Hijacking *Jihad's* Narratives in Indonesia's Politics:
A Perspective for the formulation of the Election Law

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Abstract. There is a noble purpose in holding a simultaneous election in Indonesia. It aims to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, equality, and continuation of political choices at two different levels: regional and central. It is expected that the simultaneous election will bring solid national leadership and strong community supports. Nevertheless, it is quite unexpected that many parties regretted the holding of this election model. One of reasons is that it turned to strengthen identity politics in Indonesia, as examplified by the accelerated use of the term jihad, such as "jihad against religious blashemy"; "jihad against cheating election"; and 'jihad against anti-Islamic leaders." This research attempts to examine the politicization of the word jihad in Indonesia's politics. Wrong narratives in elucidating the meaning of jihad in the campaigns, lack of legal protection in the text of the Election Law No. 7/2017, and the ideal rule according to Islamic law will be the focus of this research. The result found that the term jihad has been hijacked to bind religious powers in Indonesia. The presence of strict rules is needed in order that the election contestants no longer use religious narratives to win the hearts of people in Indonesia's politics.

Keywords: Simultaneous Election, Jihad, Islamic Law

1. Introduction

The term *jihad* has been always an interesting topic of study that attracted the attention of both foreign and domestic researchers. The word jihad is contained in the core of Islamic episteme. It must be admitted there are many paradigms and interpretive models related to this term. The interpreters of the Qur'an have examined the term in various aspects. They discussed its meaning, its mention in the Qur'an, its revelation context, (*asbabal nuzul*), and its historical use in the Islamic world [1], [2]. For the *fiqh* experts, the meaning of jihad is seen from the perspective of whether or not it is implemented by Muslims [3], [4]. Likewise, the Sufism experts put the meaning of jihad as one's desire to confront and fight against the pitfalls of lust present in every individual [5]. Similarly, based on the various studies mentioned above, many scholars (religious figures) today also use this narrative as a 'spirit-

grower' in religious life but in a manner far from the original meaning of *jihad* itself. A concrete example is the word jihad is culted against those who committed "terror" [6]. The word is used to grow motivation against the American imperialism in the Middle East [6]. It also signifies young groups who are excluded in many Muslim countries or in Europe due to being a minority [6]. In short, the word jihad has a duality of meaning, which goes hand in hand with a specific context or contestation in which it will be either positive or negative.

This paper will not examine all the aspects of changes that had occurred related to the use of the word jihad in the lives of Muslims. Rather, this paper will focus on three important points that become trend in Indonesia and the global world in general. The first is the proliferation of the word as a strategy to achieve certain goals, be it political or ideological. The second is the use of the term in the Indonesia's recent political arena. The third is an analysis on the phenomenon of jihad and its academic discourse related to future election laws. The purpose of this paper is to present a more anticipatory legal product on the issues of SARA on behalf of Islamic jihad.

2. Method

This research is a literature study in which the data was collected from books and other written sources related to the research problem. The data sources were in the forms of writings, such as books, articles, websites, or others relevant with the focus of study. All the data was analyzed critically. A critical analysis has been developed from a descriptive method that interprets human ideas uncritically (Sumantri, 1996: 41-50).

The critical analysis was used to figure out the formative history of thoughts and paradigms as well as their backgrounds by which the proliferation of *jihad* narratives are studied. The method will be applied through the research by describing, discussing, and criticizing ideas from the secondary data according to the subject of study. Afterward, interpretations were conducted to obtain comprehensive information about the development of the *jihad* narratives and Islamic laws can offer to the next codification of election law in Indonesia.

3. Result and Discussion

The proliferation of "Jihad" Narratives in the Local and Global Contexts

The fact showed that Muslims in Indonesia are reluctant to discuss the term *jihad* in the public sphere. Religiosity in Indonesia is prone to spirualism (mysticism) than rationalism in which 'acceptance' of cultures in Indonesia is given priority. The literature on *jihad* is mostly straightforward during the war against colonialism in Indonesia. Ahmad Mansyur Surya Negara stated that the word was found on minute notes of the BPUPKI meeting on July 16, 1945. The script said [7].

> "In order to conduct relentless defense and protection for the country, the Indonesian state fully believed in the ability of all Indonesia people to carry out: *jihad* in the path of God, especially on the spirit of struggle of Indonesian youths who were undoubtedly willing to sacrifice their body and soul.

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, a great Muslim leader at the time, also referred to *jihad* in his attempt to protect the city of Surabaya. He called on Muslims to fight tooth and nail, sacrifice

property and lives, for the sake of the integrity of the Indonesian state. Nevertheless, the popularity of "KH Hasyim Asy'ari's Jihad Resolution" was never uttered discursively as the behaviors of Muslims in Indonesia, nor was it touted as a form of compulsory teaching to combat different global paradigms. The resolution becomes no more than a narrative on preserving the existence of the Indonesian nation, in line with the collective agreement found in the BPUPKI meeting.

As a counter narrative, the Nahdliyin understand the expression of 'Jihad Resolution" as a form of sincerity to protect the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), not as a sporadic resistance against the radical groups. Jihad is an ultimate meaning for those who are Muslims. Jihad is the safeguard (*al-hifdu*) of the Islamic goals (*shari'ah*) toward which life should goes on. *Jihad* does not mean to change or destroy *wasa'ils* (tools) to achieve the goals in Indonesia just because the country is 'different' from other Islamic ones.

I believe that was the first encounter of Indonesian Muslims with the discourse of *jihad* in the public sphere. The interpretation of *jihad* as practiced by Muslim figures, particularly KH. Hasyim Ash'ari, does not trigger a long debate. That is, the word *jihad* will not justify any means to achieve certain goals. The word conveys the meaning of defensive-narrative, not offensive. The interpretation of *jihad* is more profound as it must not violate the common sense and laws of the purpose of human life in general. *Jihad* will be in line with the breath of people making religion as their way of life. The word jihad will not trigger social terror against non-Muslims.

This second phase of jihad reference came up during Bali Bombing I & II. In this phase, jihad is no longer understood uniformly. The term became 'abstract' and 'blurred' as it depends on the paradigm used. This is the case when it is particularly connected with anthropological, socio-psychological, and political approaches. Through these different interpretations, I want to emphasize that the word *jihad* becomes a heated discourse that will not end up in the near future.

In an anthropological-structural term, the logos of *jihad* are considered the same as *qital* (warfare), terrorism, and criminal action. Abdul Fatah [8] said that interpretation of *jihad*, as a narrative of war, cannot be separated from the existence of *madaniyah* verses that call on Muslims to make every effort, including war, to maintain the existing achievements. Hence, the truth is that the existence of *jihad* in the context of warfare is to maintain sovereignty, not to invade the sovereignty of other countries. In addition, he also said that the word war could be softened according to certain contexts [9]. The text of jihad in the meaning of "war" had been implied and could not be possibly erased. All we can do is to 'shift' the context of the textual command to the reality currently faced by Muslims.

On the other hand, the identification of *jihad* with terror does not always come from the narrative of the text. The construction of *jihad* in this sense has been the result of media framing. Edward W. Said, Fethullah Gulen, and J. Esposito suspected that the Western media are responsible for narrowing the meaning of *jihad* as terror. In fact, viewed from the actual meaning, these two words are not by far comparable. The word *jihad* does not refer to a command to disturb or frighten others. On the contrary, the word terror is carried out to threaten and fight the sovereignty of a particular country or region [10], [11]. Hina Abbasi & Musferah Mahfooz stated that the equalization of jihad with terror is a metaphor in a conflict narrative. Jihad is a struggle to bring independence and peace, especially for Muslims who are under Western imperialism. Terror, on the other hand, is an activity to delegitimize someone's independence [12].

Finally, jihad is understood as a form of criminal action. Identification of jihad with criminal acts goes further than just with war and terror that have a complex context. It is

undeniable that there is a shift in the activities of the jihadist groups to carry out their "ideological-jihadist" activities both in Indonesia and in some developed countries.

In Indonesia, we all understand and see how the jihadist (the terrorist) groups are involved in criminal activities such as robbing jewel stores or rich people [13]. Similarly, in Europe they are not just involved in criminal acts, but they were in fact former criminals in the past [13]. The jihadists have not been only recorded in crimes in some developed countries. On the other hand, their interaction with deradicalization may also a central point of change in the pattern of jihad in other part of the world [13].

Apart from an anthropological discussion on the semiotic of jihad, it is also interesting to look at the term from sociological and psychological perspectives. The social manifestation of jihadist groups in Indonesia can be seen using the perspective of social movement and ideological hegemony. From a perspective of social movement, the groups who spread terror in Indonesia will emerge, such as Jemaah Islamiyah, Anshorut Tauhid, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, and other groups who adopt radical interpretation of Islam. All these groups make *jihad fi sabililah* as a slogan for their lives, or use "martyrdom" as the highest form of faith in practicing their religion.

Noorhaidi Hassan articulated the jihadist movements as a form of Islamic defense through small atriums in several areas of religious conflicts. He gave an example of how the emergence of Laskar Jihad Indonesia (LJI) became very popular during the conflict in Maluku. They consider this conflict as not merely a matter of social inequality, economic, or political interests. More than that, they interpreted it as a struggle to defend Islam. The slogans used by the Indonesian Laskar Jihad group to mobilize people include "Wages of *jihad fi sabilillah*" and "Guarding Muslims in Maluku" [14]. Taufiqur Rahman said that the jihad nuanced social movements in Indonesia were the impacts of the attachment of religious values within transnational groups. Therefore, their call for jihad tends to be global.

The two views above, in fact, illustrated that sociologically two factors affected the shift in the meaning of jihad among Muslims in Indonesia. *First*, religiously nuanced regional conflicts have ignited Islamic groups to generate mobilization. *Second*, global situation has situated Islamic countries as colonies of developed countries.

From these two factors, it can be seen how they develop the narratives of jihad. For some groups, ideological hegemony and a highly religious zeal have infiltrated the social anatomy of the jihadists in Indonesia. A research by Charlene Tan, Masdar Hilmy, and Merlyna Lim is useful to know the dogma of "jihad" among the Islamic groups. Merlyna Lim, in her research, made a list of groups that are prone to be exposed to the call for jihad as shown in the following table [15].

Table 1. Dogma and Movement Model of Jihadist Group in Indonesia

Name of organization	Forms of Movement	Issues brought up
Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia	Seminar, non-violent demonstrations, socialization and regeneration, etc.	Establishment of the *Khilafah Islamiyah*
Front Pembela Islam	Sweeping and solidarity actions on global violence towards Islamic society.	Enforcement of Islamic Sharia without having to establish an Islamic state
Laskar Jihad	Sympathetic actions and taking space in local religious conflicts, and	Counter movement towards Christianization.

	becoming part of acts of terrorism.	
Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia	Terrorism and acts of violence	Khilafah Islamiyah and Enforcement of Islamic Sharia holistically.
Jemaah Islamiyah	Terrorism and acts of violence intended to attack the West and globalism.	Khilafah Islamiyah and Enforcement of Islamic Sharia holistically.
Hamas Indonesia	Not anarchist and merely carrying out sympathetic movements toward Muslims in Palestina	No need to change Indonesia as an Islamic state, but instead seeking independence through state diplomacy, carried out in Indonesia.

The table above depicts some social groups or social movement groups that BNPT listed as contributing to the spread of jihad in the sense of war, terrorism, and criminal actions in a country. It should be noted also that not all members or those who have an emotional closeness with the organization got involved in similar actions.

In addition to the sociological paradigm, Oliver Roy also provided a psychological account of these jihadist groups: the groups who interpreted jihad as acts of radical idolatry in understanding their religion. Roy stated that there are several psychological characteristics of this group:

> "It is very common to view jihadism as an extension of Salafism. Not all Salafis are jihadis, but all jihadis are supposedly Salafis, and so Salafism is the gateway to jihadism. In a word, religious radicalization is considered to be the first stage of political radicalization. But things are more complicated than that, as we have seen…When young jihadis speak of "truth", it is never in reference to discursive knowledge. They are referring to their own certainty, sometimes supported by an incantatory reference to the sheikhs, whom they have never read. The first motivation he cited is atrocities committed by western countries against the "Muslim people"…the second is the role of avenging hero… the third is death…and his reception in heaven [11]".

This citation implies that psychologically they already have their own beliefs in jihad the dogma of *jihad*. The Salafist groups, for example, interpreted jihad as a heartfelt effort to uphold God's laws. When they are not able, they would prefer to "die" in their belief. They look for the ecstasy of heaven in life after death. Therefore, this understanding will greatly lead anyone to interpret the obligation *of jihad fi sabilillah* as it is contained in the Qur'an, in addition to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

The point is that the proliferation of the word jihad will greatly depend on the construction of knowledge and framing. The word *jihad* has lost its substantive meaning. On the other hand, the word *jihad* cannot be separated from the Qur'an's textual narratives potentially interpreted based on the interests of the situation and particular ideology.

Jihad and Political Dynamics in Indonesia: The Birth of New Genre

I mentioned earlier that there is a political dimension on the interpretation of *jihad*. However, the discussion was deliberately separated. Therefore, it is interesting to see the current phenomenon that can be categorized as a new genre of *jihad*. In today's era of democracy, the *jihad* narratives can be used to "fight against the government regime". On the other hand, it can also be used by the government as a social movement to fight against the evil deed in society. This contestation can be seen through many news reports, at least, when the government formulates Regional Election and General Election simultaneously in Indonesia.

The records related to the nuances of *jihad* in political contestation began with the Jakarta Election in 2017, when Ahok made a political blunder by assuming that people who chose leaders based on primordial and religious reasons are "being tricked out" by the *ulama*. Because Ahok is a non-Muslim, the case triggered Muslims' anger. At that time a new narration of jihad appeared as what recorded as "Jihad against Religious Blasphemer," or "Jihad to defend NKRI" ("Aksi Bela Islam" in www.alamislam.com). On the other hand, the counter-narrative efforts were also made by some moderate *ulama* in Indonesia by stating that the word jihad was not elegant to be used merely to win political contestation in Jakarta (http://www.republika.co.id/). Thing was little bit different from what was in Jakarta. The clinch of the *jihad* narrative in the political constellation was not contested at the time. The new jihad narrative was formed by the group "Ulama Defenders" and the winning team of one of the presidential candidates after the presidential election. For example, one of the Presidential Spokespersons stated that his resistance was "Constitutional Jihad" (https://www.matamatapolitik.com); "Jihad against Cheating" (https://news.detik.com); Amin Rais also stated that "I am ready for jihad on the first Front-line" (https://www.cnnindonesia.com). As usual, the moderate groups denied the invitation for the act. Some of them argued that "May 22 Act is not a Jihad" (https://www.matamatapolitik.com). In fact, one of the politicians insisted that "Political Jihad is not stated in the Qur'an" (see: https://www.medcom.id).

Based on some facts above, the sacredness of the word "jihad" is no longer exclusive. The word *jihad* is used in almost every political contestation in Indonesia, which attracted concern from the national community. The next question is whether the use of the word *jihad* is appropriate in a political contestation. How should an electoral rule ideally limit the use of languages that could induce a particular group to commit acts of terrorism? What exactly is the meaning of jihad in an ideal political contestation?

It has been shown that the proliferation of the word *jihad* is indeed very dependent on the behaviors and actions of Muslims who interpret it. Thus, the meaning of *jihad* in political dynamics must be interpreted as a genuine spirit to maintain the sovereignty of the group or citizen. Oliver Roy stated that the true jihad in the political context is "homeground for terrorism" (https://www.meforum.org). It means that they spread fear for the outsiders who are trying to colonize and take away the rights of certain citizens. There is no dogma within the jihadist groups unless they defend what they have. He took an example of the constitution of the Hamas group in fighting against Israeli imperialism. He said that:

> "Article 8 of the Hamas covenant illustrates the convergence in jihadist thought of politics, theology, and religion: "Allah is its goal, the Prophet is the model, the Qur'an its constitution, jihad is its path, and death for the sake of Allah is its most sublime belief "(https://www.meforum.org).

Therefore, jihad in the political field is a struggle to maintain the sovereignty and beliefs of Muslims. It is not to interfere with the sovereignty of other countries, including ideology held firmly by the citizens in a sovereign territory. I intentionally made the group's belief of Hamas in the constitution of their organization as a different angle and a form of global terror carried out by Islamic groups in other countries or as a reason to defend the oppressed Muslims. Taking the example of Hamas is also a manifestation that the struggle to defend the motherland, such as the NU's struggle against the classical jihad, can be an ideal model of how a Muslim can carry out the word jihad implicitly in the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad.

Another thing needs to be discussed here is about the policy of the simultaneous national leadership in Indonesia. In this context, I want to state that there are some potential risks from the political process of simultaneous leadership. They include transformation of local issues into national ones and different conditions from the previous democratic journey. Therefore, there is a need to formulate new rules that are not just based on political considerations of the parties and equality of national political participation.

I suggest that in the future the formulation of the Election Law should take into account the issue of how democracy must be carried out, as well as how the president has an intrinsic power to be the master of national development. Other crucial issues, such as SARA, should become very normative and present in the discussion of the Election Law in Indonesia that has primordial living conflicts. The following are some of the strategic issues that I summarize in the content of the 2017 Election Law.

Table 2. 18 Topics of Discussion for the 2017 Election Law

No	Crucial Issues
1	Election Principle
2	Election System for the members of House of representative (DPR) and District house of representative(DPRD)
3	Seat Allocation and Electoral District
4	Requirements for Political Participants to Become Election Contestants
5	Vote Recapitulation
6	Parliamentary Threshold
7	Vote to Chair Conversion Method
8	Election of President and Vice President
9	Election Organizer
10	Integrated Law Enforcement Center
11	Election Process Dispute and Election State Administrative Dispute
12	Campaigns and Money Politics
13	Dispute of Political Party Management
14	Election Results Disputes
15	Election Day
16	Election Stages
17	Women's Representation
18	others: a. E-Voting b. Title of bill c. The Role of Government and Local Government d. Number of DPD Members and Minimum Support Requirements for DPD

	Member Nomination
e.	Election watcher
f.	f. Number of Voters in Polling station (TPS)

Source: Personal Documentation of the PKB Faction about the Clusterization and Special Committee of the 2017 Election Bill

It seemed that zero response toward the politics of identity, the use of terminology that can trigger the return of prolonged conflicts in Indonesia, as well as demystification of religious values in Indonesia have made the nation divided. In this context, I want to emphasize that there should be a set of blunt laws of leadership succession in Indonesia to ensnare groups who easily use the term religion as their political strategy, including the word *jihad*. In fact, the word jihad will be 'bad' if used by irresponsible people for the sake of their political interests or the contesting individuals or groups.

4. Conclusion

From the explanation above, it can be inferred that the word *jihad* has shifted into a negative meaning. Some important things need to be highlighted to stop the 'uncontrolled' understanding of the word jihad or at the very least to minimize the use of the word for the sake of certain social or political groups.

Firstly, it should be understood that the word *jihad* in the meaning of war (*qital*) and the sincerity to uphold the teachings of Islam) must be put within the context of *al-hifdu* (maintaining or caring for) our sovereignty, both as individual and as a country. It is because almost all *fiqh* experts stated that maintaining the *maslahah al-'ammah* (from religion, soul, property, to offspring) is the ultimate meaning for a Muslim. Such an understanding will delegitimize the meaning of political *jihad* as an effort to establish *Islamic shari'ah* because it means eliminating one of the essential elements of *istinbath* in Islamic law. Thus, once again, political jihad should be ideally placed on the conception; 'to not damage what already exists.'

Secondly, in the future it is very necessary to channel out the rules that discuss sensitive issues in the community, especially when dealing with social conflicts in the community. As Noorhaidi Hasan and other researchers argued, the presence of jihadists sociologically cannot be separated from the stages and their fields where the seeds of radical teachings are understood as their ideology. Ideological contestation that continues to be debated in Indonesia will always have an impact on new models of propagation of the jihad's narratives in social life. In the past, people knew that jihad means to fight the invaders. Later, the horizontal conflicts between religious groups in Indonesia have changed against foreigners in Indonesia, as a continued impact of oppression in an Islamic state, and today the word jihad is brought into political contestation, which of course, will have a prolonged impact.

Thirdly, in addition to the binding rules, there is also a need for systematic awareness about the re-actualization of the true meaning of *jihad*. This task cannot simply be given to the government, but also to religious leaders or teachers in educational institutions, and other groups who have a concern to live the authentic values of people in Indonesia. In short, to present a true conception related to the meaning of *jihad* requires a reinterpretation of the semiotics. Anticipation of conflict dynamics in society also requires specific rules that govern how SARA issues are not brought into political strategies. Finally, to restore the true meaning of *jihad* requires interaction and role models of religious leaders in real life.

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