

The Map of Jihad Meaning Among Junior High School Students in Padang

Novizal Wendry*, Sefriyono, M. Yusuf

Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Imam Bonjol Padang

*corresponding author: novizalwendry@uinib.ac.id

Abstract

This present research aims to explore the meaning of jihad among Muslim youths in the context of junior high school students in Padang. Muslim youths at this level are considered to have unique characteristics in expressing diversity, including in the interpretation of jihad. As a qualitative research, it gathered the relevant data through series of survey of the perception of students on jihad and its rationale, as well as their sources of knowledge on the issue. The interlocutors include students in several junior high school in Padang, including Thawalib Boarding School, MTsN 5, SMP 24, MTSs Tarbiyah Islamiyah, MTSs Bustanul Ulum, and SLTP Muhammadiyah 7. This research discovered that there were five types of definitions of the meaning of jihad proposed by the respondents of the research. First, jihad was seen as earnest in worship, secondly; jihad was meant as being committed to work, third; jihad was interpreted as devotion to parents, fourth; jihad was interpreted as an effort to spread Islamic teachings and the fifth; Jihad was defined as a war against infidels. There were several sources which affected the way respondents interpreted the meaning of jihad, for instance, Islamic teacher (ustāz) around 85%, Quran teacher 73%, parents 59%, religion teacher in elementary school 54%, and junior high school teacher for 51%.

Keywords: Young Muslim; Jihad; *Qitāl*; *Ḥarb*; Junior High School.

Abstrak

Riset ini menjabarkan makna jihad dalam persepsi remaja Muslim di level siswa menengah pertama di kota Padang. Pemuda muslim di level ini dinilai memiliki karakteristik yang khas dalam mengekspresikan perbedaan, termasuk terkait cara mereka memahami jihad. Sebagai riset kualitatif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui survey kepada sejumlah siswa terkait pandangan mereka mengenai jihad dan latar belakangnya, serta sumber pengetahuan mereka mengenai isu ini. Sumber data meliputi siswa di Pondok Pesantren Thawalib, MTsN 5, SMP 24, MTSs Tarbiyah Islamiyah, MTSs Bustanul Ulum, dan SLTP Muhammadiyah 7. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa ada lima model pemahaman remaja Muslim mengenai jihad: pertama, kesungguhan dalam ibadah; kedua, komitmen dalam pekerjaan; ketiga, patuh kepada orang tua; keempat, menyebarkan Islam; dan kelima, perang melawan kaum kafir. Ada sejumlah sumber informasi yang membentuk pemahaman responden mengenai jihad, seperti penceramah agama (ustaz) sekitar 85%, guru mengaji Al-Qur'an 73%, orang tua 59%, guru agama di sekolah dasar 54%, dan guru sekolah menengah pertama 51%.

Kata kunci: Remaja Muslim; Jihad; *Qitāl*; *Ḥarb*; Sekolah Menengah Pertama.

Introduction

The term jihad has become a crucial topic of discussion in the last two decades along with the escalation of religious radicalism. In this context, the concept of jihad is frequently associated with the propelling reason for radical actions carried out by individuals and groups. Jihad is interpreted as *qitāl*, which is fighting in the way of Allah in the context of upholding the religion of Allah.¹ Nevertheless, jihad does not merely mean war. Countless positive messages are contained in it such as the elimination of oppression, enforcement of religious freedom, and peace. Only 10 verses of jihad have historically been interpreted as war, namely verses that descended on the Mecca period. Besides, hundreds of verses were found that told the prophet to be peaceful, forgiving, and tolerant. The variety of interpretations of jihad has encouraged experts in the field to categorize its meaning, namely esoteric and exoteric. Esoterically, jihad is explicated as *mujahadah*, a serious effort in approaching Allah, and *qitāl*, in the sense of war, as its exoteric meaning.

The increased radical actions give birth to various studies on jihad and its relation to these actions. Saifuddin in his qualitative research revealed the metamorphosis of the object of jihad from commoner to the educated, for example, students.² This was proven by Widyaningsih where students had a high vulnerability exposed to the understanding of radicalism through financial assistance which attracts their sympathy.³ Sefriyono further

assessed that Islamic jihad action from defensive to offensive is a form of literal understanding without considering the contextual aspects of the doctrines.⁴ In contrast to the studies above, Ahmad in his quantitative research informed that although high school students (SMA) tended to interpret jihad with *qitāl/war*, the meaning did not correlate with their attitude in solving religious problems.⁵

The survey results of the Islamic Studies and Peace Institute [LaKIP] found that 48.9% of students in Jabodetabek expressed their willingness to take part in radical actions⁶. Also, the Wahid Foundation discovered the similar results that more than 60 percent of the Islamic religious (Rohis) activists were willing to do jihad. The survey of the Directorate of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia yielded similar results with 60 percent of the total of 1,626 participants of the Rohis Development Camp agreed to wage jihad in conflict areas and 68 percent agreed to participate in jihad in the future.⁷ Maarif Institute in its research found that high school (SMA) students in Padang, Sukabumi, and Solo were most easily incited by radical ideology. This vulnerability was analyzed from the radical history at the local level and the infiltration of Islamic spiritual extracurricular activities.⁸

<http://jurnal.lppm.unsoed.ac.id/ojs/index.php/Prosiding/article/view/553>.

⁴Sefriyono Sefriyono and Mukhibat Mukhibat, "Radikalisme Islam: Pergulatan Ideologi Ke Aksi," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 17, no. 1 (May 26, 2017): 205–25, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v17i1.815>.

⁵Kadir Ahmad, "Pemahaman Jihad Kalangan Siswa Ternate: Puritanisme tanpa Kekerasan," *Al-Qalam* 14, no. 2 (November 11, 2018): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v14i2.506>.

⁶BBC, "Survei: Hampir 50% Pelajar Setuju Tindakan Radikal," BBC news, 2011, https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2011/04/110426_surveiradikalisme.shtml.

⁷Tempo.co, "Wahid Foundation: Lebih 60 Persen Aktivist Rohis Siap Jihad," Tempo.co, 2017, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/847299/wahid-foundation-lebih-60-persen-aktivis-rohis-siap-jihad/full&view=ok>.

⁸Bbc.com, "Pelajar SMA Di Padang, Sukabumi, Dan Solo Dianggap Paling Rentan Terpapar Radikalisme,"

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¹ M. Amin Abdullah, "Divinity and Humanity in Islam and Christianity: A Post-Acqw Reading of the Qur'an," *Exchange* 45, no. 2 (April 12, 2016): 141–53, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1572543X-12341398>.

² Saifuddin Saifuddin, "Radikalisme Islam di Kalangan Mahasiswa (Sebuah Metamorfosa Baru)," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2011): 17–32, <https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v11i1.605>.

³Rindha Widyaningsih, Sumiyem Sumiyem, and Kuntarto Kuntarto, "Kerentanan Radikalisme Agama Di Kalangan Anak Muda," *Prosiding* 7, no. 1 (November 30, 2017),

Research by PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia (2019) which involved religion teachers as the sample of the research found that many religious teachers both in primary and secondary education tended to be exclusive and intolerant towards groups that differed with them, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Contrasting to the research above, Moh. Hasim noted the values of radicalism in religious textbooks in the form of a narrow understanding of religion as a driver of militant attitudes seen from intolerance towards other religious groups.⁹

This article aims to map the meaning of jihad among junior high school students in Padang. This research was conducted in six junior high schools; they are Thawalib Boarding School, MTsN 5, SMP 24, MTs Tarbiyah Islamiyah, MTs Bustanul Ulum, and SLTP Muhammadiyah 7. The aspects revealed include students' interpretations of jihad and their perceptions of the appropriate manifestation of jihad. Besides, this present article also investigates the rationale of the jihad interpretation and its sources.

This current research is field research using quantitative and qualitative data analysis. It involved several junior high school students in Padang. The quantitative method was used in processing questionnaire results. Research respondents of the present study were taken from several types of schools, namely; religious-based private school; Pesantren-based private school; state junior high school under the Ministry of Religion; and State junior high school under the Ministry of Education and Culture. A set of questionnaire was used during the survey. Data processing was initiated with data entry to data coding on each respondent's answer. To find out all the answers given by

respondents, the data were analyzed using the rating scale method with the following formula;

$$p = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Where; p: Percentage, f: Frequency of each questionnaire answer, n: Ideal number of scores, and 100: Constanta. After mapping the meaning of jihad, the researchers investigated the reasons for the choices that had been previously provided by the respondents through Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Jihad Concept in Early Islam

As a concept, jihad contains a multitude of interpretations. Frequently, the meaning is reduced to qital, which is fighting in the way of Allah to uphold His religion. This conception is often deployed by radical groups to legitimize the radical movements they initiate. In fact, jihad does not only mean war. Look from the root of the word, a jihad is a *maṣḍar* form of the word *j-h-d* which can literally be interpreted as being earnest or working hard. While mujahid is a form of *isim fā'il*, which can be interpreted as those who try earnestly or participate in jihad.¹⁰ However, the hadith scholars such as Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalānī defined jihad as war, while themes other than war were only complementary. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalānī defined jihad as *baḍl al-juhd al-kuffār* (exerting earnestness in fighting the infidels). In line with Asqolani, Muhammad bin Ismail al-Kahlānī defined jihad as *baḍl al-juhd fi qitāl al-kuffār wa al-buḡāt* (exerting earnestness in fighting infidels and rebels). The meaning of jihad as war is supported by the conditions in which the codified-hadiths of jihad were mostly

Bbc.Com, last modified 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-42832938>.

⁹Moh. Hasim, "Potensi Radikalisme di Sekolah Studi Terhadap Buku Pendidikan Agama Islam Sekolah Dasar," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan* 13, no. 2 (August 30, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v13i2.242>.

¹⁰Ar-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī, "Al-Mufradāt Fī Garīb al-Qur'ān" (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1998), 108; Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy, *Konsep Jihad Dan Mujahid Damai* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2012); Enizar Enizar, *Jihad the Best Jihad for Moselems* (Jakarta: Amzah, 2007), 3.

the ones during the period when the prophet had migrated to Medina.¹¹

Jihad Categorizations

Jihad is not merely translated as war. There are at least two categories of the meaning of jihad, namely esoteric and exoteric. Esoterically, the word jihad is better interpreted as *mujāhadah* which means an earnest effort to draw closer to Allah. While exoterically, jihad is understood as a holy war. Jihad in this sense is understood by some scholars as a meaning that is influenced by the Christian concept of the crusade. Nasaruddin Umar argued the meaning of jihad is different from *qitāl* or war since jihad, *qitāl*, and *ḥarb* have different meanings in the Qur'anic text and hadith. *Qitāl* and *ḥarb* mean war. Even when talking about war orders, the Qur'an is very careful. Al-Qur'an caution in peeling jihad in the meaning of war is strengthened by Imam Muslim in *Sahih Muslim* number 3,261 which talks about ethics that must be upheld when carrying out the war, namely: 1) jihad should invite the opposing party to devote to Allah. 2) do not kill children. 3) attacking enemy during the confrontation is not necessary if diplomacy and invitation to convert to Islam can replace, and 4) if the opponents do not want to embrace Islam, then ask for *al-jizyah*, and maintain and respect their rights.

Historical Context of Jihad in the Qur'an and Hadith

Regarding the interpretation of jihad as war, Sahiron opined that it is an excess of the Muslim. One reason is the incessant socialization carried out by classical fiqh scholars in their fiqh books which popularized the term jihad with war. In principle, behind the meaning of jihad, peace messages are stored such as sincerity to eliminate oppression, upholding religious freedom, and peace. Sahiron

¹¹Moh. Guntur Romli and A. Fawaid Sjadzili, *Dari Jihad Menuju Ijtihad* (Jakarta: LSIP Jakarta, 2004).

added only ten verses of jihad that historically mean war, namely verses that descended on the Meccan period. In addition to the meaning of war, hundreds of verses are found to send prophets to be peaceful, forgiving, and tolerant.¹² However, Ibn Taymiyah pinpointed that the non-qital meanings in jihad do not have a strong normative foundation. The hadiths used in evaluating it are considered as false hadiths. For Ibn Taymiyah jihad is more actively interpreted. He further stated that a ruler who failed to uphold Sharia in all aspects including conducting jihad lost his right to lead. Related to this, Taymiyah proposed it is a necessity to wage jihad in the form of war against the crusaders and the Mongols who occupied the Islamic state as set out in history. This view is based on the long-running Khawarij tradition in Islamic history that directed jihad against the less-Islamic rulers.¹³

Interpretation of Jihad in the Contemporary Indonesia

The meaning of jihad both in the form of war and in other meanings such as sincerity to eliminate oppression, injustice, backwardness, freedom of religion, and peace, is certainly obtained from the sources of meaning. In the study of religious movements, religious understanding as part of a culture is inherited through the media, which is commonly referred to as the media of cultural inheritance. Among these media are cultural stakeholders such as educators, including religious teachers. Cultural heritage can be carried out through books, networks, friendships, media both mass, electronic, and online and others.¹⁴ Media dissemination of religious understanding in the context of movement can also be called the

¹²Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Islam, Tradisi, Dan Peradaban* (Yogyakarta: Bina Mulia Press, 2012).

¹³Baidhawiy, *Konsep Jihad Dan Mujahid Damai*.

¹⁴ Arifinsyah Arifinsyah, Safria Andy, and Agusman Damanik, "The Urgency of Religious Moderation in Preventing Radicalism in Indonesia," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (April 27, 2020): 91–108.

movement resources.¹⁵ From the results of a questionnaire distributed to 61 Salafi activists in Padang related to their interest in salafis for reading salafi books, 91.8 percent of respondents expressed their interest in salafi understanding through reading and around 80.32 percent of the respondents also revealed their interest of salafi understanding through electronic media such as radio, television, and others.¹⁶

Another media that also contributes significantly to the dissemination of religious understanding is online media. M. Thoyibi and Yayah Khisbiyah et.al. in the Islamic Discourse Contestation in the Virtual World, revealed that the meaning of jihad can be obtained through the special rubric on jihad such as "Jihad News" in Islamic VoA, "Jihad Zone" in arrahmah.com, several articles about jihad in thoriquna.go.id. and Suara-islam.com. Generally, these media interpret jihad with war (qital) which connotes violence without explaining the historical context (*asbāb nuzūl*). In addition, it was followed by the hadiths that explain that jihad does not only mean war. The Convey Indonesia survey also released that non-affiliated Islamic organizations in Indonesia often turn their sites as propaganda media to spread hatred such as the association of jihad with violence and war. The Convey Indonesia in "Map of Millennial Generation Islamic Literature: Ideology and Networking" found five features of Islamic literature, namely jihadi, tahriri, salafi, tarbawi, and popular Islamism. This survey proved that the growing jihadi literature seeks to portray Islam in conditions of war and is threatened by enemies who want to destroy Islam. This literature encourages Muslims, especially millennials, to join in the fight to destroy the enemies of Islam.¹⁷

Diverse perspectives of the concept of jihad such as jihad are interpreted by *qitāl*-fighting in the path of Allah in the context of upholding the religion of Allah - jihad is an earnest effort to establish a good relationship with Allah - jihad is meant by the sincerity in freeing people from economic, political, education injustice and freedom of religion and belief and other meanings obtained through various sources of meaning. This diversity in turn will also affect one's perspective in interpreting the jihad term. Whether it is a war or sincerity in establishing human relationships with Allah through worship and human interaction with each other through various patterns of social interaction.

The Meaning of Jihad among Junior High School Students in Padang

As a fundamental conception in a religion, jihad is often interpreted in a variety of ways. These diverse meanings at the praxis level rely on the extent to which the meaning is institutionalized intensively by religious groups. There are three meanings emerge in this research, namely, jihad is seen as being committed to undergoing cultural processes such as education; being earnest in establishing a relationship with God which is institutionalized in the form of worship; and being wholehearted in fighting Islamic enemies that institutionalize jihad as war. Therefore, jihad does not have a sole meaning. The meaning is very dependent on the socio-cultural context and community conditions.¹⁸ In this context, it is interesting to examine Sayyid Qutb's statement when discussing the threat of religious understanding of moderate and harmonious life patterns. Qutb elaborated among the verses of the Qur'an that need to be

¹⁵ Imam Malik, Khoirul Anam, and Sukron Ma'mun, "Online Radicalism, When Online Surfing Leads to Suffering," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (April 27, 2020): 109–118.

¹⁶Sefriyono Sefriyono, *Gerakan Kaum Salafi* (Padang: IAIN Imam Bonjol Press, 2015).

¹⁷Noorhaidi Hasan et al., *Literatur Keislaman Generasi Milenial; Tranmisi, Aptopriasi Dan Kontestasi*, ed. Noorhaidi

Hasan (Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2018); Salman Rusydie, "Peta Literatur Keislaman Di Kalangan Generasi Milenial," *Pps.Uin-Suka.Ac.Id*, 2018.

¹⁸Sahri, "Radikalisme Islam di Perguruan Tinggi Perspektif Politik Islam," *AL-DAULAH: Jurnal Hukum Dan Perundangan Islam* 6, no. April (2016).

understood carefully are: fight those who do not believe in Allah ... (QS (29)). This verse applies temporally and periodically. In an era of peace, it must be juxtaposed with other verses that encourage compassion and cooperation among others. Nasaruddin Umar in his introduction to the book of Jihad by Gamal al-Bana distinguished the meaning of jihad into two categories; esoteric and exoteric, Jihad, exoterically, can be interpreted as the holy war, whereas esoterically, it (or more precisely: mujahadah) means, a genuine effort to draw closer to Allah. In the sense of holy war, Jihad is viewed by some experts as an influence of the Christian concept (the Crusade). Umar emphasized that the meaning of jihad is different from qital or war since jihad, al-qital, and al-harb are different in meaning in the context of the Qur'an and Hadith. Qital and harb imply similar meanings, namely war.¹⁹

Despite the various meanings of jihad, in practice, the choice of meaning is highly dependent on the most popular term institutionalized to the religious community. When the meaning of jihad in the form of *qitāl* and *ḥarb* undergo an intensive institutionalization process, the tendency of the community to interpret jihad as an effort to fight the enemies of Islam will become common values held by the people in a society. Conversely, if the cultural meanings are institutionalized more intensively, then people will interpret jihad as cultural efforts for the improvement of society such as improving the level of education and alleviating the poor. Both ways of institutionalizing the concept of jihad have become commonplace in society. For example, esoteric interpretations of jihad are strongly opposed by legal philosophers such as Ibn Taymiyah who interpreted jihad in the offensive form. Even harder, he argued that the great jihad doctrine that is widely used by adherents of the meaning of the intensive jihad is false hadith. He believed a ruler who does not establish sharia in all aspects including jihad

¹⁹Nasaruddin Umar, "Mengurai Makna Jihad," in *Jihad* (Jakarta: Mata Air Publisher, 2006).

loses the right to lead. He stressed the need to participate in the jihad of war against the Crusaders and the Mongols who had occupied the Islamic state as set out in history. Ibn Taymiyah based his arguments on the long-running Khawarij tradition in Islamic history that directed jihad against the less-Islamic rulers.²⁰ At this level, jihad becomes a source of violence in the name of religion.²¹

Another study pinpointed that jihad is not only viewed as war.²² in his research of pesantren leaders in West Java found out that most of the pesantren leaders did not agree if jihad was equated with war, even though they realized that part of the meaning of jihad was war. Jihad in the form of war against lust is more important than physical war or *asghar* jihad or fight against enemies of Islam on the battlefield. Almost all of the respondents (99%) agreed that jihad against poverty, ignorance, and underdevelopment of Muslims is much more necessary in today's life.

One element of the society that also has its own conception of the concept of jihad is the younger generation. In the present context, the term young people or so-called "millennial generation" is captivating to discuss, especially the context of Muslim youth. Living amid a digital age makes this generation to be freer to express themselves in understanding life, including in interpreting religious behavior as the concept of jihad. In its study, CSRC-PPIM UIN Jakarta found that there were conservative tendencies among young people in expressing their religious zeal. Young people can not only be religious in religion but also eager to make efforts to purify Islam and strengthen Islamic

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Zakiya Darajat, "Jihad Dinamis: Menelusuri Konsep Dan Praktik Jihad Dalam Sejarah Islam," *IJTIHAD Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 16, no. 1 (2016): 1.

²²Nurrohman, "Jihad dan Radikalisme Dalam Perspektif Pimpinan Pesantren Di Jawa Barat," *PenelitianKeislaman* Vol 6, no. 9 (2010): 1689-99, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>.

law.²³ In 2016, Wahid Institute portrayed that 33% (529 students) participants interpreted jihad as a war against infidels.²⁴

This present research found that in the level of understanding, junior high school students in Padang had quite conservative views but did not come out of the context of Islamic teaching. Overall, there are five categories of the interpretation of jihad addressed by the participating students. Those are; jihad as earnest in worship, jihad as being committed in learning, jihad as devotion to parents, jihad as an effort to spread the Islamic teaching, and jihad as a fight against infidels.

The five interpretations emerged after the researchers provided the participants with the opportunity to select five out of fifteen choices regarding the meaning of jihad. The options including: (1) being committed in learning, (2) being committed to working, (3) earnest in helping others, (4) earnest in worship, (5) war against devils/demons, (6) war against infidels, (7) war against people of different faiths/non-Muslims, (8) spread Islam to others, (9) fighting/killing, (10) sharing, (11) devotion to parents, (12) telling the truth to the wrongdoers, (13) not committing the acts of corruption, (14) change appearance/dress and (15) others.

Table 1.

The meaning of jihad to Muslim youths at the junior high school level in Padang

Option	Votes	Percentage
Earnest in worship	136	80,47
Committed to learning	117	69,23
Devoted to parents	91	54,85

²³S. Bamualim, Chaider, Hilman Latief, and Irfan Abubakar, *Kaum Muda Muslim Milenial: Konservatisme, Hibridasi Identitas, Dan Tantangan Radikalisme*, ed. Bamualim S. Chaider, Latief Hilman, and Abubakar Irfan (Tangerang Selatan: Center for The Study of Religion and Culture (CSRC) Pusat Kajian Agama dan Budaya UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2018).

²⁴PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia, "Pelita yang Meredup: Keberagaman Guru Sekolah/Madrasah di Indonesia," vol. 2 (Tangerang Selatan, 2019).

Spread the Islamic teaching	84	49,70
War against infidels	64	37,28

The table above illustrates the dynamics of the meaning of jihad to Muslim youths at the junior high school level in Padang. Several findings are addressed from the data. Out of the 169 participating students, 136 (80.47%) students interpreted jihad as earnest in worship, 117 (69.23%) participants viewed jihad as being committed in learning, and 91 (54.85%) students defined jihad as devotion to parents. In addition, 84 (49.70%) students translated jihad as one way to spread the teachings of Islam, and the last, 64 (37.28%) students considered jihad as an act of war against infidels.

The findings can be classified into several categories; vertical, horizontal, and asymmetrical meaning. Jihad in the vertical meaning can be interpreted as a process of contact between creation and the Creator (*ḥabl min Allāh*) and it is implemented by young Muslims at the junior high school level in the form of being earnest in worship and spreading Islam. Owing to this, Muhammad Chirzin had reviewed the meaning of jihad with a broader perspective. He defined jihad as any effort that requires the pleasure of Allah in the form of special worship, both individually and collectively.

Meanwhile, jihad in the horizontal sense is interpreted as a form of individual relations with a social context (*ḥabl min an-nās*) which is manifested by the research participants in the form of acts of devotion to their parents. This is supported by Yusuf Qardawi in ²⁵ which said that jihad is not only limited to the meaning of war as its initial embodiment, but it also includes the educational, political, economic, and social dimensions. As for the asymmetric meaning, jihad is interpreted as an intersection

²⁵Deni Irawan, "Kontroversi Makna Dan Konsep Jihad Dalam Alquran Tentang Menciptakan Perdamaian," *Religi*, X, no. Januari 2014 (2014): 67–88.

of two different things and is considered to be contradictory. This was translated as the war against the infidels by the respondents of this research. Although contextually there are differences, this category seems to be agreed by Imam Al-Mubarak bin Muhammad bin Muhammad Jazari.²⁶ He called Jihad against infidels as "intensive struggle" (*mubālagah*) which means a fight with all the power and strength both verbally (*qaul*) and deeds (*fi'il*).

The Meaning of War in the Perspective of Young Muslims in Padang

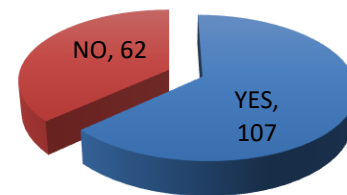
For jihadis, the term jihad is always understood and interpreted as "war". They do not like it if jihad is interpreted in activities in fields other than war.²⁷ Orientalists interpret the concept of jihad which etymologically has the meaning of hard work and earnest and almost always associate it with *qitāl* (kill), (war), or even *irhāb* (terrorism). Some classical scholars, both *fuqahā'* (jurists), *mutakallimīn* (theologians), and *muhaddisīn* (hadith experts), almost always interpret jihad obligations as military obligations.²⁸ Muslims are divided into two groups in understanding the concept of jihad. First; those who believe that jihad only has a single meaning, which is war. Those who fall into the category of this group include jihadist salafi groups. The second group is the mainstream of Muslims who interpret jihad not only in the form of physical jihad (war) but even greater is jihad against lust (grand jihad). Some examples of this group category include Muhammad Abduh, Rasyid Ridha, and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. In the Indonesian context, Muhammadiyah, NU, and MUI are among the

parties which consider jihad against lust is more severe than war.²⁹

This present research also seeks to explore deeper the meaning of jihad by asking a question to the respondents of the research on whether or not jihad can be interpreted as war. This research shows a very significant difference. A total of 107 (63%) young Muslims chose the "yes" answer that jihad is seen as an act of war. Meanwhile, 62 (37%) participants chose the answer "no" that jihad is not meant by war. These findings can be seen in the diagram below:

Diagram 1.

The percentage of the number of respondents who interpret jihad as war



The diagram 1 shows that there is a significant difference between the number of respondents who interpreted jihad as war and those who did not. From table 1 on the meaning of jihad, it is obvious that there is a gap between the meaning and the emphasis of jihad as war addressed by the participating students. This has led to another question of what was happening to the young generation? Following this question, the researchers of the present research asked a question to the participants. What and who should be fought by youths?

The answers to the question are very important to note. From a discussion with the respondents, it was found that, overall, there are five objects that the research participants want to fight against. Those are the infidel leader, tyranny, anger, greedy lust, ignorance, and non-Muslims. The five objects of jihad emerged from

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Abdul Munip, "Buku Jihad Terjemahan Dari Bahasa Arab Dan Potensi Radikalisme Beragama Di Lembaga Pendidikan," *Cendekia: Journal of Education and Society* 15, no. 2 (2017): 175, <https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v15i2.1080>.

²⁸Darajat, "Jihad Dinamis: Menelusuri Konsep Dan Praktik Jihad Dalam Sejarah Islam."

²⁹Ibid.

10 (ten) choices provided by the researchers, including (1) non-muslims, (2) Western culture, (3) infidel leaders, (4) social media, (5) people of different views, (6) anger, (7) greed, (8) morality, (9) ignorance and (10) others.

Table 2.

Objects to fight based on the respondents' perspectives

Option	Vote	Percentage
Tyranny	95	88,79
Infidel leader	89	83,18
Anger	75	70,09
Greed	74	69,16
Non-Muslim & Ignorance	55	51,40

The table 2 illustrates a number of objects that become the target of the fight. From the data, tyranny was selected by most respondents with a total of 95 participants (88.79%). Another feature that appears in the table is that 89 participants (83.13%) place an infidel leader as another object of the jihad. Anger and greed are other objects of jihad in today's life with the number of votes of 75 (70.09%) and 74 (69.16%) respectively. The last, a total of 55 participants (51.40%) claimed that non-muslim and ignorance are other targets of jihad. Besides, jihad also includes war against ignorance, poverty, tyranny, corruption, greed, the hunger of power, wasteful behavior, undisciplined, and other negative behaviors.³⁰

The Rational of Jihad Is Not A War

The word "jihad" does not always connote a negative meaning. There are times when the meaning is positive. It is said negative when the term is interpreted by treatments or struggles that use repressive measures that strike the rights of other groups in the name of the *jihād fi sabilillāh*. Basically "jihad" in Islam will always

remain the pillars of struggle.³¹ What might happen is the transformation of the interpretation of jihad. Today, the controversy of the meaning of jihad which is caused by the statements and even the behavior of some Muslims, have made the concept of jihad more confusing. As a result, the understanding of negative jihad becomes a legacy inherited from the generation of young Muslims.³² Reflecting on the research findings discussed in the previous section with Muslim youth declaring jihad to be interpreted as war, this research also traces to Muslim youth who do not interpret jihad as war. Several questions were used for further investigation, such as what is the reason for some Muslim youths not to consider jihad as war? and what are the rationals for the choice?

Nurus Shalihin in his book *Rationalization of Religion in the Political Arena: From Political Identity to Rational Politics*³³ quoted Descartes who said that humans from birth to the world have brought a set of ideas, the ideas could have originated from God or derived from genetic factors. These ideas will then encourage someone to act and choose. Descartes believed that rationality lies in the conception of ratios, where the measurement of the results of actions is based on the benefits of the ratio evaluation. Rational action has a characteristic that is always oriented to value-added, namely the extent to which an action or choice can bring maximum results. In this context, the outcome issued from action is a measure in deciding whether to interpret jihad as war or vice versa.

Overall, there are five rationals constructed by Muslim youths participating in this research in interpreting jihad as not being identified as war. Some of the proposed arguments are; a

³¹Rumba Triana, "Internalisasi Jihad Dalam Pendidikan Karakter," *Edukasi Islam, Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 07, no. 1 (2018): 101–129.

³²Abd Kadir Ahmad, "Jihad Versi Siswa," *Al-Qalam* 22, no. 2 (2016): 167–78, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v22i2.313>.

³³Nurus Shalihin, *Rasionalisasi Agama Dalam Arena Politik: Dari Politik Identitas Ke Politik Rasional*, ed. Lihin, 1st ed. (Padang: Imam Bonjol Press, 2013).

³⁰Ibid.

religion teaches love and compassion to fellow human beings 58 (93.55); all human beings have the same rights whatever their religion 52 (83.87); war is not taught in religion 49 (79.03); war contradicts to conscience 38 (61.29); and war is prohibited in religion 33 (53.23). These findings can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3.

The rationals of jihad is not a war

Option	Vote	Percent age (%)
Religion teaches compassion among humans	58	93,55
Humans have the same rights whatever their religion	52	83,87
War is not taught in religion	49	79,03
War contradicts to conscience	38	61,29
War is prohibited by religion	33	53,23

The rationals that jihad is not a war are articulated in the form of varied reasons. Based on the findings above the rationals can be classified into three categories, namely religion, humanity, and instinctive nature. The participants of the research decided to consider jihad is not a war due to religious values. When referring to Max Weber's social action thinking, it is found that one of the actions is called value-oriented rationality.³⁴ Those values could be found in religion. Religious values are used as a basis of rational in categorizing jihad is not war. This indicates that religion is still the main source of action among participating youths, including in interpreting jihad. It can clearly be seen from the reasons uttered by the students, such as "religion teaches love, religion does not teach war, and religion forbids war".

³⁴Ibid.

It is said that rationality is based on human values, that human values become rationality and a reason for young Muslims not to categorize jihad a war. Human values contained in the equality of rights become a fortress for some Muslim youth not to interpret jihad as war. The form of rationality can be seen from the reasons found " humans have the same rights whatever their religion and war is contrary to the right to life of others". Rationality based on natural instinctive is that psychologically, war is against the conscience and it is seen in the statement "war contradicts my conscience".

The References in Jihad Interpretation among Muslim Youths in Padang

In addition to being presented with the mapping of the meaning of jihad, this research also identified sources that contributed to the meaning of jihad uttered by the participants of this study. The sources intended in this research are actors or references used by Muslim youth in interpreting jihad. Muslim youths involved in this research seem to have been familiar with the term jihad. Some of them said that they have been introduced to the term since elementary school, while others are introduced to the concept in junior high school. Putri, a IX grade student of SMP N 24 Padang said "I have known the term of jihad since I was a fifth-grader". Likewise, Habib, a ninth-grade student of SMPN 24 Padang added "I have known jihad since elementary school, precisely in grade 4". In addition to the introduction of the term jihad since elementary school, some heard the term for the first time when they were in junior high school. Rati, a ninth-grade student of MTsS Bustanul Ulum Padang, said that she was familiar with the term of jihad when she was studying at MTS Bustanul Ulum. Similar to Rati, Zikri, one of the students who was in the 9th grade of MTsN 5 Padang said that he knew the term jihad when he was in the seventh grade. These conditions arise questions regarding the phenomena, such as who introduced the term and what references used by the students.

Sociologically, junior high school students who participated in this research are a generation whose development is inseparable from the socialization of values and ways of life of the older generation in society.³⁵ A research conducted by the Maarif Institute claimed that there are internal and external actors that shape the religious paradigm among students. First, students tend to be more influenced by the teacher as the role model. The teacher has a dominant role in shaping the character of students so that it defeats the role of parents at home. In addition, the teacher becomes an inspiring figure for students which students will idolize. All words, behavior, and attitude of teachers will be a model for students. Thus, the role of the teacher in shaping the paradigm of religion and nationality is pivotal among students. An inclusive teacher will bring students to a more open understanding. Conversely, an exclusive teacher will be able to encourage students to be more "closed". The second, external factors are considered to influence students' perspectives and paradigms on religion and statehood.³⁶

Generally, several sources serve as a reference in the interpretation of jihad among Muslim youths at the junior high school level in Padang. For example, speech delivered by Islamic teacher or *ustāz* (143 participants/ 84,62%), Quran teacher (124 respondents/ 73,37%), parents (99 respondents/ 58,58%), the religion teacher in elementary school (92 respondents/ 54.44%), and junior high school teacher (87 respondents/ 51.48%). The summary of the findings can be seen from the table below:

Table 4.
The references in interpreting jihad

Options	Vote	Percentage (%)
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³⁵Ahmad, "Jihad Versi Siswa."

³⁶Abdul Aziz Muslim et al., *Menjaga Benteng Kebinekaan Di Sekolah (Studi Kebijakan OSIS Di Kota Padang, Kab. Cirebon, Kab. Sukabumi, Kota Surakarta, Kota Denpasar, Dan Kota Tomohon* (Jakarta: Maarif Institute for Cultural and Humanity, 2018).

Islamic teacher (<i>ustāz</i>)	143	84,62
Quran teacher	124	73,37
Parents	99	58,58
Religion teacher in elementary school	92	54,44
Junior high school teacher	87	51,48

Viewed from the information presented above, the references used by the participating students in interpreting jihad can be categorized into two aspects; internal and external. Internally, the interpretation of jihad is influenced by religion teachers in schools, both elementary and junior high schools. Formation of the meaning of jihad was performed by religion teachers through curriculum or religion subject taught to students. Raja, a student at Ponpes Thawalib stated that he knew the term jihad when he was in Ponpes Thawalib.

The meaning of jihad was received from religious teachers when teaching Aqidah (moral beliefs) subject. Habib, a student at SMP N 24 Padang, told that he obtained and became acquainted with jihad when he was still in elementary school, he became familiar with jihad term in religion class. Satria, a student of SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Padang also had a similar experience. He said that he knew the term of jihad from the religious subject taught in his school.

The other internal factor is religious books provided in schools. This research found that literature provided in both primary and junior high schools had contributed to the formation of the meaning of jihad among Muslim youth today. Noorhaidi Hasan et al.³⁷ confirmed that there is popular Islamic literature spread among Muslim youth, both for those who are in high school or college. This literature has a huge influence on the formation of religious understanding among them. A wide range of literature, from salafi to jihadist, has infiltrated

³⁷Hasan et al., *Literatur Keislaman Generasi Milenial; Tranmisi, Aptopriasi Dan Kontestasi*.

education and is widely consumed by educated Muslim youth.³⁸

On the external side, many actors play a role in the formation of the meaning of jihad among Muslim youth at the junior high school level in Padang. Starting from parents, an Islamic teacher in the mosque, the Quran teacher to social media. This research notes that today's parents have also contributed to the formation of the meaning of jihad among Muslim youth. This phenomenon shows that the understanding of jihad has spread not only in educational institutions but also at the family level.

Another external actor is the Islamic teacher (*ustāz*) at the mosque. Some students acknowledged the influence of the Islamic teacher in the formation of the meaning of jihad. For example, Zikri, whose house was not far from the mosque, frequently heard the speech on jihad delivered by the teacher. This had made him familiar with the term jihad. The Quran teacher also played an important role in the formation of the meaning of jihad. Putri, a student of SMP 24 Padang admitted that her Quran teacher affected the way she defined jihad.

The interpretation of jihad can also be influenced by an external factor, for instance, social media. Sovia, a student of MTsN 5 Padang claimed that religious speech on social media brought effect on how she interpreted jihad. Further, she acknowledged that she watched religious speech delivered by some popular figures on social media quite often. Such as Adi Hidayat, Zakir Naik, and Yahya Waloni. Besides, Sofia also involved in a WhatsApp group on Islamic study. This group discussed various issues on religion, such as hijrah, worship, and jihad. Rati, another respondent said that social media had a huge impact on the formation of the meaning of jihad. Even though she did not actively involve in social media, she argued that Google as a search engine was one of her prior references in understanding the concept of jihad.

³⁸Ibid.

Social media can function in both positive and negative ways. Jewkes opined that half of the members of radical organizations in Saudi Arabia were recruited through the internet network. The internet is also recognized as an effective propaganda tool, because there are no rules in the use of the internet, especially in terms of writing. Also, all forms of information can be spread on the internet. Likewise, readers can read anything on the internet, including the religious issues that are not clear base.³⁹

Conclusion

The map of jihad meaning among Muslim youth can be summed up in several points. Muslim youth have become victims of the struggles of jihadist discourse that have developed in recent years (moderate and extreme meanings). On the flip side, they are also able to provide their own interpretations of jihad meaning. The extreme interpretation of jihad among young Muslims is a response to the socio-religious conditions that can threaten them in expressing their identity. At present, the extreme meaning is still in discourse level, however, at any time it can be manifested in a concrete form.

This present research also highlights that young Muslims show their rationality in addressing jihad is not equal to war. The most powerful reason is due to the encouragement of religious doctrine. This research also discovers various references and actors contesting each other for the formation of the meaning of jihad among Muslim youth. The formation of the meaning of jihad among Muslim youth is not merely associated with formal institutions (teachers and books), but also non-formal institutions (social media and family). Nevertheless, this research only discusses the surface level of the topic, further research is required to look deeper at the process of institutionalizing "jihad" carried out by schools and families.

³⁹ PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia, "Pelita Yang Meredup"

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