

## RETHINKING DIGITAL ACTIVISM AND TOLERANCE: A HABERMASIAN PERSPECTIVE FROM YIPC YOGYAKARTA

Armaidy Armawi<sup>1</sup>, Hafidz Iman<sup>2</sup>, Dany Chandra Purnama Wibowo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Philosophy, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 55281

E-mail: armaidy@ugm.ac.id, hafidziman2000@mail.ugm.ac.id,  
danychandrapurnamawibowo@mail.ugm.ac.id

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the digital activism of the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Yogyakarta in promoting tolerance, using Jurgen Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy as an analytical framework. Adopting a qualitative research design with an intersubjective approach, the study involved three key informants who serve as YIPC facilitators. Data were collected through structured interviews, a review of Habermas's theoretical works, and an analysis of public comments and interactions on YIPC's Instagram account. Data analysis was conducted through curation, categorization, and thematic interpretation to explore conceptual dimensions, the formation of collective public opinion, the quality of rational debate, and the capacity to mediate between society and the state. The findings indicate that YIPC contributes to the development of a relatively inclusive digital public sphere and promotes pro-tolerance narratives through creative content, cross-community collaboration, and the empowerment of young content creators from marginalized groups. However, engagement with negative comments, while increasing visibility, occasionally generates less rational exchanges that weaken deliberative quality. Furthermore, YIPC's role in mediating public policy remains limited, as its activities are primarily oriented toward education and community engagement rather than formal advocacy. These findings highlight both the potential and the limitations of digital activism in advancing deliberative democratic ideals within social media contexts.

**Keywords:** digital activism; public sphere; YIPC; tolerance; habermas.

## MENINJAU ULANG AKTIVISME DIGITAL DAN TOLERANSI: TELAH PERSPEKTIF HABERMASIAN TERHADAP YIPC YOGYAKARTA

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji aktivisme digital *Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community* (YIPC) Yogyakarta dalam mempromosikan toleransi, dengan menggunakan teori demokrasi deliberatif Jürgen Habermas sebagai kerangka analisis. Dengan mengadopsi desain penelitian kualitatif dan pendekatan intersubjektif, penelitian ini melibatkan tiga informan kunci yang berperan sebagai fasilitator YIPC. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara terstruktur, telaah terhadap karya-karya teoretis Habermas, serta analisis komentar publik dan interaksi pada akun Instagram YIPC. Analisis data dilakukan melalui proses kurasi, kategorisasi, dan interpretasi tematik untuk mengeksplorasi dimensi konseptual, pembentukan opini publik kolektif, kualitas perdebatan rasional, serta kapasitas dalam memediasi antara masyarakat dan negara. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa YIPC berkontribusi pada pengembangan ruang publik digital yang inklusif serta mempromosikan narasi pro-toleransi melalui konten kreatif, kolaborasi lintas komunitas, dan pemberdayaan kreator konten muda dari kelompok marjinal. Namun, keterlibatan dengan komentar negatif, meskipun meningkatkan visibilitas, sesekali memunculkan pertukaran yang kurang rasional sehingga melemahkan kualitas deliberatif. Selain itu, peran YIPC dalam memediasi kebijakan publik masih terbatas, karena aktivitasnya lebih berorientasi pada edukasi dan keterlibatan komunitas dibandingkan advokasi formal. Temuan ini sekaligus menyoroti potensi dan keterbatasan aktivisme digital dalam mendorong ideal-ideal demokrasi deliberatif dalam konteks media sosial.

**Kata kunci:** aktivisme digital; ruang publik; YIPC; toleransi; habermas.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the nature of activism. Social media and online platforms are no longer merely tools of communication; they have evolved into strategic mediums for disseminating ideas, fostering solidarity, and mo-

bilizing civil society around public issues (Mindel et al., 2024). Digital activism refers to a form of socio-political advocacy that operates through the use of digital technologies and networks (Rachimoellah et al., 2024). The significance of studying this phenomenon lies in its growing influence on shaping public opin-

ion, accelerating mobilization, and creating new spaces for civic participation.

Digital activism has expanded opportunities for broader civic participation, yet it also introduces significant challenges. Digital communication is increasingly characterized by speed, fragmentation, and algorithmic mediation, which often shape how information is circulated and interpreted (Gandini et al., 2025). As a consequence, online interactions can become trapped in echo chambers and polarization, reducing the possibility of meaningful public engagement. Initially associated with global political mobilization, digital activism has gradually extended into more complex social issues, including tolerance, identity, and religious freedom (Jati, 2016). These developments indicate that digital activism must be examined not only in terms of its mobilizing capacity but also in relation to its broader social consequences.

In Indonesia, the growing use of digital media has coincided with persistent challenges to religious tolerance. Over the past five years, the spread of hate speech related to ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA) on social media has continued alongside restrictions on worship experienced by minority communities (Habibah et al., 2025). These conditions have created an urgent need for new strategies that can promote tolerance through public engagement in digital spaces. Within this context, the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Yogyakarta represents a relevant case because it consistently uses digital platforms to disseminate interfaith dialogue and peace education. The experience of YIPC Yogyakarta therefore offers an important opportunity to examine how digital activism can function as a response to religious intolerance in contemporary Indonesia.

To examine digital activism in promoting tolerance, this study employs the theoretical framework of Jürgen Habermas. This study focuses on two key concepts in Habermas's thought: the Public Sphere as a space for public communication and Communicative Rationality as a form of interaction based on openness, mutual understanding, and inclusivity. In the digital context, these concepts provide a framework for analyzing how YIPC Yogyakarta uses social media to create dialogue and circulate narratives of religious tolerance.

Against this backdrop, the study aims to describe and analyze the digital activism practices carried out by YIPC Yogyakarta in campaign-

ing for tolerance. More specifically, it seeks to identify YIPC's strategies in utilizing online media to disseminate narratives of interfaith peace and to build inclusive spaces for dialogue. Furthermore, the study also provides a philosophical reflection on the contribution of YIPC's digital activism to the cultivation of tolerance values within society.

### ***Jürgen Habermas's Public Sphere on Deliberative Democracy***

A philosopher who has made a contribution to democracy that we consider relevant is Jürgen Habermas. Because through the perspective of this Dusseldorf-born philosopher on June 18, 1927 we will understand the pattern of deliberative communication in democratic efforts. Habermas is renowned as a key figure of the second generation of the Frankfurt School in social research, particularly in politics and communication. With a broad intellectual influence, Habermas is credited with ushering the humanities into a more modern era. His thinking has been significantly influenced by the philosophies of Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx.

It is the influence of Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx that also led Jürgen Habermas to elaborate on his theory of deliberative democracy (Muthhar, 2020). The word "deliberation" originates from the Latin word *deliberatio*, meaning "consultation," "weighing considerations," or "discussion." Therefore, simply put, deliberative democracy means that the process of giving reasons for a public policy must first be tested through public consultation or "public discourse" (Muthhar, 2020). Deliberative democracy is also described as a public discourse conducted by the government with various elements of society in the form of deliberations to establish a public policy. In other words, for Habermas, deliberative democracy is an effort to realize the essence of democracy itself.

The essence of democracy is openness and freedom without any authoritarian actions from the government or any particular group. This is because deliberative democracy generally emphasizes reasoning through dialogue and the exchange of opinions to produce a collective agreement (Safitri, 2020). In the context of a democratic state, the people are the holders of the highest sovereignty. Thus, the government is merely a servant of the people, acting in ac-

cordance with the people's needs and collective agreements.

According to Hallim's research, a democratic state is one where civil authority is based on the decisions of its people, whether directly or indirectly. The research also explains that deliberative democracy assumes the active and collective involvement of society in ratifying public policies (Safitri, 2020). Besides decisions that must be discussed together, deliberative democracy also requires direct involvement or participation from the public in the decision-making process. Habermas emphasizes that deliberative democracy ensures that decisions must be made through a mechanism of open dialogue and discussion to create a collective decision that can be binding on all members of society within the state. Therefore, for Habermas, state policies will not be implemented effectively without the active involvement of the people in both the formation and execution of those policies.

Jürgen Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy represents a profound shift from aggregative and liberal models of politics, which focus on the summation of pre-formed individual preferences and interests. Instead, Habermas grounds his normative model in his broader theory of communicative action, which posits that human interaction is fundamentally oriented toward reaching mutual understanding (*Verständigung*) through reasoned argumentation. For Habermas, legitimate law must arise not from the compromise of competing interests or the sheer will of the majority, but from a process of public deliberation where citizens engage in discourse to discover common interests and formulate generalizable interests (Chambers, 2018). This process is governed by the "unforced force of the better argument," where participants are motivated by a cooperative search for truth and justice rather than strategic advantage. The legitimacy of any law or political decision is thus derived from the quality of the procedure that produced it. A procedure ideally allows all affected parties to participate as free and equal discursive partners.

The central mechanism of this model is the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*), which Habermas conceptualizes as a network of communicative associations that he ranging from informal coffeehouse discussions and activist groups to more formal parliamentary debates and media discourse. This arena is distinct from both the state apparatus (public) and the economic sys-

tem (private), it is the social domain where public opinion is formed. The vitality of democracy depends on this sphere being an open and inclusive space where no internal or external coercion exists, allowing for a free flow of information and arguments. In order to achieve legitimate consensus, all participants in the public discourse must acknowledge and accept that anyone can participate and also the outcome will practically affect everyone involved. The participants are seen as equals, granting one another equal standing in the deliberation process (Habermas, 1984).

**Table 1. Table Name**

Key	Function
Deliberation	The process of rationally exchanging arguments aimed at reaching a consensus or mutual understanding about the common good. It's not simply a matter of negotiation or voting.
Reasonableness	Willingness to provide reasons (reason-giving) that are acceptable to all parties involved and willingness to accept better reasons (the force of the better argument).
Freedom from the coercion	Freedom to access public spaces, express opinions, raise issues, and criticize without fear of reprisal or censorship (freedom from coercion). No external pressure (such as threats from those in power) or internal pressure (such as psychological pressure) should interfere with the deliberative process. Every voice has the right to be heard.
Status Equality	The principle that all participants have equal status in discourse. Social hierarchy, power, or wealth should not affect a person's opportunity to speak and hear.

Source: Author's personal analysis



**Figure 1. Habermas's Deliberative Democracy**

Source: The Author's Personal Analyst

Habermas acknowledges that digital media may carry emancipatory promises that align with the ideals of the classical public sphere.

At first, the new media seemed to herald at last the fulfilment of the egalitarian-universalistic claim of the bourgeois public sphere to include all citizens equally. These media promised to lend all citizens their own publicly perceptible voice and even to equip it with mobilising power. (Habermas, 2022: 159).

This potential is manifested in the ability of digital activism to mobilize the masses and give voice to traditionally marginalized groups. Habermas even provides a concrete example: "Moreover, the worldwide organisational potential offered by the new media is at the service of radical right-wing networks as well as the courageous Belarusian women in their sustained protest against Lukashenko." (Habermas, 2022: 160). Thus, that quotes shows Habermas sees that digital platforms can be used for both progressive and regressive political struggles or activism.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach, focusing on the digital activism practices of the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Yogyakarta. The data are presented in a descriptive narrative form rather than statistical figures, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within its contextual setting (Moleong & Surhaman, 1989). The research adopts a fieldwork approach, drawing on both direct and indirect data obtained from the empirical context (Creswell, 2017). Data collection techniques include document analysis, observation, and interviews, encompassing both primary and secondary sources (Nawawi, 2019).

Primary data were collected through interviews with three informants. The researcher selected three informants for this study because all of them serve as facilitators within YIPC. In addition, they act as social media administrators responsible for managing and sustaining YIPC's online platforms. This selection is highly relevant, as these informants possess detailed knowledge of the dynamics within YIPC's digital space, particularly in relation to its social media activities. Observation was conducted with a particular focus on digital activities across platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. However, the analysis primarily focuses on Instagram, as this platform demonstrates a higher level of activity, whereas YIPC's YouTube account, although present, is relatively less active. Furthermore, this study designates YIPC Yogyakarta as the main object of analysis because the @yip.center account has a larger number of followers and exhibits more recent and consistent digital activity compared to other affiliated accounts. The data are qualitative in nature, expressed in words and narratives. Secondary sources consist of relevant literature, including books on digital activism, the public sphere, and Jürgen Habermas's deliberative communication, as well as other references supporting the thematic analysis of this research.

This study also employs a synthesis method, which connects various relevant concepts and findings in order to construct a more systematic analytical framework. Through this process, existing concepts are not merely combined but also reinterpreted, thereby producing new and deeper insights into the research object (Baker,

1994). At the stage of analysis, the collected data were repeatedly examined to ensure consistency, then curated and specifically identified to highlight the most relevant, significant, and meaningful information for the study (Miles et al., 2014).

The initial stage of this research involves the collection of library-based data. At this stage, the researcher examines various credible sources, including books, journal articles, and other academic documents relevant to the topic under study. The primary focus of the literature review includes Jürgen Habermas's thought on digital activism, studies on digital activism conducted by YIPC particularly YIPC Yogyakarta and the relevance of Habermas's framework in analyzing digital activism in promoting religious tolerance in Indonesia. These sources are obtained through searches on digital platforms such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, Library Genesis, as well as from printed collections in nearby libraries. At this stage, the researcher downloads and records all potentially relevant references, whether historical, theoretical, or contextual in nature.

Once the data have been collected, a process of screening and selection is conducted to ensure the relevance, validity, and timeliness of the sources used. The selected literature is categorized into three main groups: (1) historical and conceptual studies related to YIPC, (2) studies on the public sphere within Habermas's deliberative democracy, and (3) studies focusing on YIPC's deliberation in digital activism. Redundant, less credible, or irrelevant sources are excluded to maintain the focus and quality of the analysis.

The next stage involves literature analysis using a philosophical approach. In this stage, analysis is carried out by examining, identifying, comparing, and synthesizing findings from the selected literature in a critical and comprehensive manner (Bakker & Zubair, 1994). The researcher first analyzes key concepts such as the public sphere, deliberative communication, and tolerance campaigns in the digital space. Subsequently, an analysis of Indonesia's public sphere as a democratic context is conducted. Within this context, the researcher then relates the conceptual framework to the concrete practices of digital activism carried out by YIPC Yogyakarta. The analysis focuses on how YIPC utilizes digital media as a discursive space to facilitate interfaith dialogue, disseminate narra-

tives of tolerance, and foster inclusive interactions among users.

Furthermore, an interpretative process is conducted by comparing the ideal of the deliberative public sphere in Habermas's thought with the empirical reality of YIPC's digital activism practices. At this stage, the researcher identifies the extent to which the principles of communicative rationality, such as openness, inclusivity, and orientation toward consensus are reflected in YIPC's digital activities. This analysis also takes into account Indonesia's socio-cultural context, which influences the dynamics of both the reception and production of tolerance discourse in the digital sphere.

The final stage is synthesis, which involves formulating the research findings into a coherent analytical narrative. At this stage, the researcher establishes the relationship between the theoretical framework, the results of the literature review, and the empirical context of YIPC Yogyakarta to explain the contribution of digital activism in promoting religious tolerance. This synthesis also serves as the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the position and role of YIPC in constructing a deliberative and inclusive digital public sphere in Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Digital Activism of the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community Yogyakarta*

The advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the ways in which human beings build relationships, communicate ideas, and negotiate meaning in everyday interactions. Communication that was once direct and spatially confined has now shifted into dynamic exchanges that transcend geographical boundaries and take place within virtual spaces, thereby generating new social patterns (Antonucci et al., 2017). Digital technology has given rise to a new landscape that serves as a domain for diverse human activities. This digital space is not merely accessed through devices such as mobile phones, computers, or laptops; rather, it constitutes an ecosystem of interaction that influences nearly every aspect of life. From socio-political practices and social interactions to economic mechanisms, the digital sphere now exists as a new reality that both accompanies and gradually reshapes the ways in which society conducts its activities (Gani & Anwar, 2022).

Within the socio-political domain, the digital sphere does not simply provide an additional channel of communication but fundamentally alters how political processes unfold. This transformation is evident in how citizens articulate and convey aspirations, build public opinion, and organize collective movements. All these dynamics have increasingly shifted into digital spaces that accelerate the flow of information. In the digital era, activism has also undergone significant transformation through the utilization of digital platforms as media for disseminating messages, building networks, and promoting particular values within society (Rachimoellah et al., 2024).

Digital activism can be defined as a series of campaigns and movements that operate entirely within the ecosystem of digital technology and networks. It is comprehensive in nature, encompassing all forms of social and political advocacy that rely on digital infrastructure; at the same time, it is distinctive, as it differs from other forms of activism that may employ technology but are not inherently rooted in digital connectivity itself (Arianto, 2022). Through digital spaces, campaigns and collective movements acquire a new form spreading more rapidly, reaching broader audiences, and exerting greater intensity in shaping public opinion with the ultimate goal of fostering social and political transformation (Joyce, 2010).

In recent years, global attention has increasingly turned toward the potential of digital technology as an instrument of social and political advocacy. Various tools both hardware such as mobile phones and laptops, and software such as social media platforms (Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter) have become strategic instruments for organizing campaigns. One of the most influential examples of digital activism is the emergence of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. The hashtag first appeared on social media in 2012 as a response to cases of police violence against African Americans in the United States (Clayton, 2018). It represented a collective resistance mobilized through the viral nature of social media while simultaneously articulating the issue of racism within the public sphere.

The Arab Spring further demonstrated the role of social media as a bridge for disseminating information and political ideas across national boundaries. The roots of resistance lay in social dissatisfaction with unemployment, poverty, soaring prices of basic necessities, and

regime corruption, which collectively drove citizens to challenge the ruling authorities of the time. From Tunisia and Egypt, this momentum spread to other countries through transnational activism facilitated by digital technology, with media reports and the internet accelerating the circulation of democratic ideas and demands for citizens' rights (Umar et al., 2016).

The Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) is a non-governmental interfaith community committed to promoting peace among religious groups. One of the approaches it has developed is interfaith dialogue through scriptural readings, known as *Scriptural Reasoning (SR)*. This method situates sacred texts as a meeting point to deepen mutual understanding and foster more inclusive relationships among adherents of different religions (Ochs, 2012). The purpose of this method is to seek and cultivate shared comprehension of sacred scriptures through openness to diverse interpretations.

Historically, the origins of YIPC can be traced back to 2012 through the initiative of two scholars, Andreas Jonathan (Christian) and Ayi Yunus Rusyana (Muslim), both of whom were pursuing their Ph.D. at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS). Their vision materialized in the Young Peacemaker Training, held on July 9-12, 2012, in Yogyakarta, which brought together 25 Christian and Muslim students from various universities. Drawing upon their experience in the Campus Peace Movement and Peace Generation, Andreas and Ayi formulated a set of peace values that evolved into interfaith dialogue, conflict reconciliation, and peace education based on intensive interaction. From this foundation, YIPC was established as a sustainable platform to continue training while cultivating a new generation of interfaith peacemakers (Waliyuddin, 2021).

According to Hisyam Malik, a YIPC Yogyakarta facilitator, the organization initially emerged as an informal community that preceded its formal institutional framework. He emphasized that, in its early stage, YIPC functioned as a youth-based interfaith forum before eventually forming a center to manage administrative and organizational needs. This initial initiative arose from the spirit of Yogyakarta's students who recognized the urgency of interfaith encounters as a shared learning space.

YIPC initially launched its flagship program in 2023 by organizing an event entitled the

“Student Interfaith Peace Camp” with the theme “*Building Peace Generation Through Young Peacemakers.*” This inaugural follow-up activity was attended by 30 students from various regions, including Bandung, Solo, Surabaya, Kebumen, Madura, and Palembang. The peace values developed by YIPC emerged from a synthesis between the 12 Peace Values of Peace Generation and the practice of interfaith dialogue through Scriptural Reasoning (SR). From this combination, four core dimensions were formulated: peace with God (as a transcendent relationship), peace with oneself (as an expression of self-awareness and acceptance), peace with others (through egalitarian and dialogical social interaction), and peace with the environment (affirming the importance of ecological responsibility).

According to Annisa Zuhra, YIPC Media Staff, these four values represent the vision that continues to be strongly upheld by YIPC members. They also serve as the philosophical foundation derived from the principles of *hablun minallah, hablun min an-nas, and hablun min al-alam*. YIPC’s vision is to cultivate a peaceful generation grounded in love for God and for fellow human beings. To realize this vision, YIPC has formulated a set of fundamental peace values that function as the organization’s core values. These values encompass four main dimensions: peace with oneself, peace with others, peace with the environment, and peace with God. Each of these dimensions is further elaborated into various sub-values that enrich and deepen the implementation of peace principles in everyday practice.

In its early stages, the use of digital media was largely spontaneous and had not yet become part of the organization’s formal agenda. Social media was primarily utilized as a space for sharing documentation of activities and disseminating simple calls to action, enabling the issue of tolerance to reach a broader audience beyond the immediate circle of offline participants. Over time, in 2016, YIPC began to utilize digital platforms more systematically, starting with Facebook, and gradually intensified its online campaigns. The organization subsequently established a dedicated team to manage its official accounts, focusing on producing narratives of tolerance, publicizing activities, and engaging youth communities beyond face-to-face interactions. In practice, YIPC’s tolerance campaigns are presented in various formats, such as posters, short videos (reels), and other forms of

content that follow social media trends. This strategy aims to ensure that the messages are more easily received by young audiences through relevant and contextual packaging. Although the development process remains experimental, relying on a trial-and-error approach, YIPC adaptively leverages the various features available on platforms such as Instagram to expand the reach and effectiveness of its campaigns. According to Hisyam Malik, this entire process reflects YIPC’s adaptation to the dynamics of the digital era.

According to Annisa Zuhra, this momentum was reinforced in 2018 with the emergence of young facilitators who encouraged digital innovation, supported by broader networks and donors. Since then, YIPC’s digital strategy has become more structured: no longer limited to posting documentation of activities, but also encompassing the design of thematic campaigns, the production of visually appealing content, and the systematic management of audience engagement on social media platforms.

“We see social media as a platform that can be utilized to campaign for changes in dominant narratives. Therefore, the YIP Center, with support from several donors, organizes training programs for interfaith youth so that they can become content creators with a diversity-oriented perspective. Participants in these training programs are specifically drawn from marginalized groups, with the expectation that they can become influencers who articulate their own issues. For instance, we frequently highlight issues related to adherents of indigenous belief systems, queer communities, and persons with disabilities. Since 2018, our focus has indeed been on using social media as the primary medium for narrative change campaigns.” (A. Zuhra, personal communication, June 20, 2025).

In utilizing social media platforms to campaign for tolerance and peace, YIPC seeks to follow existing algorithms and trends on Instagram and TikTok, recognizing that contemporary narratives of intolerance often stem from hate speech and comments that reject religious diversity. The YIPC media team employs various strategies and schemes to ensure that their campaigns are timely, relevant, and accurately targeted. Anisa Eka shared her perspective on

the potential of leveraging new social media features to steer narratives in favor of tolerance.

“So far, from my perspective, I see this in terms of platform features. For instance, we use Instagram, which offers many features. One that I find particularly important is the collaboration feature, because it allows the issues we raise not to remain confined to our own platform, but to reach other communities as well. Those communities, in turn, usually have a large number of followers.” (A. Eka, personal communication, July 8, 2025).

A similar perspective was expressed by Anisa Zuhra, a YIPC Yogyakarta facilitator. She considers Instagram to be the most effective medium for campaigning for peace, particularly because the platform accommodates visual content, especially videos, that have proven capable of engaging audiences more broadly.

“Each social media platform indeed has its own distinctive characteristics. YIPC itself is most active on Instagram, largely due to limited human resources. On Instagram, certain forms of content tend to generate higher engagement. We observe that users are constantly exposed to new trends on the platform every day, whether audio trends, music, dance, or various other forms. As a result, we see that videos featuring dancing, music, or humorous content attract significant interest. Based on this, we attempt to ride social media trends while embedding our own narratives within them.” (A. Zuhra, personal communication, June 20, 2025).

YIPC’s transition from face-to-face interactions to the digital realm demonstrates that the shift in medium is not merely a technical matter, but a transformation in the way tolerance and peace are nurtured. Recognizing that the main arena for intolerance has increasingly emerged on social media—a space where public opinion is contested—YIPC has responded through digital strategies that leverage algorithms, trends, and cross-community collaborations. This approach illustrates that campaigns for tolerance cannot rely solely on idealized dialogical spaces; they must actively contend in the same arenas where narratives of hate circulate. This transformation underscores YIPC’s

relevance as an interfaith youth movement, while also serving as a reminder that building peace demands creativity, courage, and a willingness to continuously adapt.

### *YIPC’s Deliberative on Digital Activism*

After understanding the concept of Habermas’s deliberative democracy, the stage is set to confront the central inquiry of this analysis. This theoretical framework provides the critical lens through which to examine the role of philosophical engagement in practical movements. Consequently, this section directly addresses the overarching question: “does philosophy contribute to YIPC activism?”

YIPC’s digital activism as a form of deliberative democracy as conceptualized by Habermas, the author uses four main indicators: Deliberation, Reasonableness, Freedom from coercion, and status equality. The public sphere serves as a link between civil society and the state, where the resulting public opinion can influence and shape political decisions (Sohrabi, 2021).

To fulfill the requirements of Habermas’s **deliberative** democracy, YIPC often faces the challenge of deliberating between society and the government as policy makers. According to Anisa Eka, YIPC at the regional level hasn’t reached the level of public policy. In our interview, she said, “... YIPC hasn’t reached the level of public policy. Because we’re still a small community and haven’t yet focused on advocacy; our concerns are individual.” (A. Eka, personal communication, July 8, 2025). Therefore, YIPC still does not fulfill the mediation of power and society as expected by Habermas.

YIPC’s digital activism still cannot be classified according to the deliberative democracy expected by Habermas. Although lacking in some deliberative aspects, such as rational discussion on social media and mediation between civil society and the government due to the government’s poor response and YIPC priority concern. On the other side, YIPC’s digital activism efforts still deserve public appreciation, especially in promoting tolerance and peace. Considering that the type of democracy is not only deliberative democracy as Habermas formulated it, YIPC’s digital activism still on the track of democracy action. Therefore, the author concludes that YIPC’s digital activism, especially

regarding tolerance and peace, isn't quite deliberative.

Similar to Anisa Eka, Hisyam thinks that advocacy and/or deliberacy action is still no need to do. In our interview he said, "We've never advocated for the government to change policy. So far, YIPC has focused on targeting young people to internalize the values of peace." (H. Malik, personal communication, June 14, 2025). Due to YIPC's goal is just to introduce and campaign tolerance and peace for the young generation, deliberacy action is never to do.

YIPC still provides **reasonableness** on their social media platform. According to Annisa in our interview, she said,

"...We respond to negative comments because I've observed that when we respond to people, other comments will come... the content goes viral. It's certainly draining energy... because it sparks pointless debate... But on the

other hand, it has a positive impact... our content can reach people who don't have a perspective yet..." (A. Zuhra, personal communication, June 20, 2025)

From Annisa's statements we know that YIPC use this strategy, while energy-consuming, demonstrates a conscious effort to engage directly with criticism, using it as a tool to strengthen their message, reach new audiences with different perspectives, and stimulate a dynamic exchange of ideas, thus upholding the principles of open dialogue.

Even though the social media debate isn't rational (*debat kusir*), sometimes YIPC also found the rational debate argument. The author found a discussion in the comments column of an Instagram post from YIPC @yip.center on April 17, 2024, where there was a discussion from the accounts @kabarsejuk and @muhamadmiftah106 about building permits for houses of worship, especially churches.



Figure 2. Commentar collum discussion

Source: Instagram @yip.center

YIPC is trying to open universal access in their social media interaction to get the **freedom from coercion**. This assumption comes

from the statement of our source. Hisyam said, "If it's from other admin friends, if it's still possible to comment back, or invite them to a dis-

cussion, yes, they answer the discussion.” (H. Malik, personal communication, June 14, 2025). This statement aligns with the universality principle of deliberative democracy because it affirms a commitment to responding to and involving all parties who wish to participate in the discussion, without exception. This is because of the principle of freedom from coercion that all parties affected by a decision must have an equal opportunity to participate in the deliberation process. By being open to responding comments and engaging with anyone in the discussion, the practice described by Hiysam operationally embodies the principles of inclusivity and equal access to the discourse space, which are at the core of freedom from coercion in deliberative democracy.

In maintaining freedom from coercion, the perspective of the YIPC social media account admin is very necessary because they have more direct experience interacting. Annisa re-

veal her experience due to manage YIPC social media account. In our interview, Annisa said,

“... hate comments and threats like that, for example, if we create some content that says, for example, Shia is also Islam, Ahmadiyah is also Islam, transgender women have the right to worship... later comments like, watch out, I'll report you to the MUI, for example, and they'll tag me directly, the MUI, and things like that on Instagram.” (A. Zuhra, personal communication, June 20, 2025).

The presence of hate comments on YIPC's social media accounts proves that YIPC is free from any coercion in commenting or expressing opinions in its campaign efforts. Because the author was interested in hate comment causes, the author was trying to find the real case in YIPC's social media account.

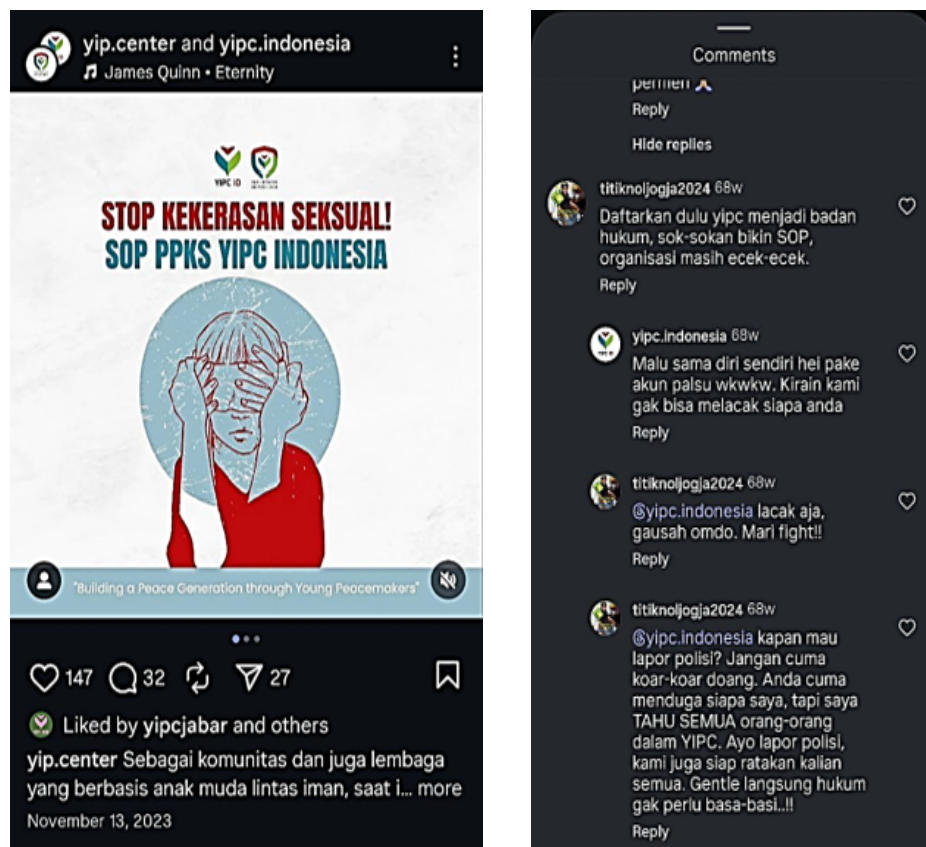


Figure 3. Hate comments

Source: Instagram @yip.center

After seeing the hate comments directly, we believe that YIPC's social media accounts **still guarantee freedom from coercion** to everyone

who wants to express their opinions. Although, sometimes, or maybe oftenly, hate comments aren't reasonable, YIPC's account still allows it.

In a few minutes, the YIPC hate comments cause was remembering us to Thommas Hobbes popular quotes *homo homini lupus* which means humans as wolves to other humans (Suhadi et al., 2025).

YIPC provides **status equality** in their social media. Anisa Eka said,

"Because our core principle is peace, I feel that what I convey on social media is now starting to resonate with many people, especially young people and students, who attend YIPC events to learn more. The new public value we've discovered through our content is the increased reconciliation of conflict for various groups, especially religious groups." (A. Eka, personal communication, July 8, 2025).

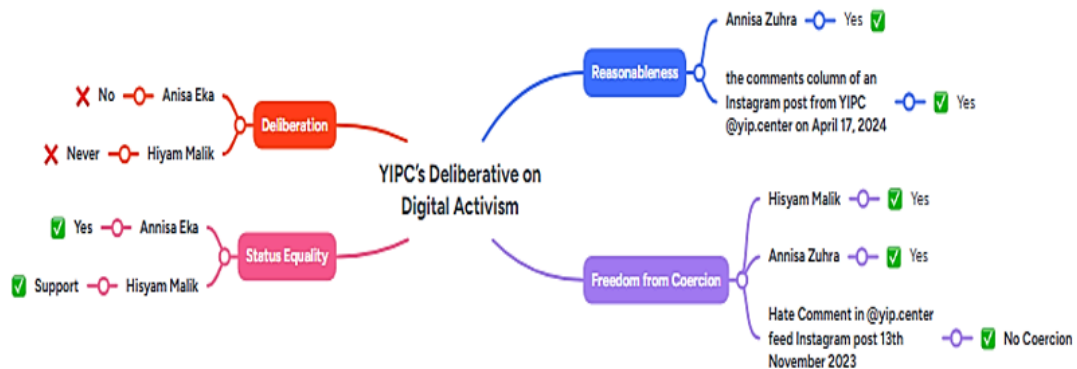
Anisa Eka's actions are in line with the principle of forming **collective public opinion** in deliberative democracy because her efforts in spreading the value of peace have succeeded in attracting the interest and participation of vari-

ous community groups, thus giving rise to a shared awareness of the importance of conflict reconciliation as a new public value.

The Hisyam's answer is in line with Anisa Eka on another occasion,

"The YIP Center, with the support of several donors, is holding training for young people of different faiths to become content creators with a diverse perspective. Participants in this training specifically come from marginalized groups, with the hope that they can become influencers who speak out on their own issues." (H. Malik, persona communication, June 14, 2025).

The practice described by Anisa Eka is connected with the principle of universality on deliberative democracy because it actively includes marginalized groups in the public discourse space. Thus, it ensures that the voices of those who are often marginalized can be heard and considered in the formation of public opinion.



**Figure 4. Deliberative democrations on YIPC's digital activism**

The image provided is a thematic mind map that visualizes the results of a qualitative analysis regarding the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community's (YIPC) deliberative practices in digital activism. Using a Habermasian lens, the data is organized into four core nodes: Deliberation, Status Equality, Reasonableness, and Freedom from Coercion. Each node is supported by specific interview excerpts from participants (Anisa Eka, Hisyam Malik, and Annisa Zuhra) and observations from Instagram interactions, effectively serving as a "Data Display" in the Miles and Huberman model.

The left side of the map focuses on the structural challenges and goals of YIPC's engagement. Under Deliberation, participants note that while they haven't influenced formal public policy yet, their focus remains on internalizing peace values in individuals. Meanwhile, the Status Equality node highlights YIPC's effort to level the playing field by training content creators from marginalized groups. This reflects Habermas's requirement for inclusivity, as the organization seeks to empower those often excluded from the public sphere to "speak out on their own issues."

On the right side, the map explores the quality and safety of digital discourse. The Reasonableness section captures the exhausting reality of managing viral content, where Annisa Zuhra describes the tension between "pointless debate" and the positive impact of reaching new audiences. This illustrates the struggle to maintain rational-critical debate in a digital environment prone to emotional volatility. Similarly, the Freedom from Coercion node documents the "hate comments" and threats (such as being reported to religious authorities like the MUI) that represent the "strategic action" and external pressures that threaten the ideal speech situation.

Overall, this mind map serves as a synthesized narrative of how YIPC's digital activism operates in a messy, real-world context. It moves from the internal motivations of the activists to the external friction they encounter on social media platforms. By mapping specific quotes to theoretical categories, the researcher can clearly demonstrate where YIPC's digital activism isn't succeeds in creating a "mini-public sphere". Due to YIPC has not yet reached the aspect of deliberation between the general public and the government to solve the problem.

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, the answer to the central question is nuanced: while YIPC's practices are not a perfect example of Habermasian deliberative democracy, they represent a vital and praiseworthy form of democratic action in the digital space. YIPC's digital activism cannot yet be categorized within the deliberative democracy framework by Habermas. Despite deficiencies in certain deliberative elements, like rational discourse on social media and deliberation between civil society and the government, this is largely due to the government's inadequate response and the priority concerns of the YIPC. Conversely, YIPC's digital activism initiatives still merit public recognition, particularly in tolerance and peace promoting. Recognizing that democracy encompasses more than just deliberative democracy as outlined by Habermas, YIPC's digital activism remains aligned with democratic action. Consequently, the author determines that YIPC's digital activism, particularly concerning tolerance and peace, is not sufficiently deliberative. This study concludes that philosophy, specifically Habermas's theory, provides an invaluable framework for critically

assessing the democratic quality of modern digital movements, revealing both their potentials and their limitations.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research, entitled "Digital Activism and Tolerance: A Review of Habermas's Thoughts on the Practices of the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Yogyakarta," was made possible thanks to the financial support of the BPPTN-BH Universitas Gadjah Mada through the Faculty of Philosophy for the 2025 fiscal year. Therefore, the author expresses his deepest gratitude for the trust and financial support provided.

The author also wishes to express his gratitude to: Dr. Iva Ariani, M.Hum., Head of Activities at the Faculty of Philosophy, UGM; Prof. Dr. Rr. Siti Murtiningsih, M.Hum., Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, UGM; and all the lecturers and staff at the Faculty of Philosophy, UGM, who facilitated the implementation of this research.

The author also expresses sincere gratitude to all the interviewees, namely: Hiysam (Chairman of YIPC Yogyakarta), Annisa Z. Yahya (Social Media Admin of YIPC Center), and Teh Ninis (Account Admin of YIPC) for their generous time, sharing their knowledge, and providing invaluable data during the field research process.

Finally, thank you to all parties, not mentioned individually, who contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this research report. We hope that the results of this research will benefit the development of science and the wider community.

## REFERENCES

- Antonucci, T. C., Ajrouch, K. J., & Manalel, J. A. (2017). Social Relations and Technology: Continuity, Context, and Change. *Innovation in Aging*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igx029>
- Arianto, B. (2022). Gerakan Protes Digital Para Suporter Sleman. *Kalijaga Journal of Communication*, 3(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.14421/kjc.31-01.2021>
- Baker, A. (1994). *Metodologi penelitian filsafat*. Penerbit Kanisius.
- Bakker, Anton., & Zubair, A. Charris. (1994). *Metodologi penelitian filsafat*. Penerbit Kanisius.

- Chambers, S. (2018). Democracy in the Open. *The Good Society*, 27(1–2), 146–154. <https://doi.org/10.5325/goodsociety.27.1-2.0146>
- Clayton, D. M. (2018). Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: A Comparative Analysis of Two Social Movements in the United States. *Journal of Black Studies*, 49(5), 448–480. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934718764099>
- Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Gandini, A., Keeling, S., & Reviglio, U. (2025). Conceptualising the ‘algorithmic public opinion’: Public opinion formation in the digital age. *Dialogues on Digital Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/29768640251323147>
- Gani, R., & Anwar, C. R. (2022). Nyaman dan Aman ketika Bermain di Ruang Digital. *Jurnal Riset Jurnalistik Dan Media Digital*, 115–120. <https://doi.org/10.29313/jrjmd.v2i2.1365>
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (T. McCarthy, Tran.; 1st ed., Vol. 1). Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (2022). Reflections and Hypotheses on a Further Structural Transformation of the Political Public Sphere. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 39(4), 145–171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221112341>
- Habibah, S. M., Ihsan, Rumiati, S., & Gomez, A. (2025). Efforts to prevent inter-religious intolerance in Indonesia through the wise use of social media. *Digital Theory, Culture & Society*, 3(1), 15–22. <https://doi.org/10.61126/dtes.v3i1.100>
- Jati, W. R. (2016). Cyberspace, Internet, dan Ruang Publik Baru: Aktivisme Online Politik Kelas Menengah Indonesia. *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi*, 3(1), 25. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jps.v3i1.23524>
- Joyce, M. (2010). *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change* (M. Joyce, Ed.). International Debate Education Association.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, Johnny. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Mindel, V., Overstreet, R. E., Sternberg, H., Mathiassen, L., & Phillips, N. (2024). Digital activism to achieve meaningful institutional change: A bricolage of crowdsourcing, social media, and data analytics. *Research Policy*, 53(3), 104951. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2023.104951>
- Moleong, L. J., & Surhaman, T. (1989). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Remadja Karya.
- Muthhar, M. A. (2020). Membaca Demokrasi Deliberatif Jürgen Habermas dalam Dinamika Politik Indonesia. *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.15408/ushuluna.v2i2.15180>
- Nawawi, H. H. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Bidang Sosial*. Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Ochs, P. (2012). An Introduction to Scriptural Reasoning. *Journal Of Renmin University of China*, 26(5), 16.
- Rachimoellah, M., Lubis, P. H., & Utimadini, N. J. (2024). Digital Activism and Political Change: Challenges of Social Media’s Impact on Political Development. *Jurnal of Middle East and Islamic Studies*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.7454/meis.v11i2.177>
- Safitri, D. (2020). Analisis Demokrasi Habermas Pada Teks Forum Diskusi Onlien RUU Omnibus Law. *JIKE: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Efek*, 4(01), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.32534/jike.v4i01.1099>
- Sohrabi, H. (2021). New Media, Contentious Politics, and Political Public Sphere in Iran. *Critical Arts*, 35(1), 35–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2021.1887311>
- Umar, Ahmad. R. M., Darmawan, A. B., Sufa, F. S., & Ndadari, G. L. (2016). Media Sosial dan Revolusi Politik: Memahami Kembali Fenomena “Arab Spring” dalam Perspektif Ruang Publik Transnasional. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 18(2), 114. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.13130>
- Waluyuddin, M. N. (2021). *Gerakan Pemuda Lintas Iman di Yogyakarta: Motif, Aksi, dan Hibridasi Identitas Studi Kasus di Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community Yogyakarta* [Thesis

(Masters), UIN Sunan Kalijaga J. <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/44068>