness of an individual to bear something which they dislike.

Based on its purpose, which is to create a tolerant condition, Vogt (1997:17) categorized tolerance into three types, which are political tolerance, moral tolerance, and social tolerance. Political tolerance, also known as civil liberties, is tolerance over actions in the public sphere, such as joining a demonstration. Moral tolerance is concerned with the tolerance over actions in the private sphere, such as respecting a person’s
freedom to follow and practice their religious belief. And social tolerance is the tolerance over conditions or characters that are inseparable from the person since birth or is a result of socialization, such as skin colour and language. In our understanding, intolerance can also be categorized into these three types.

Referring to a study by Arifin (2010) and Pertiwi (2014), we gathered six religious aspects that are often used to determine the level of religious tolerance and intolerance in the society, especially the Indonesian society. The aspects mentioned are interreligious marriage, religious conversion, construction of places of worship and worship rituals, acceptance to religious groups that are seen as deviators, leaders from different religion, and giving greetings for holidays of another religion. The way an individual deal with these six issues reflects the level of religious tolerance or intolerance.

Theoretically, we see that religious intolerance (and tolerance) is related to the concept of homophily in the social network. McPherson et al. (2001:416) defined homophily as a principal where people with a common background will be able to interact easier among themselves compared to interacting with people from different background. Adida et al. (2015:1) described homophily as an individual’s tendency to build teamwork with other individuals from a common background. The common background varies, it could be ethnicity, religion, or the level of education (Adida et al. 2015:1). Studies done by Bakker (2006) and Sageman (2004) found a similar condition that individuals that have common thoughts, actions or behaviours tend to form a group from that same network.

According to Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954), as cited by McPherson et al. (2001:419), there are two types of homophily, which are status homophily and value homophily. Status homophily is based on “informal, formal, and ascribed status” (McPherson et al., 2001:419). In a more concrete sense, this type is then divided into two categories, that are characteristics which are ascribed, such as race, and those which are acquired, such as religion (McPherson et al., 2001:419). Meanwhile, the value of homophily is based on three things: “values, attitudes, and beliefs” (McPherson et al., 2001:419). This type of homophily can be concretely found in the various aspects that shapes an individual’s future behaviour, such as the level of intelligence (McPherson et. al. 2001:419; 428; 429).

According to McPherson et al. (2001:419), homophily causes two effects, which are baseline homophily and inbreeding homophily.
Homophily is caused by “… the demography of the potential tie pool…”, while inbreeding homophily is caused by “… the opportunity set….” (McPherson et al. 2001: 419). In various cases, what actually happens is a combination of the two homophily effects mentioned (McPherson et al. 2001: 419; 420; 425).

Homophily is capable of causing both a positive and negative impact (McPherson et al. 2001: 417). One example of a positive impact is academic achievement, while an example of a negative impact would be deviant subcultures (McPherson et al. 2001: 417; 428). In the case of religious homophily, its positive impacts, for example, is the presence of aid in urgent situations (McPherson et al. 2001: 425-426), while its negative impact is namely discrimination that prevents social integration (Adida et al. 2010).

Based on the thoughts of Rink and Sharma (2016), Berggren & Nilsson (2015), Bakker (2006), Sageman (2004), McPherson et al. (2001), we categorized four aspects that can be used to analyse homophily in friendships, which are environment of community or neighbourhood where the individual was raised, school background, friendships at work, and involvement in a religious-oriented group.

**RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE OF TEACHERS**

Using six aspects to analyse tolerance (and intolerance), as we have explained, the following presents the data and analysis of the religious intolerance of teachers in Belimbing High School and Jambu Air High School who were informants for this study. In relation to the interreligious marriage issue, the teachers showed a tendency of rejection towards it. There are two points of view that are their reference to respond to it, first is the Islamic point of view that they believe, and the state. From a religious point of view, interreligious marriage is haram (forbidden) and is considered a grave sin if it is done. According to Sakti and Panji, there is no passage in the Al-Qur’an that allows interreligious marriage. It is also not a practice recognized by the state (Kemenkumham 1974), as said by Sakti, Panji, and Tika.

In the case of religious conversion by a Muslim, all informants reject the idea of it. Alike the interreligious marriage issue, we found two related point of views in this issue, which are religion and state. From the religious side, it is seen as a highly forbidden action. According Riyanto, a Muslim that converts to another religion is called murtad,
that is categorized as a very heavy sin. Most of the informants realised that looking from the point of view of the state, there is a freedom and individual right to choose one’s religion. However, as stated by Yandi, it can be interpreted as the freedom of an individual from another religion to convert to Islam.

The teachers didn’t show any rejection if they have to reside in the same region or be neighbours with non-Muslims. However, they refuse to have a place of worship or any religious activity of another religion in their residential area, because they worry that could disturb their faith and belief and those of their families and other Muslims in general. Aside from that, according to Yandi, the government has released two policies on the two cases (Menteri Agama dan Menteri Dalam Negeri 2006). Worshipping activities routinely done in home, for example, are considered to violate that policy. Based on that, Riyanto along with their neighbours, took the initiative to express their objection to any worshipping activities from other religions in their area.

Another aspect that received negative response from teachers was on groups that deviate from the teachings of Islam. Most of them reject the Ahmadiyya group, considering it as a heresy that endangers Muslims’ faith, because their teaching deviate from the teachings of Islam. The teachers also agreed with the government’s decision to categorize Ahmadiyya as a heresy (MUI 2005a; Menteri Agama, Jaksa Agung, dan Menteri Dalam Negeri 2008). For Budi, the decision is proof that Ahmadiyya is considered to be a potential danger to the interreligious harmony in Indonesia. Said decision was also another reason why most of the informants reject Ahmadiyya. Even more, Riyanto refuses to live in the same area as a member of Ahmadiyya.

In relation to the issue of a non-Muslim leader, most teachers refuse or are reluctant to be led by a leader from non-Muslim background, no matter how good their quality is. They believe that Muslims should vote and have a Muslim leader—which according to Tika is in accordance with the Islamic Shari’a. They planted this same belief to people around them, including students, as was done by Yandi, who stated that the refusal is also based on the worry that a non-Muslim leader will make policies that are not in favour of Muslims.

While in the case of giving greetings to people from other religions who are celebrating their holidays, all of the teachers refused it. They believed that doing so will diminish the faith of a Muslim, because it is considered as agreeing with the beliefs and teaching of another religion.
that celebrates the holiday. This demeanour is also influenced by a fatwa released by the Indonesian Ulema Council, a semi-state institution that prohibits the giving of greetings on other religion’s holidays\(^2\), such as Christmas, as stated by Yandi.

Based on the data from the field findings above, a majority of the teachers showed a tendency of being intolerant in the six religious aspects used. They reject marriage of a Muslim with a non-Muslim, deviant groups, non-Muslim leaders, and giving greetings on holidays of other religions. Even though they don’t reject the idea of living as neighbours with non-Muslims, but they rejected the presence of a non-Muslim place of worship and any kind of non-Muslims religious activity. They also reject the idea of religious conversion from Islam to non-Islam, but approve it if the case is the opposite. This showed that these informants are moving in the opposite direction of Vogt’s theory (1997) on tolerance or shaping intolerance.

Based on the thoughts of Vogt (1997) on the three types of tolerance, which then was used to explain intolerance shown by the teachers being mostly a mix between moral intolerance and political intolerance, both private and public. Based on the religious interpretation that they believe, which is categorized by Vogt as a moral type of tolerance (and intolerance), the informants reject the idea of interreligious marriage, religious conversion, construction of places of worship and other religious worship activities, deviant groups or heresy, and giving greetings on holidays of other religions.

However, except religious conversion and a non-Muslim leader, the other three aspects are always supported by a public base, as categorized by Vogt, which is state policy and a semi-state institution such as MUI who prohibits interreligious marriage, closely monitors the construction of place of worships and other religious activities, also prohibiting religious groups that are considered to be deviant. Principally, there are no state or semi-state policies that prohibits Muslims from giving holiday greetings to other religions, namely Christmas. What is prohibited by

\(^2\)According to Zainut Tauhid, Vice Chairman of the MUI, the institution never released a fatwa (religious order) that regulated the giving of Christmas greetings. The ulema themselves are divided on the issue, there are some that allows it, while others prohibit it. Because of that, MUI left is to Muslims to choose whether to give greetings or not based on their personal beliefs (“In regards of giving Christmas greeting”, 2017). However, MUI prohibits Muslims from using non-Muslim attributes, including Christmas attributes (MUI, 2016) and to participate in Christmas celebrations (MUI 1981).

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the semi-state institution is participating in Christmas celebrations and using non-Muslim attributes. However, many Muslims in Indonesia see this as the MUI also prohibiting the giving of holiday greetings to other religions, such as Christmas.

The analysis on intolerance of teachers using Vogt’s idea is surely rejected by some Muslims in Indonesia and maybe even worldwide. Vogt’s idea implies that there is recognition of other religions, that could potentially mix Islam with other religions, and lowers the value of Islam as the only truth—an idea that contradicts with the teachers’ belief, as stated by Yandi. In their opinion, there is no tolerance for subjects related to religious teachings. According to Yandi, tolerance is only done in order to keep the harmony among mankind, which is done in form of buy and sell, saying hello, and helping each other.

The teachers’ opinion is backed by the fatwa from MUI that prohibits pluralism, liberalism, and religious secularism (MUI 2005b). According to the fatwa, Muslims are obliged to be exclusive on things related to their faith and worship. MUI defined plurality as being inclusive, as long as it doesn’t harm each other, are only done if Muslims live in the same community or neighbourhood as people from other religions. The three types of tolerance offered by Vogt, which basically separates the private sphere (moral tolerance) from the public sphere (political tolerance), all contradicts said fatwa.

TEACHERS, HOMOPHILY, AND INTOLERANCE

The following are the data and analysis related to how religious intolerance of teachers were shaped by homophily in their social network. Except Bayu, the other informants were raised in a community or neighbourhood that are mostly homogenous in terms of religion and is religious, which was experienced by Ina. In that kind of social environment, there are many religious activities that teachers did in their childhood, which then shaped the religious orientation since childhood until today, as stated by Tika.

According to Ina, Riyanto, and Yandi, being raised in a homogenous social network, and focusing on their own understanding, they tend to not know or interact with another religion. This caused them to be uninterested to understand or even learn about the other religions, which in turn often caused misunderstandings to other religions. Deana and Yandi, for example, understood that a religious service held in a
Christian’s home is the first step to build a church in the area where they live.

Most of the teachers earned their education from a secular school or an Islamic School, on varying levels of education. There are some who went to Islamic schools from preschool up to junior high school, and then continued to high school and university in a secular school, as experienced by Panji. There are also other cases such as Royo, who went to a secular elementary school, then continued to an Islamic school for their secondary education and university. Among all the informants, only Sakti and Tika, spent their whole education in an Islamic school and secular school, respectively.

If we look at the duration spent by the teachers in both school types, most of them spent more time being educated in Islamic schools. Based on that condition, they had less opportunity to interact and build friendships with people from different religious backgrounds, compared to those educated in secular schools.

While pursuing a career as a teacher, most of the teachers prefer to make friends with fellow Muslims. This was even what Tika did, being in secular schools for their whole education, despite interactions with people from different religious background in school. Only Bayu, who was raised in a heterogeneous social background, who had friendships with non-Muslims. This clearly raised questions, considering that Belimbing High School and Jambu Air High School where the teachers currently work are both secular schools. As secular schools, it means that anyone from any religious background is able to work and attend both high schools. Consequently, even though the majority of teachers and students in both schools are Muslims, there are also teachers and students who are non-Muslims.

Aside from teaching, most of the teachers used their spare time to get involved in a religious group, that routinely does various religious activities, such as religious studies. These kinds of activities usually take

3Although they attend a secular school, every Indonesian is obliged to take a course on their respective religion as a part of formal education from elementary school to university, as decreed by Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 (Kemenkumham 2007). Aside from that, from Muslims, the religious nuance is basically formed since before elementary education through Early Age Education (Pendidikan Usia Dini or PAUD) and preschool. Most Muslims, from a young age until adult age, learn to read Al-Qur’an at home or at the mosque; study Islamic teaching intensively in various majelis taklifs (Islamic learning groups), Islamic activities organized by the school, university, and student organizations.
place in the weekends or in the evenings. Deana and Tika has even been involved in a religious group since high school and university, which then continued when they started working and had families. One of the reasons that encouraged them to be involved in a religious group is to extend their knowledge on their religion, as stated by Panji. Another reason, as explained by Ina, is because there is a common thought and sense of comfort from friendships in the religious group itself.

The data from field findings generally showed that the community in which the teachers were raised, their school background, friendships in the workplace and the religious groups they participate in, all showed a tendency of homogeneity in terms of religion, which is Islam. The community where they live is not only homogeneous, but also has a strong Islamic influence. Even though they come from various school backgrounds, they still spent more time attending Islamic schools than secular schools. In the workplace, although there are non-Muslims, they chose to only be friends with fellow Muslims. In community life, they are also involved in a religious group, which usually represents a certain interpretation on Islam.

Theoretically, following the flow of thought from McPherson et al. (2001), what is shown by the teachers can be identified as homophily in social network. They grew and created networks in various social environment using the same social attribute, which is a certain interpretation on Islam, which then tied them to a homogeneous social entity. This is what was categorized by Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954), as quoted by McPherson et al. (2001), as an acquired homophily status. The religious homophily showed a combination between what was referred by McPherson et al. (2001) as baseline homophily and inbreeding homophily. This cannot be separated from the fact that Islam has the largest number of followers in Indonesia, reaching around 87.18% of the population (BPS 2011). Aside from that, followers of Islam are spread in various social entities such as schools, business, and the bureaucracy. In such conditions, it is more likely for people to group, as in inbreeding homophily, based on their common religion.

In the homogeneous social entity, aside from feeling religiously secure—not doing anything opposing to their religion—they also feel psychologically secure (according to McPherson et al. 2001): suited, having common thoughts and understanding, and happy, as stated by Ina. Aside from that, in our opinion, homophily in social network also has a sociological function; as some kind of fortress to make the
informants feel secure from threats of non-Islam elements that they belief could potentially damage Islam, both qualitative elements, such as religious purity, and quantitative elements, such as the number of Muslims.

In our perspective, homophily of these teachers has a certain impact towards their relationship with non-Muslims. The choice to live in religiously homogeneous social entities created a clear gap between them and people from other religions, non-Muslims. Homophily thus resulted in the rise of a strong belief that their group’s perspective as the only truth; devaluing the other beliefs and religions (Smith 2007; The Wahid Institute 2014), even including to those from an Islamic background but is considered of having a different belief. In turn, religious intolerance, as we have explained in the previous part, will grow in these kinds of conditions, homophily in social network.

CONCLUSION

Based on the case in two high schools in Pisang Batu City, this study confirms various studies on religious intolerance that spread among teachers in Indonesia. Based on the category by Vogt (1997) which was used inversely, what happened was a moral intolerance based on religious belief, supported by political intolerance from policies of the state and semi-state institution. Moral intolerance and political intolerance was shown through the six aspects commonly used to assess the level of religious tolerance and intolerance, which are interreligious marriage, religious conversion, construction of places of worship and worship rituals, acceptance to religious groups that are seen as deviators, leaders from different religion, and giving greetings for holidays of another religion. Two reasons behind the emergence of intolerance are the mix of feeling religiously, psychologically, and sociologically secure and the policies from the state and semi-state institution in relation to several aspects of religious tolerance and intolerance.

Intolerance is caused by the homophily in the social network of the teachers. They tend to keep themselves in a community, school background, friendships at work, and religious groups that are homogeneous, based on common religion or a common interpretation of Islamic teaching. Referring to Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954, quoted from McPherson et al. 2001), this is an acquired status homophily. The large population of Islam, which is the baseline homophily, enabled
homogenous groupings in various social entities, thus inbreeding homophily.

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