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Paving the way to Struggle

Ouvrir la voie à la lutte : le premier congrès du Kebatiman (1955) et la politique du discours religieux en Indonésie

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AUTOUR D'UNE TABLE RONDE *

EKA NINGTYAS **

Paving the way to Struggle: First Kebatinan Congress (1955) and the Politics of Religious Discourse in Indonesia ***

Introduction

The 1950s were an essential milestone in the historiography of *kepercayaan* (belief) in Indonesia. It should be noted that the concept of *penganut kepercayaan* (adherents of belief) was politically shaped during the New Order era (1966-1998) to distinguish them from the so-called *pengikut agama* (followers of religion). The *penganut kepercayaan* were previously represented by the Kebatinan¹ movement, which began to show

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1. In this article, I distinguished between *kebatinan* and Kebatinan. The first refers to the vernacular term used to designate mystical practices, and the last one is the name of an eponym group.

massive development in the first and second decades following Indonesian independence. The implementation of the BKKI (Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia, Indonesian Kebatinan Congressional Assembly) on 19-21st August 1955 was a significant event in the history of the Kebatinan movement and of *kepercayaan* in general.

In contrast to the so-called “Cornell orthodoxy,” which holds that there was continuity from the colonial state to the New Order government, this paper supports Vickers’ opinion, who argues that the 1950s marked a transition period between the late colonial era and the early years of independence (Vickers, 2008, p. 68). In this period, the intellectual discourse of *kebatinan* practitioners was growing and gaining influence, as shown by the gathering of *kebatinan* intellectuals in the BKKI forum. It was followed by large national, regional, and local meetings, which were regularly held with at least 100 Kebatinan representatives throughout Java (Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia, 1956). During these events, there was an attempt to conceptualize the Indonesian religious discourse. *Kebatinan* intellectuals created key concepts that would later be used during the New Order era. One of them was the “education of the character” (*Pendidikan Jiwa*) and the interpretation of Pancasila as a specificity of the Indonesian nation (especially the Javanese segment of the population).

This paper aims to analyze the dynamics in the politics of religious discourse in 1950s Indonesia, particularly during the first Indonesian Kebatinan Congress of 1955. This year has been crucial in Indonesia’s political history because it was the first time a national election was held after independence.² Javanese nationalists, leftists, and Islamic groups were involved in an intense competition for seats in the government. Going back to several years earlier, many national reports regarded the debate over the choices on the Indonesian state formation modalities, whether it was to be an Islamic state or a secular one. A significant event that triggered strong reactions among Islamic organizations and prominent Islamic leaders was President Sukarno’s speech at a mass meeting in Amuntai, South Kalimantan, on 27th January 1953 (Sajuti Melik, 1953). In this meeting, Sukarno firmly stated that Indonesia was a national state that covered the entire archipelago (Fogg, 2012, p. 313). He also added that if Indonesia’s foundations had to be based on Islam, many areas whose inhabitants were not Muslim would break away (Muhamad Iqbal, 2009, p. 28). Opposition reactions were raised by the Front Mubaligh Islam, in North Sumatra, the Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and several personalities, like Isa Anshari, a member of the parliament at the time, and Saleh Suaidy, a member of the Indonesian National Committee (KNI) from the Masyumi party (Saleh, 1953).

2. The first national election of 1955 was held on 29 September 1955 to elect members of the House of Representatives (DPR, *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*) and on 15 December 1955 to elect members of the Constituent Assembly.

In this historical context, the Kebatinan group negotiated its religious singularity. Led by Wongsonegoro, a political figure from the Partai Indonesia Raya (PIR), a party whose majority supporters were Javanese *abangan*, the BKKI accommodated hundreds of Kebatinan groups in Java to formulate their religious discourses. The Kebatinan Congress showed a significant increase in group members in the subsequent years. These groups also implemented action programs in line with governmental agendas to enhance the quality of education and the role of women in society.

Since the beginning of Indonesian independence, religion (*agama*) and beliefs (*kepercayaan*) have become the subject of political and academic debates. From the point of view of religious politics, we can mention Samsul Maarif's work about ancestral religion recognition (2018), Martin Ramstedt (2004) about the recognition of Hinduism in modern Indonesia, and Michel Picard and Rémy Madinier's work (2011) about the politics of religion in Indonesia, especially in Java and Bali. Simon Butt (2020) has investigated the constitutional recognition of *kepercayaan* in Indonesia. The history of the Islamization of Java, which intersects with the history of *kepercayaan* in Indonesia, has been documented by Ricklefs's work (2012), who mainly analyzed what he called the totalitarian experiment of *aliran* politics between 1966 and the 1980s.

Based on ethnography, Justus Maria van der Kroef's study (1961) was one of the preliminary works about *kepercayaan* in Indonesia. Robert Hefner (1985) also provided an authoritative ethnographic description of the Tenggerese and a sophisticated interpretation of their Hinduist culture and its place in the broader culture of Islamic Indonesia. Andrew Beatty's study (1999) is a sociological analysis of the self-conscious strategies of the Javanese in defining their religion. It gives us an understanding of the diversity of variations within the Javanese religion. Niels Mulder (1978) focused on the rise of Javanese mysticism, especially from the 1960s until the 1980s (1978). Clifford Geertz (1960) introduced a seminal threefold religious-ideological division of Javanese society that forms its structural frame: *abangan*, *santri*, *priyayi*. His work received constructive critics from scholars such as Mark Woodward (1989), Harsya W. Bachtar (1973), and Parsudi Suparlan (1995). Last but not least, several theologians cum scholars have worked on the relationship between religion and *kepercayaan*. Studying missionaries' works, Harun Hadiwijono (1967), Simon Rachmadi (2017), and Rachmat Subagya (1981), have tried to analyze how the Kebatinan movement in Indonesia has impacted the unfolding process of evangelism. Muslim scholars, like Hamka (1971), a high-level representative in the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), has focused on the development of Kebatinan in Indonesia, and Rasjidi (1967), an influential figure of Muhammadiyah, has written about the relation between Islam and *kebatinan*.

This abundant literature is missing a study on the internal dynamics of *kebatinan* in its early formalization and organization. Such a study could



Fig. 1 – The entire committee and participants of the BKKII Congress, in front of the Asoqa building on 19-21 August 1955 in Semarang (Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia, 1956, p. 69).

address the relationship between the state and Kebatinan’s adherents within the framework of religion as codified by the Pancasila. The main concern of the present article is the formation of the concept of *kebatinan*, the debates it raised, and the position of the Kebatinan movement within the religious discourse in 1950s Indonesia.

Javanism and the genealogy of *kebatinan* ideas

At eight o’clock in the morning on 20th August 1955, 680 people waited with great enthusiasm in front of the Asoqa building on Jalan Be Biauw Tjwan no. 4 Kampung Kali (present-day Jalan Pandjaitan), Semarang. They were about to attend the first Indonesian Kebatinan congress that was finally successfully conducted after a long debate among its organizers. That Saturday, which coincided with the first *Suro* of 1887 Javanese calendar (*kalender Jawa*),³ was chosen as the congress day. The Asoqa building had been the Semarang theosophical group’s official main building since the late 19th century.

3. The Javanese, who form part of the majority as adherents of Islam, apart from using the Hijri calendar system, are also familiar with the Javanese calendar system, which was introduced since the reign of Sultan Agung (1613-1645 CE). The first *Suro* is the Javanese New Year. Some believe that the first *Suro* symbolizes the beginning of life. Many Javanese respect this date, which they associate with the idea of living a holy life, especially respecting “almighty God.”

Semarang was one of the few towns in Central Java that had connections with the theosophical movement in the Dutch East Indies. In front of the main entrance, the congress participants could see the banner “Kongres Kebatitanan Indonesia Jang ke-I” (“The first Indonesia Kebatitanan congress”) printed in a large size. It was meant to make it easier for the participants to identify the Asoqa building from afar, knowing that they were not all from Semarang. The committee prepared a dormitory in the Bulu Lor village, about four kilometers northwest of Kampung Kali, for guests from outside Semarang.

Near the entrance were present Djumanto, Sudirdjo, Purnomo, Sumanto, Heru, Suwarno, and Diromiharjo, committee members responsible for accompanying the guests during the congress. The participants were invited to enter the hall of the Asoqa building and to sit on the chairs that were made available to them. As mentioned in the book of commemoration, the representatives of the 67 invited Kebatitanan groups were guided to fill the chairs arranged in a *mandala* circle (Bagoes Wiryomartono, 2016, pp. 41, 57, 58).⁴ The presidium members discussed the fundamental understanding and principles of *kebatitanan*.

The hall of the Asoqa building was full of guests from all over Java. There was only one representative from Taman Siswa Palembang, who was the only guest from outside Java. Conceptually, Taman Siswa was essential for the development of the Kebatitanan movement. This educational institution was founded by Ki Hajar Dewantara in 1922 in Yogyakarta, who applied the concept of “*among*” in his teaching practice (Sajogo, 1952, pp. 183-127).⁵ “*Among*” is derived from the Javanese term *mong* (“to take care”), and *momong* is verbal: to guide, lead, and take by the hand. Thus, the relationship between the *kebatitanan* master (*guru*) and his spiritual adherents in the Javanese Kebatitanan movement is similar to the relationship between parents taking care of their child (Shiraisi, 1997, p. 10).

The history of Taman Siswa is highly instructive for the emergence of various Kebatitanan groups in Java, especially during the 1950s (Bonneff, 1978). The starting point of Taman Siswa dates back to 3rd July 1922. Still, its ideology can be traced from the manifestation of Paguyuban Selasa Kliwon’s

4. *Mandala* (literally means ‘circle’) is a symbolic representation of the Javanese kingdom in which the center of power is in the center. This setting aims to experience the mystical unity of multiple individuals. As shown in Figure 2, the set-up represents a ring or layers that symbolically distinguish the rank and influence from those sitting in the center to those seated at the outermost.

5. *Among* is a system of education that aims to educate students to think and work independently. In addition to providing necessary and valuable knowledge, the “teachers” are supposed to teach the “students” to seek and use that knowledge. Knowledge of harmony is primordial in the “among” system, which aims to help students’ physical and spiritual needs in association with one and another.



Fig. 2 – The participants of the first BKKI congress (Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia, 1956, p. 75).

(Religious Club of Tuesday *kliwon*⁶) (Clément & Bazin, 1985, pp. 193-201). The Paguyuban Selasa Kliwon's maxim was “*memayu hayuning sarira, Bangsa, manungsa*” (feed happiness in each individual, happiness for the Indonesian nation, and happiness of all humanity), which also animated the spirit of Taman Siswa under Ki Hajar Dewantara (S.A. Soedibyo, 1952, p. 167). It is important to note that the slogan of BKKI after its first congress, *memayu rahayuning Bawana* (“to work for the security of the world in general”), was rooted in the slogan of Paguyuban Selasa Kliwon. Ki Suryomentaram, a leader of this organization, recognized that his ideas, discussed in the *paguyuban*, had already manifested in Taman Siswa. Therefore, he decided to dismiss the regular meeting of the *paguyuban* (W. Le Fevre, 1951).

Furthermore, after the official establishment of Taman Siswa in 1922, discussion on topics related to the Javanese mystical and philosophical knowledge continued in Paguyuban Rebowagèn, a *paguyuban* under the Taman Siswa. Ali Sastroamidjojo, Indonesian Prime Minister in 1953-1955, who was also a member of the Madiun branch of *Majelis Luhur* and a teacher at *Taman Siswa* Yogyakarta, explained that he had actively participated in the Paguyuban Rebowagèn's reunions held in Ki Hadjar Dewantoro's residence

6. *Kliwon* is one of the days in the pre-Islamic Javanese calendar called *pasaran*, which is based on five-day cycle of a week: *Kliwon, Legi, Pahing, Pon and Wage*.



Fig. 3 – S. Ramuwisit on the microphone (source: Badan Kongres Kebatitan Indonesia, 1956, p. 85)

at Wirogunan, Yogyakarta, in the 1930s (Ali Sastroamidjojo, 1952, p. 41). The principle of *sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe* (“not having the desire for oneself instead working hard for the public interest”), which became the principle of the Kebatitan movement in 1955, was indeed designed by Ki Hajar Dewantara for Indonesian national education during the Paguyuban Rebowagèn meeting (Ali Sastroamidjojo, 1952, p. 44). Thus, the Taman Siswa was influential in conceptualizing the 1955 Kebatitan movement in Indonesia.

The description of the congress further enables us to understand how the ideas and concepts were shaped in the Kebatitan movement. The sound of the microphone of S. Ramuwisit (member of Semarang theosophy group), who led the congress, marked the beginning of the program at ten o'clock in the morning on 19th August 1955. Ramuwisit then invited five religious or faith representatives to lead the opening prayer. Tan Bing Oei represented Confucianism, Hadikusumo represented theosophy, Asrar Prawirodisurjo represented Islam, Mangunkawotjo represented Buddhism, and Joedosoetardjo represented Christianity. They took turns reciting prayers before all the congress participants.

In organizing its first congress, the Kebatitan movement in Indonesia received great moral and spiritual support from the Semarang theosophy group. They provided their main building for the congress and three preparatory meetings on 27th March, 3rd April, and 29th May 1955, and their members played a direct



Fig. 4 –. From left to right, Tan Bing Oei, Hadikusumo, Asrar Prawirodisurjo, Mångunkawotjo, and Joedosoetardjo (Badan Kongres Kebatnan Indonesia, 1956, p. 65)

role in preparing the congress. One of them was Wongsonegoro (or Soenardi), Deputy of Prime Minister of Indonesia in Ali Sastroamidjojo's first cabinet from 1953 to 1955, formerly serving as Indonesia's Minister of Education and Culture from 1951 to 1952 (Bakker S.J, 1958). In 1915, together with Dr. R. Satiman Wiryosanjoyo and Kadarman, Wongsonegoro established Tri Koro Darmo, one of the youth organizations that promoted Javanese nationalism and was in line with the spirit of Boedi Oetomo (Nagazumi, 1989, p. 41).⁷ Wongsonegoro's role in developing the Indonesian Keatnan movement was crucial, especially in the run-up to the 1955 elections.

In addition to the support of the theosophy group, the first Indonesian Keatnan congress was supported by senior members who had been involved in Javanese cultural organizations since the colonial era. The initial phase of the Keatnan movement in Indonesia was marked by the mobilization of Javanist religious and cultural values. This mobilization appears clearly in the list of the 99 Keatnan groups integrated into the BKKI as an umbrella organization in 1955 (see table 1). These 99 groups were all from Java and conveyed Javanese *keatnan* values or javanism. Several of these Keatnan groups existed until the 1970s or even today, like Sumarah, Perjalanan, Ilmu Sejati, Sapto Darmo, Pangestu, and Hardopusoro.

7. Budi Utomo was one of the early Javanese cultural organizations, which later grew into an essential movement shaping the Indonesian nation.

Soegeng Kusumowardojo, in one of his articles published in the book of commemoration ceremonies of the first and second Kebatnan congresses (for detailed dates see table 2), stated that the implementation of the Indonesian Kebatnan congress of 1955 had been prefigured since 1933 (Badan Kongres Kebatnan Indonesia, 1956, p. 61). He wrote that in Semarang, there was an art center called Eko Kapti, located in the Pendrikan Utara neighborhood, which was still active in 1955 (when Soegeng's article was published). Eko Kapti had a library (Taman Batjaan), Javanese cultural activities (especially Javanese dance), and a branch of *kebatnan* called Soero-Moerten. Its followers were called *warga* (member), and most of them were senior members (*pinisepuh*) of Eka Kapti. Soegeng also mentioned several Soero-Moerten members, including Coadiat Martodarsono, Ki Wirjoprawito, Soedarsono, Kartyosoemarmo, and Soegeng Kusumowardojo himself.

Ki Wirjoprawito, mentioned by Soegeng Kusumowardojo above, was active in a Javanese cultural organization called Sobo Karti in Semarang since the 1920s. Sobo Karti was a Javanese art association (*kunstkring*) founded on the initiative of two parties in 1916: Thomas Karsten and Sam Koperberg of *Semarangsche Kunstkring*⁸ (Coté, 2017, p. 92) on the one hand, and Mangkunegara VII, Dr. Radjiman Wedyoningrat⁹ and R. Ng. Sosrohadikoesoemo,¹⁰ on the other hand. Wirjoprawito's name appears in the *Djawa* magazine of 1924, which was linked to the regular meetings of Sobo Karti in May 1922, especially concerning his appointment as a director of Sobo Karti (S. Koperberg, 1924).

However, many Kebatnan groups did not join the BKKI in 1955. One of the reasons was that these Kebatnan groups were usually already institutionally massive. They did not join likely because they felt they were independent enough and did not need to form an association to be widely recognized. One of them was Djawa Dipa, a group based in East Java that had been very active in fighting for civil rights such as marriage, burial, and citizenship rights, including conducting activities without being suspected by the department of religious affairs local branch. Djawa Dipa was a Kebatnan group whose members were mainly former soldiers of the war of independence. In 1955,

8. *Kunstkring* was typical of cultural society that could be found in most of the main cities of the colonies (for instance: In Bandung, *Bandungsche Kunstkring*, in Surabaya, *Surabayasche Kunstkring*, and in Jakarta, *Bataviasche Kunstkring*) in the twentieth century by adapting a similar organization located in the towns throughout the Netherlands. The purpose of establishing *Kunstkring* in Semarang was to educate, entertain and stimulate interest in the arts and, in general, to increase cultural awareness.

9. He was a Surakarta court physician and chairman of Boedi Oetomo.

10. R. Ng. Sosrohadikoesoemo at the time became president of the *ambtenaar Bumiputera* ("indigenous civil servant") association "Mangoenhardjo", a member of the Semarang council and a member of the executive board of the Kartini school.

Djawa Dipa sent a report to President Sukarno containing the names of 167 independence war veterans among its members.¹¹ In addition to Djawa Dipa, it was noted that Agama Sutji and Imam Mahdi, actively defending their citizenship rights, were not included in the list of the 99 Kebatinnan groups that joined the BKKI. It indicates that the number officially recorded by the BKKI does not necessarily reflect the intense mushrooming of the Kebatinnan groups in the 1950s.

Table 1: The Kebatinnan groups who joined the BKKI organization in 1955 (Badan Kongres Kebatinnan Indonesia, 1956, pp. 110-111).

No	Name of the Kebatinnan groups	Address	No.	Name of the Kebatinnan groups	Adress
1	Pangudi amrih tentrem	Mangundjajan Md. 4/247 Yogyakarta	51	Mardi Katentreman	Ki Wirosengodjo, Prembun Tambak, Sumpuh
2	Sutji-Rahayu	K.H. Samanhudi Street, No. 13, Pati	52	Tarek Akmalijah	Ki Wirosengodjo, Prembun Tambak, Sumpuh
3	Pertapaan Kwogo Branch Solo	Partono Martodiwirjo, Kartotijasan 21, Solo	53	Kawruh Begdjo	Ki Hardjosumarsono, Kebondowo, Banjubiru, Ambarawa
4	Perjalanan	M. Kartawinata, Sukasirna, Tjitjidas, Bandung	54	Ilmu Sedjati	Romo Adji Kromodrono, Podjok, Modjogedang, karanganjar, Solo
5	Sutji Rahayu Branch Bojonegoro	Merapi Street 3, Semarang	55	Budi Muljo	Bonoredjo X / 3, Nusukan, Solo
6	Mardi Santosaning Budi	Madijotaman II/10 Solo	56	Depok Sonopramono	R.M. Prawiromidjojo, Glemore, Banjuwangi
7	K.W.M	R. Nurhadi, Wonokromo, Gombang	57	Roso-sedjati	Ki Onggo, pakis Putih, Kedung Wuni, Pekalongan
8	Hasto Broto	Slamet Rijadi Street, No. 334, Solo	58	Filsafat Kebatinnan	Diponogoro Street 53, Jakarta
9	Budi Rahayu	Hasanudin street, No. 10, Ngawi	59	P.T.T.I Sidarta	Batjiro Baru 66 A Yogyakarta
10	Mardi Santosaning Budi	Mantrigawen No. 33 Yogyakarta	60	B.K.K.I. (branch Solo)	Ronggowarsito Street, 60, Solo
11	Agama Budo	Resi Budo, Stang-Wlingi, Blitar	61	Budi Luhur	Pendrikan Barat I / 37, Semarang

¹¹. “Anggota Angkatan Perang Jang Masuk Mendjadi Siswa Pranoto Agung Paguyuban Djowo Dipo” (ANRI, n.d.), No. 153, *Arsip Kabinet President Republik Indonesia 1955-1959*.

No	Name of the Kebatinan groups	Address	No.	Name of the Kebatinan groups	Adress
12	K.P.G.R.S (budi rahayu)	R. Satmokowigeno, Karanganyar, Solo	62	Sumarah	Onggowongso Street, Nirbitan, 3 / 1, Solo
13	Sakabat Sukohardjo	Gadjahan 7 M/17 Solo	63	Perhimpunan Theosofi (branch Solo)	Taman Kusumawardani 290, Solo
14	Suara Imam Muslimin	Kap. Podjok 212/1, Cirmahi Bandung	64	Pangestu	Sumarto, Gondang Solo
15	Agama Djawa Sunda	Kalibaru Utara 1 / 2 Cirebon	65	Pangastuti	Kratonan, mangunpradjan 107, Solo
16	Paguyuban Sumarah	Panembahan 13 Yogyakarta	66	Kridowatjono	Kartohardjendro, Djojodiningratan blok 24, Solo
17	P.T.I.I. Lodji Djuwono	L.S. Hadikusumo, Diponegoro Street Juwono	67	Perdjalanan (branch Solo)	Atmosutagnjo, Turisari Gg. V / 10, Solo
18	A.D.A.R.I	Pengok F. 1 Yogyakarta	68	Kawruh Djiwo	Penumping, Bendo, No. 3, Solo
19	Wisnu Pandowo	Tegalsari 118 A Semarang	69	Khong Kauw Hwee	Slamet Riyadi Street, 147, Solo
20	Agama Budo Djawi Wisnu	Celaket 1 / 44 Malang	70	Gerakan Ahmadiyah	Subandi, Kesehatan 9 / 12 Jakarta
21	Ilmu Sejati (Branch Salatiga)	R. Sugeng, Kaliwungu, Susukan, Tenganan, Salatiga	71	Perhimpunan Hidup Ketuhanan (Branch Malan)	Petjinan 34, Malang
22	H.P. Kediri (Budi Rahaju)	Anggraini Street 22, Kediri	72	Perhimpunan Hidup Ketuhanan (Branch Jakarta)	Tandjung Street 12, Jakarta
23	Bakti	R. Suwarno, Reksowardojo, Brobahan Wetan, Purwokerto, Banyumas	73	Alaude Mystieke Orde Rosae Crucis	Menteng Raya Street, 24 E, Jakarta
24	Luguning Kejawan (L.K)	Ki. O Romodjati, Paviliun 278, Brebes	74	Perhimpunan Theosofi (Branch Jakarta)	Taman Blavatsky 5 Medan Merdeka Barat 17, Jakatya
25	Kamanungsan	Ki Judiprajitno, Alasmalang, Kebumen	75	Perhimpunan Upasika Upasaka	Pontjol III / 12 Semarang
26	Tarek Akmalijah	Rodji Mohamad, Pabuaran, Baturaden, Purwokerto	76	Bhuvana Saraswati	Pandit sastri, Denpasar, Bali

No	Name of the Kebatinan groups	Address	No.	Name of the Kebatinan groups	Adress
27	Ngesti Roso	Bugisan Md 2 / 156, Yogyakarta	77	Perhimpunan pemuda theosofi	Widjajakusuma Street 23, Semarang
28	Kawruh Batin Gaibing Pangeran (Branch Salatiga)	R.M. Nitibudjono, Kaliwungu, Susukan, Tengaran Selatiga	78	Hardjaning Diri	Hardjodipuro, Sulursari, Kradenan, Grobogan, Semarang
29	Kawula Melindung Tuhan (K.M.T)	Joho-Manahan 7 / 20, Solo	79	Wisnu Buda Budi	Setatsiun Street No. 1225, Wonosobo
30	Panggula wentah Ngelmu Kebatinan	Josodadi 21 A Metro, Lampung	80	Pertemuan Filsafat dan Kebatinan	Ampasiet IX/24 Jakarta
31	Sabdo Rukun	Warung sinar-hadi, Pasar Wonosobo	81	Pambuka Djiwo	S. Muljodihardjo, Bogoredjo, Jember
32	Adam Makno	Ki S Hadi-Djojo, Medani, Tegowanuh, Grobogan, Purwodadi	82	Agama Budho Djawi Wisnu	Resi Kusumodewo, Bangil
33	Domas Makuto Romo	Lowokwaru Street, 1 / A, Malang	83	Tarek Akmalijah	Kampung Keramat No. 48, Bogor
34	Bodronojo	Ki Atmoredjo, Serep Weten, Pesu, Wedi, Klaten	84	Sumarah	Halmahera Street II / 34, Semarang
35	Pretapan Kwogo	Wiku Surjokuntjoro, Kwoga-Sidowarno, Wonosari, Klaten	85	Kawruh Kasampurnan, Budi Utomo	Kampung Tjakarajam, 6 / I, Mojokerto
36	Djawi Maligi	Ki Padmosudarmo, Pekilen, Kapungan, Polanhardjo, Klaten	86	Kridosampurno	Jawatan Pengawas Perburuhan Daerah II, Palembang
37	Kawruh Batin Gaibing Pangeran (branch Klaten)	Ki Atmontono, Gempol, Kadilangu, Wedi, Klaten	87	Roso – Tunggal	Pirukunan Street, No. 9, Djjetis, Blora
38	P.I.K.M	Mangkunegaran Street No. 27, Semarang	88	I.S.K.I	Pungkuran 12 A, Tegal
39	Wahju Djatmiko	Ki Tarutarjono, Jawatan Pertanian, Sragen	89	Gerakan Patriot, Negara	Kepuh Dalam VI / 5, Jakarta

No	Name of the Kebatinan groups	Address	No.	Name of the Kebatinan groups	Adress
40	Budi Rahaju	Djamsaren, Sarehan 2, Kediri	90	I.L.D.A.T (Iki Limpading Dumadi Anggajuh Tata Tentrem)	Bekasi Timur Street, 74, Djatinegara, Djakarta
41	Pagujuban Pantjasila	Balapan Street, 189 / 295, Solo	91	K.K. Budho Djawa	Tjokroaminoto Street
42	Hardopusoro	Mukti Nitihardjo, Djapen, Kudus	92	Kebatinan-Kedjiwan	Kradjan No. 593, Kalisombo, Salatiga
43	Sutji Rahaju	Kawedanan Street, No. 52, Kudus	93	Pagujuban Samedhi	Dr. Sutomo 47, Yogyakarta
44	Perdjalanan (branch Jakarta)	Manggarai Selatan 3 Blok 1 / 156, Jakarta	94	Pagujuban Musjawarat Filsafat Kebatinan	Jawatan Pengairan, Klaten
45	A.D.A.R.I (Branch Solo)	Badran, Kenongo 144, Solo	95	Swatmaja	Kepala Kantor Tilpun, Delanggu
46	Pribadi	S. Purwosuwito, Lengkongrakit, Wonodadi, Bandjarnegara	96	Mardi Santosaning Budi	Dirdjosusastro, Ngemplak, Pos Kalasan Yogyakarta
47	Perdjalanan (branch Purwokerto)	Sikepan Street, 1 / 5 Purwokerto	97	Persatuan Ilmu Kebatinan	Judistiro Street No. 27, Semarang
48	Perdjalanan (branch Bandung)	Sukasirna 41 / 138 B, Bandung	98	Purwaning Sedjati	Wasito Guru Taman Dewasa, Cepu
49	Ngesti Rahaju	Grogolan Wetan blok 22, Solo	99	Mardi Santosaning Budi	Djogokarjan Md. 10 / 152 A, Yogyakarta
50	Agomo Djawa Buda Budi Sedjati	Beran Djedis Pasar 7 A, Blora			

The first congress: discussing the role of women in society, education, and laws

“The Indonesian nation should return to its fundamental wisdom, grounded on two guidelines: ‘sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe’ (not having the desire for oneself instead working hard for the public interest), and ‘memayu rahayuning Bawana’ (“working for the safety of the world in general”) (Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia, 1956, p. 73).

The above quote was a resolution of the first Kebatinan congress in Semarang, prepared by the committee with the approval of Wongsonegoro as chairman. Various Kebatinan groups in Java joined this umbrella organization



Fig. 5 – Wongsonegoro in 1951 (source: *Djiwa Budaja disamping Ilmu Pengetahuan*, 1951, p. 2)

because they believed that Indonesia had lost its cultural and spiritual identity after ten years of independence. The BKKI thought that the Indonesians had lost their fundamental *kebatinan* practices and values, resulting in a lack of well-being and general peace. Moreover, the first Kebatinnan congress assumed that the *kebatinnan*, as a critical cultural component of the Indonesian nation, could liberate the country from various forms of colonial remains.

Discussions and debates around the first Kebatinnan congress also dealt with the concept of “character education.” One of the most exciting presentations was delivered by Prawirodisurjo, who divided education into seven stages: first, the education starts when the baby is still in the womb; second, when the father begins to pray for the child to get a *chakraningrat* revelation¹²; third, when the parents’ souls touch and affect the baby in the womb; fourth, when the five senses develop after the child is born; fifth, through the influence of the surrounding environment in the family; sixth, thanks to the education obtained from the school; and, last, through the influence of the environment in which the child grows up (Ki Asror Prawirodisurjo, 1956, p. 69).

The resolution also emphasized aspects of education and the position of women in Indonesian law and society. In education, it was hoped that the values contained in the *kebatinnan* could be practiced both at home and school by incorporating character and religion as essential subjects. In addition, the resolution of the first Indonesian Kebatinnan congress advocated the need for a

12. Wahyu Cakraningrat itself is one of the titles of a Javanese *wayang* story that describes the efforts of three knights to gain power.

marriage law to protect women. In his speech entitled “pre-advies mengenai kedudukan wanita” (pre-advice on women’s position in Indonesia), on 8th August 1955, Wongsonegoro argued that only education and training in legislation awareness could solve the problems of social injustice that women suffered. He said that through character education (*Budi Pekerti*), which he recommended to be included in the educational curriculum, the students in every public school would be able to take care of themselves and distinguish between right and wrong.

Regarding women’s status, Sosroperwoto’s speech entitled *Kekiyatan adegning Bangsa saking kekiyatan balegriya* (“The strength of nation-building from the power of the household”) shows the tribune’s position in favor of monogamous marriage. The role of women within the Kebatnan movement raised a debate within the congress. Parwati, the only female speaker in the congress, expresses that women had a noble position as educators who learned about Western sciences and honed their intuition (Heru Suherman Lim, 2015). Wongsonegoro argued that through character education offered in *kebatnan*, which was supervised by women (mothers in the household), people could continuously monitor and control themselves. Joedosoetardjo, an adept of theosophy, also contributed to the debate. He divided women’s and men’s duties into eight sections by emphasizing women as educators and housekeepers. He further stressed that one could not regard women as it was in the previous era (i.e., before independence). He said that at that time, women were considered as “*tjowèk gopèl*,¹³” which means that when no longer needed they could be discarded (S. Joedosoetardjo, 1956, pp. 66-67). The conclusion of this first congress was to emphasize the role of women in *kebatnan* and their importance in character education. It recommended encouraging character education as one of the mandatory curricula in the Indonesian national education system so that children get physical and spiritual knowledge.

Another central point of debate during the Congress regarded marriage law. In the 1950s, we can find several cases in Java related to marriage practices among the Kebatnan group members that have not been recognized by the state

13. *Cowèk* or *cobèk* refers to kitchen utensils made of stone or clay and shaped like a plate for grinding spices (pepper, chili, etc.). *Gopèl* means a little chipped on the edges or outside. The expression as mentioned above means “Women must only focus on cooking matters” (whereas in Javanese households, the position of *cobèk* plays a vital role in cooking). When women can no longer cook, they can be removed.

(Sudargo Gautama, 1996).¹⁴ A letter from the elder (*pinisepuh*) of Djawa Dipa¹⁵ named Nurtjahjo to Sukarno in August 1955 expressed the demand for marriage recognition according to the Djawa Dipa customs. Until 1955, the government only accepted marriage ceremonies in Islam and Christianity. In addition, Djawa Dipa suggested ratifying the 1st *Suro* (New Year's Eve in the Javanese *calendar*) as one of the national holidays by the Indonesian government. Besides the letter of Nurtjahjo, I have found several personal letters written by Indonesian citizens (not officially members of the Kebatinan groups) addressed to President Sukarno in the archive bundle of the cabinet of the President. These letters relate to the demand for the recognition of *kebatinan* marriages.

“According to Article 29 paragraph 2, Article 18 and Article 43, the state guarantees the independence of each resident to embrace their religion and worship according to their religion and beliefs. Then, why are Agama Buddha-Djawi/Wisnu religious adherents discouraged from marrying in their own belief? Haven't we already obeyed the Indonesian Law? And yet there are arrangements for the dead, marriage, honoring the New Year one *suro*, and so on, which also include the worship of Agama Buddha-Djawi/Wisnu”¹⁶.

This is an excerpt of a personal letter dated from 7th February 1955, sent by the Agama Buddha-Djawi/Wisnu representatives to the Minister of Religion, Masjkur. The letter demands the recognition of Agama Buddha-Djawi/Wisnu marriage by the Ministry of Religion. Four years earlier, on 9th January 1951, representatives of Iman Igama Hak (IIH) had requested validation of their marriage procedures by the Department of Religious Affairs.¹⁷ Although resistance efforts were observed in the registration of marriages carried out by mystical groups who considered themselves religious, there were also groups who pragmatically followed what was commanded by the state authorities. One example is Tedjabuana, the son of Madrais, a spiritual leader of the Agama Jawa Sunda (Madraism) based in Cigugur Kuningan, who had converted to Islam. Tedjabuana converted in order to marry his daughter, Siti Djenar¹⁸ (Walton, 2007).

14. Since 1945, Indonesia has not had any marriage law. The legal basis used for marriage issues refers to National Law no. 22 of 1946 concerning the registration of marriages, divorces, and reconciliations (*nikah, talaq, rujuk*). Yet, for areas outside Java and Madura, reference is still made to the Marriage Ordinance for outer islands (*ordonansi Nikah Untuk Tanah Sebrang*) from the *Staatsblad* of 1932, no. 482. Secondly, mixed marriages (in the sense of different nationalities) still refer to the rules of the *Koninklijk Besluit* of 29 December 1896.

15. Djawa Dipa was one of the mystical movements that emerged since the beginning of the 20th century but only started to grow and develop as a Kebatinan movement after independence.

16. “Perkawinan Agama Buddha-Djawi/Wisnu Dicantumkan Dalam UURI” (ANRI, 1955), no. 153, Arsip Kabinet Presiden Republik Indonesia.

17. “Tata Cara Perkawinan Iman Igama Hak (IIH)” (ANRI, 1951), no. 153, Arsip Kabinet Presiden Republik Indonesia.

18. The name of Tedjabuana's daughter is interesting to discuss because her name is

No: 237/A.III/K.P./51.- Kuningan, 10 Februari 1951.-
Hal: Verslag Agama Tjigugur.- Terkirim tg. 13-2-'51.-

Pada hari Selasa tg: 6/2-1951 kami telah kedatangan sdr. Tedjabuana dia menerangkan akan menikahkan anaknya nama Siti Djener kepada Subagjahardja B.O.D.M. dengan perkawinan setjara Islam. Kemudian diajua mengaku sendiri sebagai Ummat Islam. Maka dari itu sdr. Penghulu dan Pegawai Pernikahan supeja datang dirumah kami pada hari Kamis tg. 8/2-1951 guna menjaksikan perkawinan saja punja anak setjara perkawinan Islam, karena dari dulunja saja kawin setjara Islam.

Tepat pada waktunya saja Penghulu Kabupaten dengan Waib Kepala Kuningan, Sdr. Waib Kepala Tjivagebang, Sdr. Waib Kepala Luragung dan Sdr. Radal Kuningan, memenuhi undangan Sdr. Tedjabuana.

Setelah datang dirumahnja sebelum diadakan perkawinan setjara Islam lantas sdr.Tedjabuana membata "Sjihadatein" disaksikan oleh Pak Kapten Effendi dan Staf Territorial, Pak Bian, dan oleh senus Undangan Pegawai Kepenghuluan dan oleh murid-muridnja.

Kemudian sdr. Tedjabuana sebelum mewakili, menanda tandang dulu surat tanda kenjataanja sebagai ummat Islam jang salinannja sebagai berikut:

S-surat salinan perdjandjia-n Sdr. Tedjabuana.

Tjigugur, 8 Februari 1951.-

Surat keterangan.

Saja nama R. Tedjabuana Alibasah, desa Tjigugur, pada hari Kamis tanggal 8/2-1951 menikahkan anak saja nama Nji Siti Djener kepada nama Subagjahardja dengan perkawinan setjara Islam karena kami dan keluarga kami dari dulunja telah Islam dengan mengaku dan meyakini kepada "Sjihadatein" dan jang diutjapkan pula oleh saja sekarang; diidepan kepala Agama Kuningan;

"Asjhadu Anlailaha ilallah "

Abdi njaksian sareng nekadkan jen henteu aja deui Bangoran anu wadjib disembah anging Allah sehidji.

"Waesjhadu anna Muhamadar rosulullah"

Sareng abdi njaksian sareng nekadkan jen Nabi Muhammad eta utusanana Gusti Allah.

Dengan adanja utjapan kami ini kami tetap sebagai Ummat Islam akan menjalankan kewadajiban Islam, dan mentaati segala Peraturan Kementerian Agama tak akan melanggar Undang2 No. 22 tahun 1946 mengenai pernikahan.

Tjigugur , 8 Februari 1951.-

ttd.

(Tedjabuana).-

Kemudian ..

Fig. 6 – Archives of information from *Tedjabuana*, the son of *Madrais*, who converted to Islam in order to marry his daughter, Siti Djener, to Subagjahardja in 1951. Source: (ANRI 1951) No. 153, Arsip Kabinet Presiden Republik Indonesia.

Until 1963, several marriages aside from Islam and Christianity could not be officially registered. Among them were marriages between Keabatan groups, Buddhists, and Balinese Hindus outside the islands of Bali and Lombok. In addition, marriages between people who embraced a new religion or belief, including those of the Kaweruh Nalur (KWN) group, Agama Djawa Asli Republik Indonesia (ADARI), Agama Pransuh, Agama Hidup Betul, and Sapta Dharma, were imposed (M.M. Djodjodigono, 1963, pp. 59-64). Most

taken from a famous Sufi figure in Java. Seh Siti Jenar was a Sufi master, as told in the nineteenth-century *Babad Jaka Tingkir*. Siti Jenar was executed for disseminating a secret that the *wali* (Islamic saints) felt should not be made public. Siti is a feminine first name.

of these people understood that they were not Muslims, and they refused to act hypocritically by claiming to be Muslim so that their marriage could be officially registered. They wanted their wedding to be formally registered, but none of the state officials were willing to do so.

The second and third congresses: defining *kebatinan* in relation to religion

At the second congress,¹⁹ the notion of *kebatinan* was at the center of the debates. Attempts were made to articulate and define *kebatinan* with different approaches. For instance, an attempt was made by Ki Nitiatmodjo to analyze it from a linguistic point of view. He said *kebatinan* came from *batin* ('inner'), referring more precisely to 'soul' (*Jiwa*). He formulated that *kebatinan* was related to the inner-mind, while the inner-mind was an abstract state that the five senses could not grasp. Then, he added that to study the inner-mind, one had to use its intuition and sixth sense, or what he called *rasa sejati* (true intuition) (Ki S. Nitiatmodjo, 1956, p. 94). Thus, one who had successfully mastered *kebatinan* had attained perfection in life (*kasampurnan urip*), and one of its accomplishments was *manunggaling kawula gusti* (mystic union between a man and God). Sutedjo Bradjanegara, a former member of Boedi Oetomo who was active in the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI), said that *kebatinan* was a path to spiritual knowledge, a ray of almighty God that could guide humans to the true direction (S. Bradjanegara, 1956, pp. 96-97).

The definition of *kebatinan* that emerged from the first and second Kebatitan congresses shows similarities and differences with religion (*agama*) in Indonesia. *Kebatinan* emphasizes soul cultivation and inner peace, enabling one to be close to God, while religion emphasizes certain worship rituals with the same objective. A member of the Kebatitan Congress, who went by the pseudonym of Pamong ('caretaker'), said that if *kebatinan* was studied carelessly, it could only lead to trouble, giving the example of people competing to claim to be the *ratu Adil* ('just king') and practicing black magic (Pamong, 1956, pp. 74-77).

The definition of *kebatinan* was finally formulated according to the first precept of Pancasila: "*kebatinan ialah sumber azas dan sila ke-tuhanan jang maha Esa, untuk mentjapai budi luhur, guna kesempurnaan hidup*" ("Kebatinan is the source of principles and the belief in God for the achievement of noble conduct in pursuit of a perfect life"). According to the BKKI, it means that *kebatinan* is the core principle of the first precept of Pancasila. This definition brought fresh air to the Kebatitan movement because Sukarno gave a positive approach to respond to the definition of *kebatinan*. It was underlined in Sukarno's speech as mentioned in his official speech in 1958:

"[...] especially after having read the definition of *kebatinan* as understood and spelled out by the federation (the BKKI): *kebatinan* is the source of principles

19. Held on 7-10 August 1956.

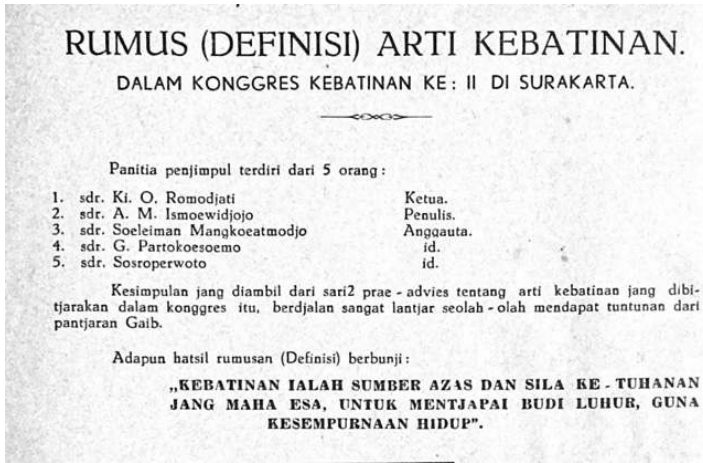


Fig. 7 – The official formulation of *kebatinan*'s definition at the second BKKI Congress in Surakarta in 1956 (Badan kongres Kebatnan Indonesia, 1956, p. 106).

and the belief in God for the achievement of noble conduct in pursuit of a perfect life (*sumber azas dan sila Ketuhanan Jang maha Esa untuk mentjapai budi luhur guna kesempurnaan hidup*). I feel furthermore happy to be with you here, knowing that your slogan is: 'hard work without self-interest' (*sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe*)”²⁰

Sukarno attended the third Kebatnan congress, held in Jakarta in July 1958. On that occasion, he expressed his satisfaction with the definition of *kebatnan* given by the BKKI (*Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 19 Djuli 1958), as well as with the adherence of the organization to the first precept of Pancasila. He further stated that *kebatnan* was not a magical belief and emphasized that Indonesian people should not believe in magic. The issue of black magic occupied religious discourse in Indonesia in the late 1950s. It was caused by the turbulent socio-political changes in Indonesia in this decade, which triggered cultural changes in society²¹. Old cultural values had begun to be abandoned, while new values had not yet been formed. In this situation, the inner guidance of Indonesian culture has become blurred and vague. Therefore, many people were attracted to black magic.²²

Unlike Sukarno, who approved and supported the BKKI on the definition of *kebatnan*, Rasjidi, the first Indonesian Minister of Religion under the Sukarno

20. “Pidato P.J.M. Presiden Pada Kongres Kebatnan Di Gedung Pemuda Djakarta Tanggal 17 Djuli 1958,” Pidato Presiden No. 003, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia.

21. S.K. Trimurti, “Badan Kongres Kebatnan Indonesia: Tugasnya Menghimpun Aliran2 Agama, Kebatnan dan Filsafat”, *Mimbar Indonesia*, No. 27, 5 Djuli 1958, pp. 18-23.

22. *Ibid.* p. 20.

regime, expressed his disapproval (Rasjidi, 1967). According to Rasjidi, it was not *kebatinan* that was the source of the principle and precepts of the almighty God. On the contrary, it was precisely the first precept of Pancasila that was the source of the principle of *kebatinan*. He said that this precept stated that it was the one and only God who created nature and humans (“Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa-lah yang menciptakan alam dan manusia”) (Rasjidi, 1967, p. 122). Therefore, God was the creator of all things and the source of *kebatinan* (“Maka Tuhanlah yang menjadi sumber segala sesuatu, tentu saja juga sumber Kebathinan”) (Rasjidi, 1967, p. 122). Rasjidi also complained that the emergence of many Kebatinan groups in Indonesia was not controlled enough by the religious leaders of the Kebatinan movement. Therefore, the heated debate about the definition of *kebatinan* and its position in Pancasila coloured the dynamics of *kebatinan* as both an idea and a movement.

The position of the movement toward the state and Pancasila

Religion plays a vital role in Indonesia. Until the late 1990s, every citizen had to be affiliated with one of the five recognized religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Anyone who was not affiliated with at least one of these religions was considered as not having a religion yet (*Belum beragama*). For this reason, the Kebatinan movement that developed rapidly in the 1950s was associated with backwardness and atheism. Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs, no. 9, 1952, mentions that the official criteria of religion included: belief in the oneness of God, the scriptures, and a prophet to whom knowledge of the Above has been revealed. Mark Woodward (1989) argues while Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism meet these normative criteria, creative interpretation is needed to include both Hinduism and Buddhism. Since the 1950s, this definition has discredited many local religious and spiritual practices, including the Kebatinan movement. The complexity of the dichotomy between “religion” and “belief” is due to the disappointment of Islamic leaders with the rejection and abolition of the Jakarta Charter. The day after the surrender of the Jakarta Charter (19th August 1945), they demanded that the government establish the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama, Kemenag), but this was not achieved until 3rd January 1946 (Boland, 1971, p. 106; Samsul Maarif, 2018, p. 22). Islamic leaders used Kementerian Agama as a political vehicle to suppress *abangan* groups, including the affiliated Kebatinan.

The word *kebatinan* was used, especially before the term *kepercayaan* replaced it in the 1970s, to identify a religious movement that had shown massive growth in the first and second decades after independence. In early 1952, the Indonesian government’s Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama, KUA) in West Java announced the emergence of 29 Kebatinan groups in the region since the national independence. In 1954, the Department of

Religious Affairs (Departemen Agama, Depag) established PAKEM²³ (Supervision of Belief Movements in Society, Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat) to monitor new religious sects²⁴. In 1956, the Yogyakarta Office of Religious Affairs counted 63 Kebatinan groups. And in the 1960s, the Indonesian government had already expressed its official interest in the Kebatinan movement.

At the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Department of Religious Affairs (Departemen Agama, Depag) in Kepatihan district, Yogyakarta, K.H. Muh. Wahib Wahab, as the Minister of Religion, stressed that his Ministry played an essential role in the mental and spiritual fields (*Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 4 Djanuari 1961). The speech responded to the emergence of various Kebatinan groups since the 1950s. Furthermore, The Attorney General, Gunawan, expressed his concern about Kebatinan in late 1961. He stressed that Kebatinan endangered the security of the state and the nation and should not be tolerated. He also invoked the spirit of *jihad* to subdue the Kebatinan movement, calling the Indonesian people to protect the sanctity of “religion” from the actions of irresponsible groups (*Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 9 Oktober 1961). Although he did not explicitly mention whom he called “irresponsible,” this statement could easily be directed in the eyes of the population to the *kebatinan* groups.

In the early 1960s, resistance to Kebatinan began to emerge due to public suspicion of their involvement with black magic. Although Sukarno, in his opening speech to the third BKKI congress, mentioned that Kebatinan was not magic, the religious discourse developed in Indonesia was moving in a less favourable direction for Kebatinan groups. An interesting case that arose regarding this political situation was the killing attempt of the Attorney General, Gunawan, by Bambang Munadi, a former member of the Attorney General Office at the Jakarta Prosecutor’s Department, supposedly by using black magic (*Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 16 Oktober 1961). Munadi admitted all his actions during the trial and stated that in utilizing black magic (*ilmu hitam*), he was assisted by a shaman (*dukun*) named Haji Maksum.

This incident weakened the Kebatinan groups because everyone became suspicious of black magic, often stereotyped to be practiced by the Kebatinan groups. This evolution can be seen by the increasing intensity of the supervisory duties of PAKEM, the body in charge of the Kebatinan movement supervision. On 4th November 1960, two weeks after the alleged

23. In Javanese, *pakêm* also means basic guidelines (about rules, procedures).

24. However, the emergence of the Law (UU) concerning the Main Provisions of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Indonesia No.15/1961, in which there is an article (article 2 paragraph (3) that assigns the Prosecutor’s Office to oversee “*kebatinan*” groups that endanger society and the state, marks the transfer of PAKEM’s authority from the Departemen of Religious Affairs to the Attorney General’s Office.

black magic assassination attempt, PAKEM invited five Kebatinan leaders to talk at the Yogyakarta Attorney's Office. Among those who attended and gave lectures were Ki Mangunwidjojo (Djojowolu) from ADARI (Artawijaya, 2010)²⁵, Djojowijono from Lagon Nglegewo, Darmowarsito from Pransuh, Karnopawiro from Kawruh Lugu, Sri Pawenang or Suwartini from Sapta Darma (*Kedaulatan rakjat*, 4 November 1961). In addition to the five speakers, the event was attended by 30 Kebatinan leaders, 12 representatives of government agencies, and representatives of the State Islamic Institute of Yogyakarta (IAIN Yogyakarta).

This event seems to have been a form of response of the Attorney General's office, through PAKEM, to oversee the Kebatinan groups in Java. The lectures given by the five Kebatinan leaders covered several aspects, including the history of the emergence of their respective Kebatinan groups, the principles and objectives of the groups, their views on social life, family relations, society, and government, on marriage ritual and spiritual development. Interestingly, Lagon Nglegewo and Kawruh Lugu emphasized that they were Kebatinan groups and not a new religion (*Bukan agama*). Meanwhile, the other three Kebatinan groups claimed that *kebatinan* was a religion. ADARI considered Sukarno as its prophet; Pransuh believed Sastrosuwignyo of Muntilan as a prophet, as did Sapta Dharma with Sri Gautama of Pare.

The conclusion of the conference organized by PAKEM in the Yogyakarta State Prosecutor's Office sounded the alarm about the need for clear definitions and laws regarding religious offenses. On 17-18th November 1961, state prosecutors from all West Java and Jakarta regions proposed the immediate definition of religion in state legislation and regulation on religious blasphemy (*Kedaulatan rakjat*, 21 November 1961). This proposal was considered urgent to purify the state and society from all misleading beliefs and ensure the protection of official religions.

The politics of religious discourse, which were intensified around the 1960s, received an accommodating response from the BKKI at the fifth Kebatinan congress in June 1963. The BKKI decided to support the whole program of the national revolution and the Manipol Usdek that Sukarno had called for in his State address (*pidato kenegaraan*) on 17th August 1959 (Roeslan Abdulgani, 1961). Manipol Usdek is an acronym for "Political Manifestations of the 1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Indonesian Character (especially Mutual Assistance "Gotong Royong"). A political doctrine initiated by Sukarno during the Guided Democracy

25. ADARI ("Agama Djawa Asli Republik Indonesia" or The Original Javanese Religion of the Republic of Indonesia) was founded in Yogyakarta in 1946 by S.W. Mangunwijaya. ADARI recognized Sukarno as a prophet and Pancasila as a holy book. The principles of ADARI were: Pancasila, freedom, social justice, the divinity in the one and only God, and the defense of Javanese culture.

called for the revival of the spirit of revolution, national justice, and state organizations for a sustainable revolution. The decisions of the fifth Kebatinan congress declared by Wongsonegoro were as follows:

“I recommend that the Indonesian people sincerely strive to complete the national revolution based on *sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe. memayu rahayuning bawana* (“not having the desire for oneself instead working hard for the public interest,” “working for the safety of the world in general”). The expansion of national moral education (*pendidikan moral*) to all levels of society as a continuation of the struggle for the explanation of the national revolution. The government should implement the meaning of the spirit of Pancasila as described in ‘Manipol’ (*Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 10 Juni 1963).

In his welcoming speech at the fifth Kebatinan congress in Ponorogo, Wongsonegoro reminded the BKKI members that they should keep the basic principles of the BKKI: “*sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe*” (“not having the desire for oneself, instead of working hard for the public interest”) and “*memayu rahayuning bawana.*” (“working for the safety of the world in general”) (Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia, 1963, pp. 5-6). Afterward, he also gave his views regarding the notion of *kebatinan* and *kepercayaan*, adding that religion or *kepercayaan* emphasized what he called “*panembah*” (Devotion to the almighty God). In contrast, *kebatinan* gave more attention to *budi luhur* (honorable moral). However, both *kepercayaan* (which he considered as included in religion) and *kebatinan* shared fundamental values, i.e., *panembah* and *budi luhur*, but placed a different emphasis on them.²⁶

26. At that time, the definition between *kepercayaan* and *kebatinan* was not officially formulated in the same way as today. Wongsonegoro, in his speech, treated *kepercayaan* in the same way as religion, while *kebatinan* was considered “the knowledge of spirit.”

Table 2 – The chronology of BKKI congresses and seminars from 1955 to 1963

Name of the meeting	Location	Year	Responsible	Resolution
Congress of BKKI I	Asoqa building, Semarang	19-21 August 1955 / 1 Suro 1887	Mr. Wongsonegoro	The Indonesian people should reuse the basis of the Kebatinan in all fields and hold on to “ <i>sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe, memayu hayuning bawana</i> ” (“not having the desire for oneself instead working hard for the public interest”, “working for the safety of the world in general”).
Congress of BKKI II	Surakarta	7-10 August 1956 / 1 Suro 1888	Dr. Soeharsono	Formulation of the definition of <i>kebatinan</i> , as a source of the principles and precepts of the almighty God.
Congress of BKKI III	Gedung Pemuda, Jakarta	17-20 July 1958 / 1 Suro 1890	Mr. Wongsonegoro	World leaders have to be concerned by the safety of humankind, to be able to participate in “ <i>memayu hayuning bawana</i> ” (“working for the safety of the world in general”, towards world peace and order).
Seminar Kebatinan I	Gedung Wanita, Jakarta	14-15 November 1959	Mr. Wongsonegoro	Fulfilling one’s own obligations, although far from perfect, the result is always more important than performing obligations for other interests that are contrary to one’s own inner spirit.
Congress of BKKI IV	Malang, Jawa Timur	22-24 July 1960 (on the month of <i>Suro</i>)	Mr. Wongsonegoro	This congress resolved to give an underline to follow the first congress resolution. So that the world in general and in particular the Indonesians can reuse the basics of Kebatinan: “ <i>Sepi ing Pamrih Rame ing Gawe</i> ” and “ <i>memayu hayuning Bawana</i> ” (“not having the desire for oneself instead working hard for the public interest”, “working for the safety of the world in general”).

Name of the meeting	Location	Year	Responsible	Resolution
Seminar Kebatinan II	Djakarta	28-29 January 1961	R.S. Soekanto Tjokrodiatmodjo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the level of national development, it is necessary to prioritize the basics of <i>kebatinan</i> “sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe, memayu rahayuning bawana” (“not having the desire for oneself. Instead, working hard for the public interest”, “working for the safety of the world in general”). 2. BKKI believes that to implement the MANIPOL and USDEK, it is necessary to make the people aware of the goodness and to provide a clear understanding of the State Policy, preceded by an irreproachable example from the leader. 3. Kebatinan needs to be included in behavioral lessons to achieve moral and virtuous humans. 4. Calling on all levels of the Indonesian people to put God in their thoughts and actions.
Seminar Kebatinan III	In the Hall of Jajasan Raden Saleh, Jakarta	11-12 August 1962	Mr. Wongsonegoro	Support every effort of mental and spiritual development.
Congress of BKKI V	Ponorogo	1 June 1963 (on the month of <i>Suro</i> 1895)	K. Ng. Achmad Saleh	How Kebatinan can support Indonesia’s national revolution. Urge the government to issue a National Marriage Law that can guarantee justice for adherents of <i>kebatinan</i> .

The politics of religious discourse leading up to the 1965 political transition increasingly marginalized the Kebatinan groups. In addition to providing official statements through the umbrella organization, the BKKI, several Kebatinan groups also collaborated with other religious groups to guarantee a safe coexistence. In June 1963, in Tasikmalaya, West Java, representatives of Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, and Kebatinan groups issued an official pledge to maintain security and public order in the religious and spiritual domains. This pledge emerged as a response to a leaflet that called for harmony among religious communities (*Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 19 Juni 1963). After the tragic political

transition of 1965, the *status quo* of the BKKI experienced ups and downs. The large number of PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, Indonesian Communist Party) members who had become members of the Kebatinan groups made this group increasingly marginalized and stigmatized. Yet, not long after the New Order regime was established, in February 1970, the leaders of the Kebatinan groups were informally asked to join Golkar (Golongan Karya, the government party) (Agustinus, 1986, p. 10). Under Golkar, the BKKI, which had been in a vacuum due to the anti-communist political upheaval and pressure from Islamic political groups, was revived. The organization then transformed into BK5I (Badan Kongres Kepercayaan Kejiwaan Kerohanian Kebatinan Indonesia), which was considered equivalent to the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI, Majelis Ulama Indonesia) and was managed under the Golkar's (Golongan Karya, The Party of Functional Group) Sekretariat Kerjasama Kepercayaan (SKK, "Secretariate for Cooperation of Belief") (Samsul Maarif, 2018, p. 41). Under the SKK, Kebatinan groups were asked to change Kebatinan into a new category: *kepercayaan*.

In the 1970s, the debate over the categorization of beliefs regarding religion reached its peak. On 20th January 1971, the National Spiritual Belief Forum (Musyawarah Nasional Kepercayaan) was chaired by Wongsonegoro and finally met with Suharto. They addressed three propositions to the president: (1) the recognition of belief (*kepercayaan*), (2) the moral education of Pancasila ("Pendidikan moral Pancasila") to be taught at school, and (3) the celebration of the 1st *suro* as a national holiday. As a result, the 1st *suro* was celebrated in various places with prayers, rituals, and Javanese puppet theatre (*wayang*), and at that time, Suharto gave a speech. In the 1970s, the New Order under Suharto himself seemed to offer space for *kepercayaan*.

Conclusion

The first Indonesian Kebatinan congress played an essential role in recognizing spiritual "beliefs" (*kepercayaan*) in the Indonesian state and society. Through this congress, Javanism became the main supporting factor in shaping the Kebatinan organization, later categorized under the "belief" (*kepercayaan*) label in the 1970s. Furthermore, theosophy groups and figures from the Javanese national movement had been involved in various Javanese cultural activities since colonial Indonesia. They helped to give birth to the Indonesian Kebatinan movement in the 1950s.

As a movement gathering dozens of groups in Java, the intellectual genealogy of the Kebatinan has survived after the colonial period. Through activities, discussions, and associations of Javanese culture since the early 20th century, ideals such as *sepi ing pamrih, rame ing gawe* ("not having the desire for oneself, instead working hard for the public interest"), and *memayu rahayuning bawana* ("working for the safety of the world in general") began to take shape in more formal ways. However, national *kebatinan* figures who served in the 1950-1956 period significantly impacted the conceptual formation

of *kebatinan*, the Kebatnan movement, and the congresses. The debates in the Kebatnan congresses from 1955 to 1963 show that the movement played an essential role in post-independence Indonesian religious discourse and political dynamics. In the discussion that arose in the congresses, the 1950s marked a golden age for the intellectual debate among *kebatnan* figures, which did not happen again in later times. The groups were particularly silenced during the New Order era when Kebatnan was categorized as a reified “culture” to be preserved and not a religion to be practised daily.

Entering the 1960s, *kebatnan* ideas, movements, and organizations experienced threats and continued to move in a less favourable direction. They were stigmatized and associated with black magic, with consequences on PAKEM’s responses as a Kebatnan supervisory body in more stringent monitoring actions. The 1965 crisis pinnacled with the end of the BKKI *status quo* as the umbrella organization that oversaw all Kebatnan groups in Java. From 1965 to 1978, there were substantial political upheavals to show the “struggle” for *kepercayaan* recognition.

As a result, in 1978, the New Order regime finally stressed that spiritual belief could only be understood and treated as a “culture” and should avoid conflict with the “official religion” in Indonesia. The government then transferred the affairs of spiritual belief from the Ministry of Religion to the Ministry of Culture, confirmed by a People’s Consultative Assembly decree in 1978. However, Suharto’s close relationship with “belief” coloured the early days of his presidency. It was especially so before the elections in 1971 and during his power until the second election in 1977. As I can say, since the late 1960s, various “beliefs” had been part of the Secretariate for Cooperation of Belief under the Functional Group (Golongan Karya, Golkar) as a party supporting the government. However, it seems that the support from the “belief” group was not as extensive as the political support offered by the Islamic group from the election in 1977. Therefore, it was also one of the factors that changed the political policy of the New Order government regarding the position of “belief” in Indonesia. Further research should enable us to explore the debates that arose after 1978 and document the role of Javanism in the discourse of religious politics in Indonesia until the end of the New Order Era.

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