

# Global Youth in A Local Area: Hybridisation of Identity among Young Muslims in Yogyakarta Interfaith Community

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**Abstract:** This article investigates the hybrid portraits of identity among young Muslims who are members of the *Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community* (YIPC) in Yogyakarta. Several inquiries have articulated that Indonesian youth tend to be dragged into ‘conservative turn’ and extremism ideology. However, in this qualitative research we have found the different faces of young Muslims and, in fact, the behavior and religious expression of nowadays youth are not singular and that simple. By using an interpretive phenomenological approach—and through observation, interviews, and documentation particularly from informants—we formulate an argument that young Muslims in the Yogyakarta interfaith community represent a form of multi-identity amalgamation (hybrid). As part of a globally networked society in a local area, they choose to take a dissimilar path from conservative currents and extremist tendencies and then decide to narrate inclusive values, tolerance, and peace education. These snapshots depict a fusion of their thought or horizon (micro-individual) with the community atmosphere (meso-community) and the reality (macro-social politics) around them—which be called *Horizontverschmelzung* in Hans-Georg Gadamer’s concept. This could be discovered from a sequence of socio-religious behaviour and expressions among youth who are active in the interfaith community in Yogyakarta.

**Keywords:** Hybridisation of Identity; Interfaith Community; Young Muslim; Youth.

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini menelusuri potret identitas campuran (*hybrid*) dari kalangan pemuda Muslim yang menjadi anggota di YIPC (*Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community*) di Yogyakarta. Sejumlah riset terdahulu mengartikulasikan bahwa pemuda Indonesia cenderung terseret menuju arus ‘*conservative turn*’ dan gelombang ideologi ekstremisme. Meski begitu, dalam riset kualitatif ini kami menemukan bahwa ada wajah keagamaan yang berbeda dari kalangan pemuda Muslim dan, pada kenyataannya, ekspresi keagamaan dan sikap pemuda hari ini tidaklah tunggal dan sederhana yang diduga. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi interpretatif—dan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi secara khusus dari beberapa narasumber—kami memformulasikan sebuah argumentasi bahwa pemuda Muslim di komunitas lintas iman di Yogyakarta merepresentasikan sebetuk percampuran (amalgamasi) multi-identitas sehingga menjadi *hybrid*. Sebagai bagian dari masyarakat yang terjejaring secara global di suatu area lokal tertentu, mereka memilih jalan yang berbeda dari arus konservatif dan tendensi ekstremis untuk kemudian menarasikan nilai-nilai inklusif, toleransi, dan pendidikan perdamaian. Potret tersebut mengilustrasikan sebuah pembauran cakrawala pemikiran mereka atau horizon (mikro-individual) dengan atmosfer komunitas (meso-komunitas) dan realitas (makro-sosial politik) di sekitar mereka—yang disebut *Horizontverschmelzung* dalam konsep Gadamer. Panorama ini dapat ditemui dari serangkaian perilaku dan ekspresi keagamaan di kalangan pemuda yang aktif bergerak di komunitas lintas iman di Yogyakarta.

**Kata Kunci:** Anak Muda; Hibridasi Identitas; Komunitas Lintas Iman; Muslim.

## 1. Introduction

Several inquiries about Muslim youth in Indonesia are still widely discussed in the academic realm. A recent prominent pattern describes that many young people are being dragged by the currents of conservatism (Bruinessen, 2013), waves of radicalism (Azra, 2002; Bruinessen, 2002; Turmudzi & Sihbudi, 2005), to extremism and intolerant tendencies (Bamualim, Latief, & Abubakar, 2018; Ikhwan & Kailani, 2021) which strengthened. These are indeed in line with a 2017 report from PPIM UIN Jakarta which presented the fact that of 2,181 respondents—including teachers, college students, and students from 34 provinces—37.71% agreed that *jihad* was the same as war or killing (Saputra, 2018, p. 40). The ironic thing about the data is that the majority of them are young people.

However, the attitude of youth in Indonesia is not single-faced and still has a variety of other forms of behavior. Youth, who, according to the UN (UNESCO) definition, is between the ages of 15-24 years (Unesco.org, n.d.), experience what Larson (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984) terms as “consciousness restructuring”. They experience a phase of psychological development that is marked by a transitional process from a state of *entropy* (a chaotic structure of consciousness) to *negentropy* (a state of well-ordered consciousness) (Sarwono, 2016, pp. 13–15). It is at this stage that the openness in youth plays a significant role in shaping their character as well as their attitude and behaviour.

On the other hand, globalisation and modernisation have brought with it the phenomenon of new media, multicultural crossings, the current flow of information, and the splendour of industry, music, fashion, film, and modern lifestyles, which have triggered relatively diverse youth actions. This phenomenon will lead to identity hybridisation in young people which is formed as a result of a multi-identity combination which then gives birth to a new identity that is both unique and complex (Bamualim et al., 2018; Kersten, 2009, 2015). Moreover, psychologically, the transitional phase of young people is characterised by symptoms of self-identity seeking, cognitive opening (Gadd & Jefferson, 2013, p. 152), anxiety, a sense of uncertainty, and exploratory passion, all of which will provide space for acceptance as well as rejection of new ideas.

Research on the younger generation and their religion, as organised by Chaider S. Bamualim, presents interesting findings regarding the challenges of radicalism in the younger generation (Bamualim et al., 2018). In addition, research on interfaith communities still focuses on their actions in dispelling exclusive narratives and efforts to prevent violent extremism (Harmakaputra, 2016; Jonathan, 2017, 2019; Jonathan, Widjaya, & Husein, 2016; Pramitasari, 2019). Meanwhile, a fairly strong and comprehensive study on identity hybridisation represented by young people on a global scale is still relatively small and has only just been started by Pam Nilan in the European region (Nilan & Feixa, 2006). Based on these previous studies, the research niche (knowledge gap) that will be further explored is the portrait of identity hybridisation. The significance of this research lies in the broad exploration that connects interreligious studies and youth studies which then provides academic contributions in the broad domains of social psychology and Islamic studies.

Departing from the points above, this article focuses on examining the socio-anthropological character and portraits of young Muslims in Indonesia which are different from the tendency of conservatism but at the same time represent the occurrence of identity hybridisation. The images explored to provide a small illustration of young people on a local scale but have a view and act like young people with global perspectives. The informants who became the sources in this study were three Muslims who were members of an interfaith community in Yogyakarta named YIPC (Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community). By using an interpretive phenomenological approach, this qualitative research also collects data through observation, interviews, and documentation. As a result, we formulate an argument that young Muslims in the Yogyakarta interfaith community represent a form of multi-identity amalgamation (hybrid). As part of a globally networked society in a local area, they choose to take a dissimilar path from conservative currents and extremist tendencies and then decide to narrate inclusive values, tolerance, and peace education.

## 2. Youth, Social Anxiety, and Cultural Hybridity

The younger generation psychologically goes through a stage of development which is described by Elizabeth B. Hurlock (Hurlock, 2012) as a phase full of storms and stress (in German: “*Sturm und Drang*”). In this phase, they experience various challenges in life as well as the search for identity to reach adulthood. One of the significant processes that young people go through, in R. Larson's terminology, is the “restructuring of consciousness” (Csikszentimihalyi & Larson, 1984). They climb the psychological ladder which is marked by a transitional process from a state of entropy (a state of consciousness that is not well organised or still chaotic) to negentropy (a state of consciousness that is well organised) (Sarwono, 2016, pp. 13–15). As part of the youth, students cannot escape from the internal conflicts and problems of their identity. According to Allport, three idiosyncratic phases in youth include an extension of the self (self-expansion), self-objectification (the ability to assess oneself more objectively), unifying philosophy of life (absorb and unify the philosophy of life within oneself) (Hurlock, 2012, pp. 205–254; Sarwono, 2010, pp. 72–77). The three stages of development contribute to patterns of thought, perspective, and behaviour decisions.

Regarding their views and attitudes, youth often stand in an ambivalent position because naturally, they are at the bridge of transitional age. In PPIM's findings, today's young generation, especially Gen Z (more on that in the next chapter), is confused. Regarding their religious beliefs and “intolerance opinions” as well as radicals, they are quite high, but at the same time, “acts of intolerance” and radical acts are low (Syafuddin & Ropi, 2018, p. 21). Such an ambiguous attitude agrees that there is a dynamic phase of cognitive opening, but in terms of consistency, there is no consistency. Several internal situations that cause it, among others, are the realistic character of the younger generation plus the need for security and balance (stability) (Dwidienawati & Gandasari, 2018).

Their interest in being surveyed about religion shows a realistic view according to them, although when verified their behaviour has zero intolerance and radical elements, it indicates that they do not want to plunge themselves out of a sense of security and tranquillity. Their life motivations, including current students in general, are relatively similar: they want to work hard, earn money and get a good job in the future to be happy. From a global perspective, today's students at a certain moment are indeed surrounded by anxiety about tomorrow and therefore make their mindset more likely to be close to survival matters. With the help of technology infrastructure and the digital world, Indonesian students tend to be more fluid, if they communicate to the point, and are reluctant to bother (a culture of instantaneous/instant habitus) (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). Even so, another potential trend that can be observed in this young generation is their attitude which is more open, egalitarian (non-feudal), self-taught, eclectic, and flexible. With the availability of these characteristics, the younger generation – including students as representatives from campus circles – are not a few who pay attention to issues of horizontal conflict and social harmonisation.

Young people's motivations for life are relatively similar: work hard, get a good profession, earn money, be able to buy the things they want, and live a happy life (Nilan & Feixa, 2006). Moving on from here, if viewed from a global perspective, young people in the current era are at a certain moment surrounded by a sense of uncertainty, anxiety about tomorrow, and various anxieties. This condition then makes the mindset of young people closer to the fulfillment of basic needs or survival and at the same time experiences several indecisions in determining attitudes.

This uncertainty can be found in various expressions of young people starting from their lifestyle, mixed interaction patterns, ways of communication, and their religious expressions as well as opinions. Especially Gen Z who have become residents of the digital world (netizens) are seen as having a different personality style from their predecessors. Yasraf Amir Piliang observes the symptoms of “alone in the crowd” (solitary) in the current youth. Cyberculture, in Yasraf's eyes, progressively or slowly, contributes to shaping the tendency of narcissism or *egophilia* beyond their love for society or *sociophilia* (Piliang, 2017). Perhaps the narrative that seems pessimistic can be observed on the trend on social media, where there are many issues of self-love and the like. Although there is a degree that must be separated between self-love and *egophilia*, it can be an early predictor of Yasraf's argument.

While the contrasting and different reviews can be read from Don Tapscott's elaboration. There are at least eight points that distinguish them from the baby boomer generation. The first is freedom. The second is customisation. Third, scrutiny or scrutiny indicates the character of attention to detail so that the current generation is mostly engaged in visual communication design or creative decoration services both online and offline. Fourth is integrity. Fifth, collaboration—which is becoming common in this digital era. The sixth is entertainment, which shows that fun has always been important for young people. Seventh, speed—spread from various online transactions, instant culture, and the interaction process that greatly cuts time and folds space (with the new media). Finally, namely innovation (Tapscott, 2009, p. 74). Tapscott views that there is an optimistic side that can be expected in today's young people who are involved in the digital space and more often act as initiators, creators, and are collaborative.

In a narrative whose spectrum is still similar, Timothy Leary himself articulates that the present generation is more inclined to accept the concept of *Kubernetes* and tend to reject the idea of *Gubernetes* (Leary, 1994, p. 64). Today's youth are relatively more choosing freedom, self-navigation, celebrating the freedom of life, or in a more familiar phrase called "standing on one's own feet" (self-reliant). Meanwhile, the *Gubernetes* concept, which means directing, controlling, managing, structural governance, is deemed to be incompatible with their lifestyle. This behavior is in line with the experimentation phase of self-identity in young people. That they go through a process that opens up the potential for the formation of a dynamic, multiple, even though unstable self. Palfrey and Gasser formulated a related phenomenon with the term 'self-multiplicity' (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, pp. 21–23). A form of young people's efforts to develop multiple selves so that they can express them according to the different contexts in which the self is present and exists.

A series of narratives about young people, in principle, are interconnected with the ongoing global constellation. The movement of the times since globalisation rolled, the digital world, and the variety of historical elements that unite society into a large network in the modern age, all of which contribute to knitting a sociological mosaic amid a particular society. Cultural crossings, multilateral relations between countries, rapid industrialisation, the political-economic atmosphere, and international trade also contribute to the risk of mixing and clashing. Starting from assimilation, negotiation, amalgamation, segregation, and polarisation are the paradoxical logical consequences of contemporary phenomena.

In the social and cultural sciences, this is commonly discussed in the multicultural, intercultural, cosmopolitanism studies to cross-civilisation studies. The accentuation point that is often studied at this time, one of which is "cultural fusion" (Thomas, 1996) or also called "cultural hybridity" (Werbner & Modood, 2015). The process, which is called hybridisation, is an active cultural operational movement between local and global elements, a hegemonic component with subalterns, a center, and an edge, but on the other hand, it is also positioned as a cultural transaction process that reflects how global culture has been assimilated and permeated in the world. in specific localities at various points in the world (Nilan & Feixa, 2006, pp. 2–13). The compounding process can be observed in various forms, such as music, fashion, lifestyle, architecture, and cannot be separated from the socio-religious affairs of young people in Indonesia. This, in Maruta Herding's description (Burke, 2009; Herding, 2013; Stockhammer, 2012), is a natural consequence that occurs as a result of Mondial intersubjective communication (worldwide scale) and spans various regions.

Thus, it is not surprising that young Muslims in Indonesia often find expressions of mixing piety values, local cultural manners, with modern lifestyles and consumption patterns. The real image can be seen from the phenomenon of Muslim women wearing multi-coloured hijabs with innovative designs and remaining fashionable (Hidayat, 2012, pp. 179–181). Such a religious panorama is also the result of the mingling of various elements—from the values of piety in Islam, local culture, and modern contemporary fashion—which then gives birth to a new, distinctive face that requires scrutiny with different benchmarks and perspectives.

### 3. Peace Education and Interfaith Engagement: A Brief Illustration of YIPC Yogyakarta

Historically, the embryo that later grew and became known as the *Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community* (YIPC) was initially initiated by two academics, namely Andreas Jonathan (Christian) and Ayi Yunus Rusyana (Muslim) in 2012 (“YIPC-Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community,” n.d.). At that time, they were pursuing doctoral education in the ICRS (*Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies*) program and started to realise their ideas in the form of the *Young Peacemaker Training* program, on 9-12 July 2012 with a target audience of students. The activity was finally enlivened by 25 Christian and Muslim students from various backgrounds and universities in Yogyakarta. Andreas Jonathan, an activist for the *Campus Peace Movement* (CPM) and Ayi Yunus as an activist for the *Peace Generation*, also formulated the peace values of their respective communities to formulate interfaith dialogue as well as conflict reconciliation and peace education in an intense interactive manner. After the training, the YIPC community was formed as a forum for *follow-up* and a means of sustainable regeneration.

This community is domiciled in Yogyakarta and, as a follow-up, just held its inaugural program in September 2013. By holding an *interfaith dialogue* in it, this program was named *Student Interfaith Peace Camp* (SIPC) and carried the theme “*Building Peace Generation Through Young Peacemakers*”—which later became known as the motto as well as the main mission of the YIPC community. The participants who took part in the initial follow-up activity were 30 students from various regions (Bandung, Solo, Surabaya, Kebumen, Madura, Palembang). Starting from the series of processes above, from 2014 until now, YIPC has had regional branches in strategic cities such as Medan, Bandung, Surabaya, Jakarta, Solo, Malang, Semarang, to Bangkalan and Ambon. The fundamental values of peace propagated by this community—as a result of the combination of the 12 Peace Values of *PeaceGeneration* with *Interfaith Dialogue* and *Scriptural Reasoning* (SR)—includes 4 main components: making peace with God (vertical-divine and supernatural relationships), making peace with oneself (a form of *self-awareness* and *self-acceptance*), making peace with others (social-horizontal), and making peace with the environment (*ecological values*).

In practice, this community is engaged in the education sector for peace and religious tolerance which focuses on involving young people. This can be seen as a futuristic projection that translates into value investment behavior for the next generation to become *peacemakers*. However, YIPC’s target is specific and limited, in this context, are students. The routine SIPC program is usually held twice a year and the participants are accompanied by mentors, facilitators who are longtime members of the community. The structure of YIPC itself is relatively simple, consisting of a National Head Facilitator (usually two people: men and women representing different religions) and Regional Heads (varied: one to three people in each region), then Assistant Facilitators in each basecamp lined up from proactive new members, and the last one is a member or members.

The pattern of peace education and interfaith relations carried out by this community is interactive-dialogical, not one-way like the religious lecture method. The series of activities in this community vary and are framed according to the mission they carry out. *Nobar* activities (acronym: watching together), routine SR, book review, discussions, and virtual meetings are vehicles for achieving the vision. They did not escape the transmission of YIPC’s peace values through the creation of content on social media, from Instagram, Facebook, Twitter to audiovisuals on YouTube and the organisation’s website. Once upon a time YIPC also traveled to tourist attractions while sharing stories, sometimes visiting places of worship of religions, local beliefs, and the like. At the moment of celebrating religious holidays, they congratulated each other for followers of other religions, for example, “Merry Christmas” from Muslims to Christians and “Happy Eid” from Christians to their Muslim friends.

Apart from the above series of activities, there are also several internal management events. Nationally, they held a joint conference in a certain place to discuss the work program and evaluation of the previous period. Then regional meetings are held by each branch. At other times, cooperation with interfaith communities from the International has also been carried out several times, such as in November 2019 YIPC Yogyakarta was visited by an Australian Jewish rabbi named Avraham Bart. At the event, which was held at the restaurant, they had dialogues ranging from theological

doctrines, religious practices, to decentralised Jewish diversity. In addition, the annual celebration in the form of *World Interfaith Harmony Week* (the first week of February every year) is a place for them to meet while realising certain programs.



Figure 1 A session of Prejudice Clarification, SIPC 2019

To illustrate the process and dynamics in activities at YIPC Yogyakarta, it can be observed in several portraits of interesting things and situations that I obtained during observations and interviews with informal dialogues. One of the moments during SIPC (8-10 November 2019 at a villa in the Kaliurang area) (Figure 1) there was a Christian female participant with the initials MW from Flores was studying at STAK Marturia Yogyakarta. MW (Personal Communication, November 9, 2012), who is still an early student, articulated his impressions on the sharing and breaking prejudice session:

*...saya kira orang-orang muslim di daerah saya itu kan pakai baju hitam-hitam semua, dan tertutup wajahnya. Saya bertanya dalam hati, mereka itu pakai ilmu hitam kah? Begitu. Tapi di sini saya baru sadar bahwa kalian ternyata sama seperti kami. (...the Muslims in my area wear black clothes and cover their faces. I guessed and asked myself whether they use black magic. But now I realised that they are just like us.)*

To the laughter of the other participants, the woman with a distinctive East Indonesian accent smiled and the session continued to the other participants. MW's expression is unique and if it is highlighted from Max Weber's social actions, the dialectical process of MW's thoughts which initially harbored suspicions and has now turned into daring to associate with Muslims is the result of the impact of the social atmosphere that surrounds him—in this context when he migrates to a pluralistic Yogyakarta. If categorised according to Weber's typology, the MW phenomenon is classified as "rational action".

Meanwhile, I had another response when I spoke informally with RN, one of the male Muslim participants and a mid-semester UIN Sunan Kalijaga student from Madura. He decided to join SIPC after receiving information from his classmates and then felt the need to join because of his uniform background. RN said that because of the monoculture environment of Islam, made him want to seek new experiences, make acquaintances with non-Muslims, and expand his social circle. In the previous review, the *cognitive opening* phase for youth, which was disseminated by Quintan Wictorowicz, turned out to play a role not only in opening the risk of youth falling into radicalism but also in providing side opportunities, namely being more open and accepting of diversity.



Figure 2 Rope Game”: Participants were challenged to be able to untwist the rope so that it returned straight without letting go of their hands. The reflective value: if each individual is selfish and does not cooperate, things will get worse

Then in the material session, a senior RB facilitator, a Batak Christian man who is also a teacher in Yogyakarta, was explaining Hans Kung’s passage about inter-religious peace. He explained that world peace can be started with peace between religious communities and this needs to be started with interfaith dialogue. While explaining the SR process to the SIPC participants, he added:

*“Nanti pada saat SR, kalian tidak harus setuju. Tapi quotes dari Hans Kung ini patut dipertimbangkan. Coba kita pikir bersama, jumlah pemeluk agama Kristen dan Islam itu terbanyak di dunia. Dan kalau kedua penganut agama ini damai, maka perdamaian dunia akan sangat mungkin terjadi.”* (Presentation by RB at SIPC November 2019).

*“During SR, you don’t have to agree. But this quote from Hans Kung is worth considering. Let’s think again, the number of adherents of Christianity and Islam is the largest in the world. And if the adherents of these two religions are at peace, then world peace will be very possible.”*

As with the program that I participated in, YIPC as a communal entity of students and students engaged in inter-religious harmony carries out a dialogue-interactive pattern of peace campaigns. Regarding the division of small groups based on varied backgrounds so that participants directly experience the simulated atmosphere of diversity. The format of the event is packaged attractively and coloured by the nuances of intimacy through singing together, games, quizzes, to emotional reflection as can be seen in Figure 2 above. Regarding the last point mentioned, one of the female facilitators from Aceh and studying at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, AN, led a self-acceptance session by opening up her family problems. Participants were then directed to write something similar on a small piece of paper, a book, or their respective devices to finally accept and make peace with themselves. Such an event gives the impression to the participants to become familiar, open, and more aware of the psychological turmoil within each other. Even so, if you observe that the percentage of participants who are actively participating in post-SIPC follow-up is only slightly and more returning to their respective activities, the question that arises is: does the experience of following SIPC have a significant impact on the individuals involved, or does it just become a kind of ephemeral intimacy that passes quickly and doesn't last? The next review tries to map indirectly with a variety of variables, concepts, other ideas that are relevant and potential to be raised.

#### 4. Global Youth in A Local Area: A Sketch of Identity Hybridisation

ASM: *Santri cum Acti-peace of Christian Campus*

The first informant is ASM (male, 27 years old), a Muslim student from Parepare, South Sulawesi, who provides a contrasting picture of the hybridisation portrait. He is one of the 'elders' of YIPC Yogyakarta who has joined since 2014 and is still actively narrating the values promoted by his community. The plan of ASM's journey in Yogyakarta is quite interesting because as an alumnus of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Study Program of Tafsir Hadith (now changing: *Ilmu Al-Quran dan Tafsir*), he continued his postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Theology, Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW). The decision was not devoid of consequences and various questions. A lot of opposition had befallen him from the side of his own family and friends, especially the fear that he would convert to Christianity—so that he would risk being called an apostate (*murtad*).

Unlike the other informants, ASM, who is Bugis, was born into a Muslim family and, as he admits, his father was an active and well-known figure in the Muhammadiyah organisation in the Parepare area. While his mother is still fairly ordinary and like other rural Muslims. After deciding to go to UKDW, a lopsided response came from the family of his deceased father, but according to ASM, he didn't care at all as long as his mother gave his blessing. At first, the mother was also naturally used to worry, but after being convinced by ASM, her softened mother finally replied with the mainstay sentence, "*Silakan, Nak. Kamu yang akan kuliah, kamu yang akan menjalani hidupmu* (Go ahead, son. You the one who will go to college, you will live your life)" (Admin, Personal Communication, April 21, 2021).

This varied path of life was triggered, one of the most determined, by the curiosity and desire of immigrants who wanted to expand their association. As a student from the hometown of B.J. Habibie, the monoculture situation in his area made ASM expect more when he decided to migrate to Yogyakarta. As soon as he entered UIN with a major that was also Islamic studies, ASM admitted that this homogeneous atmosphere had not been able to fulfill his thirst to get acquainted with various people. Since knowing and joining YIPC, it is at this moment that ASM admits to finding a wider range of interaction spaces and more diverse individuals. In his speech, the concerns of ASM's relatives and friends seemed exaggerated. For him, interaction with different religious and ethnic backgrounds (*passing over*) will automatically make him want to re-examine what he has embraced, in addition to knowing traditions, rituals, and other religious concepts. Regarding this interfaith interaction, he said (ASM, Personal Communication, March 21, 2021):

*Setelah berproses dan menjalin interaksi di sana sini, jadi bagi saya hubungan lintas iman ini sebuah metode, sebuah cara. Makanya sering kan saya bilang di peace camp biasanya, 'YIPC ini menemani kamu untuk gelisah bareng-bareng. Tidak masalah bingung, atau saat SR tidak menemukan jawaban, yang penting dari situ kita mulai bisa berdialog secara terbuka, dan bisa masuk ke hal-hal yang lebih jauh* (After going through the process and having interactions around, this interfaith relationship is a method or a way for me. That's why I often say at peace camps, 'This YIPC accompanies you to be restless together. It doesn't matter if you're confused, or when SR doesn't find an answer, the important thing is that from there we can have an open dialogue, and we can go to discuss further of many things).

From the pattern of ASM's association, it will be seen that he represents the personality of young immigrant youth who are active in establishing relationships with many groups. Not only at YIPC, but he also admits that he has many friends at PMII, often discusses with HMI groups, and has also attended HTI *halaqah* (meeting) while still in the first semester of undergraduate studies. Apart from that, ASM is also active as a coordinator of the Forum Damai Jogja, has been active at Gusdurian, co-authored a book at the Social Movement Institute, the National Alliance for Unity in Diversity (ANBTI Yogyakarta), regularly attends philosophy studies at the Sudirman Mosque, and occasionally attends *Sinau Bareng* at the Mocopat Syafa'at forum in Kasihan, Bantul. As a book lover who also regularly writes, ASM admires several well-known figures. The patron figures of Gus Dur and Romo Mangun

are quite visible in several of his writings. As for spirituality, many ASM mentions living figures such as Budi Raharjo, the leader of the Hare Krishna teachings who also leads the Narayana Smruti Ashram, a 'Modern Hindu' Ashram in Yogyakarta. ("Narayana Smruti Ashram | Because of You," n.d.).

Various references, both written and non-written—realities, encounters, phenomena, experiences—from there contribute to the puzzle of viewpoints and, directly or indirectly, contribute to the life attitude of the person concerned. This condition has been observed if you look at the title of ASM's thesis entitled "The Intertextuality of the Birth of Jesus in QS. Maryam (19:16-36) and Jesus in the Gospel of Luke". ASM's interest in activities and conducting interfaith studies was translated not only in writing but also in his decision to continue his postgraduate level at UKDW—with some risks he had taken into account.

#### *CF: Dental Nursing Student Who Spreads Tolerance*

The informant with a different educational background from the previous informants was CF. This woman, a native of Yogyakarta, studied Dental Nursing at the Yogyakarta Health Polytechnic and admitted that she joined YIPC for a simple reason: the opportunity to meet a soul mate. Starting from a friend's invitation via social media, the YIPC peace camp event poster attracted the attention of CFs who had never participated in interfaith issues. In his confession to researchers, CF's first impression when he joined SIPC in November 2019 was touched because, in addition to learning new things that he had never experienced before, he experienced a concrete situation of contact with friends of different religions in an intense and attractive atmosphere—through the song "Salam" and the socialisation of three different religions.

With CF's family being homogenous with Javanese ethnicity and Muslim religion with less obvious affiliations to mass organisations, this woman who claims to have a hobby of drawing has experienced many questions from her family. Especially when he was lined up as one of the Head-Facilitators of YIPC Yogyakarta (with WH) and had uploaded a photo with a cross in the church, the responses of his family and friends were many in the form of questions such as, "eh, kamu udah kafir po?" or "kok ke gereja pakai kerudung?(eh, are become a non-believer? Or How you enter the church while wearing the headscarf?)" Her mother also responds by saying, "Qur'an wis moco urung? Malah moco kitab lain"<sup>1</sup> (Have you read the Qur'an? Why do you read other scripture?) The response from CF herself, she admits, is just a smile. Once a close relative has also commented on recent CF activities, "Ati-ati, Nok, kui iku rentan Kristenisasi"(Be careful girl, do not you get into Christianisation) (CF, Personal Communication, April 12, 2021)

Further dialogue, when she became active and finally trusted as Head-Facilitator so that she was often busy discussing online and offline, her parents became lenient. Her father is not a problem, her mother is proud because her daughter can have a useful role in her community. Regarding a turning point or a change in his opinion on groups that are often called radicals in the media, CF recounts his encounter with a YIPC friend from Klaten who is an ex-Gavatar, his initials are AJ. Once she knew AJ who CF said was very good, she had doubts over the news that the Gavatar was dangerous and bad. This realisation made her think more openly that why in the group that was 'labelled' as bad, there were still good ones. From here, CF's view on the issue of radicalism is represented by the phrase "don't be easily provoked" and the importance of dialogue and clarifying prejudices. Even though at different times, as a Muslim, CF admits that she belongs to the group "whichever is the shortest reading, that's what I choose". On another occasion, she also judged herself as someone who "if you say I'm secular, yes it can be, because it's for the sake of my own peace".

Having a dialogue with a Dental Nursing student who is currently practicing at UGM, represents the character of the young generation who is flexible, egalitarian, open and at the same time does not have such a strong religious discourse as students or graduates of religious colleges. The response from her parents who began to be proud of the role of CF showed hope and opportunities for self-actualisation as a psychological need. With different terms, the role of the quest for significant's concept

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<sup>1</sup> Javanese language

(the search for the significance of life) participates in knitting their character and socialisation patterns in everyday life. It is possible that this situation also supports the absorption of multi-identity that blends within the individual so that it becomes a hybrid.

#### *'Alumnus' of LDK and HTI who move to YIPC*

This Muslim woman comes from a predominantly Muslim area with the application of special autonomy, namely Islamic law—called the Aceh Qanun—as the governance of the social system. AZ as an Acehnese woman, and studying at UIN North Sumatra, Medan, at that time joined the Campus Da'wah Institute (LDK) in the first semester of her studies. In addition, AZ is also a member of the Islamic Student Association (HMI) while being active in the HTI's *halaqah* around 2016-2017. This one informant admitted that he was of the view that Islam was the most correct at that time. Her motive for wanting to join YIPC in the Medan Region at that time was not based on wanting to learn about interfaith relations, but to confirm the presumption of Christianisation efforts within YIPC. Her efforts to register for YIPC were quite tough because her parents had forbidden her twice. For the third time, only AZ was able to enter and make contact with her new acquaintances at YIPC Medan, who are predominantly Christian.

At that moment, because there were few Muslim participants at YIPC Medan, she found a more flexible discussion space. From there, the cognitive opening takes on the role of shifting her perspective. Even though it is from AZ's family, her mother said, "Don't be intimate with them". AZ still feels rejection from her parents. However, in the end, she joined and became active in YIPC Medan. Then after migrating to Yogyakarta to pursue postgraduate studies in Islamic Broadcasting Communication, AZ was active again at YIPC Yogyakarta and often took care of the SIPC process from selection to editorial needs on *Peace News* and social media content. "*Jadi waktu itu aku kayak termakan omongan sendiri. Dulu aku merasa paling benar dan pihak lain itu salah. Tapi sekarang aku malah jadi bagian dari kelompok yang dulunya aku anggap nggak baik* So at that time, I ate my words. I used to think I was right and the other party was wrong. But now, I'm part of a group that I used to think was bad." (AZ, Personal Communication, April 14, 2021).

The narrative above seems like a testimonial, but from there it can be read that the pattern of shifting attitudes and character of young people is triggered, for example, by direct experiences and encounters. The interfaith discourse that she went through while in Medan with the reverse condition—being a minority because there were many Christian and Catholic members there—opened up space for her thoughts through reciprocal discussions and interactions. Because members in Medan are still few compared to Yogyakarta, AZ considers that the sense of kinship there is deep. In her confession, the frequency of discussions in Yogyakarta is indeed more and meetings with religious figures are more frequent because they are in the 'centre' of intellectual figures in Indonesia and part of the island of Java.

Regarding the topic of radicalism and strategies to overcome it, AZ's response is the opposite of before. She views the exclusive ideology with a rigid understanding at risk of danger because it suffers from a sense of superiority and is less open to social interactions with different parties. This turning point of view characterises the psychological phase of youth who still has a wider opportunity to change their perspective significantly until it is the opposite. Not only for those recruited by hard-line groups, but also vice versa, those who were originally affiliated with radicalism can also carry out social escapism to get out of the circle.

## **5. Youth and the Quest for Social Harmony**

The matter highlighted in this research is then called the *hybridisation of identity*. Varieties of their identity—starting from students from what campus, from which ethnic group, what family with how much income, alumni of Islamic boarding schools or public schools, Catholic or Protestant or Muslim, NU-Muhammadiyah-Ahmadiyah or Shi'a, and so on—basically forming a pattern of understanding (*horizon*) within each one. Then after touching each other's thoughts within the YIPC Yogyakarta

community, they experienced a phase of melting the *horizons* which later gave rise to relatively new characters and perspectives as dissolving across cultural entities. While outside the community, the process of fusion of these horizons does not just stop. It will always evolve and depend on the discourse that is perceived by everyone.

The concept of Gadamer's ideas which was originally used as an instrument for examining texts – the text horizon blends in with the interpreter's horizon – seems to also be able to be used to map the mingling of discourse horizons, phenomena, social interactions, and reality horizons with the horizons of subjects or parties who absorb discourse, observe phenomena, and experience interactions, and observers of reality. From there, the sketch of identity hybridisation can be studied with this concept and spread to the activities of congratulating each adherent of a certain religion without worrying about being accused of being infidels, liberals, or apostates. Another example is also reflected in the *iftār* activities (*buka puasa bersama*) together which often involve Christian members to participate in the celebration. These two small examples represent a simple spectrum of identity hybridisation.

These snapshots depict a fusion of their thought or horizon (micro-individual) with the community atmosphere (meso-community) and the reality (macro-social politics) around them – which be called *Horizontverschmelzung* in Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept. This could be discovered from a sequence of socio-religious behaviour and expressions among youth who are active in the interfaith community in Yogyakarta.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the explanation and stories of the three informants above, we could say that YIPC Yogyakarta as a community has members with varied backgrounds which will enable reciprocal intellectual-emotional-cultural interactions. Moreover, in terms of economic diversity, gender, ethnicity, political views, education history, affiliated organisations, life orientation, ideals, and so on also helped determine the pattern of attitude and behavior that mixed (*hybrid*). The cultural distance and psychological range between the internal members of the community itself, after interactive dialectics and negotiations, have an impact on the identity of each individual. If examined from the perspective of Gadamer's hermeneutics, especially the *fusion of horizons*, this cross-cultural and religious encounter will produce patterns of thought that blend together and are automatically related to their identities.

According to the description before, YIPC Yogyakarta could be seen as a miniature or diorama of a community that accommodates the younger generation to find a balance point in life and the search for an identity that fits their considerations amid the chaotic social conflicts in this contemporary age. They also represent a portrait of global youth in a local area and emanate the spirit to seek social harmony. Although in practice YIPC Yogyakarta has not penetrated the grassroots, especially street children whose potential for violence is quite frequent there, this community approach strategy to students and college students is considered effective as a preventive measure. If the middle class that makes up the majority of this community can move within a wider radius, the potential for lasting impact will be more significant.

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