

The Contested State of Sufism in Islamic Modernism: The Case of the Muhammadiyah Movement in Twentieth-Century Indonesia

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Abstract

The Muhammadiyah in Indonesia is commonly known not to be very sympathetic towards mysticism in terms of its manifestations in mystical religious fraternities and pantheistic identity mysticism. Although its stance versus these religious phenomena seems to be very clear, many of its members are struggling to determine their attitude towards the issue. The continuing uncertainty about its legitimacy is evident from the questions Muhammadiyah members send to the *Suara Muhammadiyah* regarding this topic. In this article I focus on the Muhammadiyah's 'official' vision through its first hundred years of existence. My thesis is that its rigidness in rejecting 'mystical and spiritual' manifestations is not only caused by its fear of unbelief and heresy, but also closely related to the political and social circumstances in which it is confronted with these 'mystical and spiritual' manifestations in the first place.

Résumé

La Muhammadiyah en Indonésie est bien connue pour ne pas être sympathique vers le mysticisme, soit sous la forme de confréries religieuses-mystiques ou sous la forme de mysticisme panthéiste. Bien que son opposition à ces phénomènes religieux semble être très clair beaucoup de ses membres ont du mal à déterminer leur attitude à l'égard de la question. L'incertitude persistante quant à la légitimité de la mystique est évidente dans les questions des membres de la Muhammadiyah envoyées à la *Suara Muhammadiyah* concernant le sujet. Dans cet article je cible la vision « officielle » de la Muhammadiyah tout au long de ses cent premières années d'existence. Ma thèse est

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que sa rigidité en rejetant les traditions « mystiques et spirituelles » ne soit pas seulement causée par la crainte de l'incroyance et de l'hérésie mais qu'elle soit aussi étroitement liée à la situation politique et sociale dans laquelle elle confronte ces traditions.

Keywords

aliran kepercayaan – Indonesia – Islamic modernism – *kebatinan* – Muhammadiyah – mysticism – polemic – religious diversity – Sufism – *tarekats*

In Indonesia we have the 'Islam Muhammadiyah', which is inspired by the 'Wahhabi'. They reject both 'Sufism' and '*tarekat*' teaching.

This statement was made in 1996 by Hardjono Kusumodiprodjo, a member of the mystical-spiritual Subud movement.¹ He expressed the widespread feeling in Indonesia that the official stance of the modernist Muhammadiyah movement towards Sufism and all kinds of more-or-less related mystical phenomena was not very sympathetic. James L. Peacock claimed that, in general, Muhammadiyah members were characterized by an 'eschewing' attitude towards Sufism.² The then rector of the State Institute for Islamic Studies of Pontianak, a Muhammadiyah member, can be regarded as a typical example of such an eschewing and rejecting attitude. He allegedly made disparaging comments on the Sufism of the *tarekats* in 1985. He declared it a backward and obsolete expression of religion, only adhered to by uneducated and

1 Harjono Kusumodiprodjo, *From Imagination to Reality: Explanation and Description about Subud* (n.p.: Jaya Purusa, n.d.), 44. *Wahhabi* is an adjective derived from Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703–87). He was the founder of a puritanical reform movement in eighteenth century Arabia to clear Islam from local popular cultic practices. In this quote it has been used in a derogatory way as 'intolerant; fanatic'. *Sufism* (Ar.: *taṣawwuf*; Ind.: *tasawuf*): 'Islamic mysticism'. I will use the word Sufism rather than the Indonesian word *tasawuf*, although it only came into use in Indonesia in the 1970s. Cf. Julia Day Howell, 'Modulations of Active Piety: Professors and Televangelists as Promoters of Indonesian "Sufism"', in *Expressing Islam. Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), 40–62, 41. (Ind.) *Tarekat* (Ar.: *ṭarīqa*, pl. *ṭuruq*): 'a (mystical) religious fraternity'. For the mystical organization Subud, see, e.g., Anton Geels, *Subud and the Javanese Mystical Tradition* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997).

2 James L. Peacock, 'The Creativity of Tradition in Indonesian Religion', *History of Religion* 25.4 (1985): 341–51, 349.

mentally retarded people.³ However, this attitude is not only a feature of the Muhammadiyah, the second largest Muslim movement in Indonesia and probably the largest modernist Muslim organization worldwide with an estimated twenty to thirty million followers and/or sympathizers, but also of Islamic modernism across the Muslim world.⁴

Kusumodiprodjo's view seemed already superseded when published because, at the 43rd Muktamar of the Muhammadiyah held in Aceh in 1995, it was decided that the organization should acknowledge the spiritual needs of Muslims and would pay more positive attention to the 'inner' side of religion.⁵ This raises three questions:

1. On what evidence is Kusumodiprodjo's opinion based?
2. Is it possible to define an 'official' position of the Muhammadiyah regarding mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats*?
3. Did the Muhammadiyah indeed change its stance versus mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats* and, if so, for what reason(s)?

The second question seems a pressing one indeed, because many Muhammadiyah members themselves have difficulty determining their attitude to this issue. The continuing uncertainty about its legitimacy is evident from the many questions on Islamic mysticism. For example, the question: 'Is it true that *tasawwuf* forms the culmination of the belief in God?' was sent to the *Suara Muhammadiyah* ('Muhammadiyah's Voice'), the bi-weekly magazine of the movement containing a question—answer column in which religious matters raised by its readers are discussed. Matters considered to be of topical and general interest are not only responded to in the *Suara Muhammadiyah*, but also published in a separate set of 'Question—Answer' books. Apparently, the above-mentioned question was rated among this category. It was also discussed in the second volume of the 'Question—Answer' books, which was published in June 1991. The questioner, a man from South Kalimantan, asked a second question, also concerning mysticism, elaborating on the first question: he wanted to know whether or not *tasawwuf*, 'Islamic mysticism', could bring

3 Werner Kraus, 'Die indonesischen islamischen Bruderschaften (*Tarekat*) im 20. Jahrhundert', in *Islamische mystische Bruderschaften im heutigen Indonesien*, ed. idem (Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1990), 17–74, 17–8.

4 Cf. Julia Day Howell, 'Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60.3 (2001): 701–29, 705–6.

5 PP Muhammadiyah, *Buku Materi Muktamar Muhammadiyah ke-43*, Yogyakarta 1995, 86; cf. Howell, 'Sufism', 712.

about *waḥdat al-wujūd*, the ‘Unity of Being’ or ‘oneness of existence’. This doctrine of monism had become one of the main lines of Islamic mysticism since Ibn al-‘Arabī (1165–1240), but was rejected here as a false doctrine not belonging to authentic Islamic mysticism.⁶

In answering the three aforementioned questions, I will focus on three periods of the Muhammadiyah’s history, namely: 1) the 1920s and 1930s; 2) the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s; and, 3) the 1990s. In each of these periods, mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats* appeared to be a cause of special concern for the board and leaders of the Muhammadiyah. A chronological and historical approach will show the evidence upon which Kusumodiprodo’s opinion was based and illuminate the long-standing ‘official’ stance of the Muhammadiyah towards mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats*. It also will make clear that the Muhammadiyah always distinguished Sufism and *tarekats* from mysticism without, however, giving a clear definition of these phenomena and their distinctions. Finally, answering these three questions will give a better insight into a part of the Muhammadiyah’s twentieth-century identity, whether appropriated or ascribed.

The 1920s and 1930s

Although I do not know of any source written by Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of the Muhammadiyah movement, himself on the subject of mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats*, Muhammadiyah members who sympathize with Sufism always tend to stress the fact that, for him, Sufism was acceptable as an expression of Islamic piety. He is said to have studied Sufism before and during his two stays in Mecca, but rarely discussed the subject at official Muhammadiyah meetings later in his career.⁷ The tendency to consider Sufism a vital part of the religious life of Muslims grew even stronger after the ‘turn to spirituality’ of the 43rd Muktamar (1995), as will become clear in the section on the 1990s below. Some Muhammadiyah members compared Ahmad Dahlan’s religiosity with that of the attitude of al-Ghazālī (1058–1111) towards Sufism.⁸ This towering personality from the history of Islam is said to have been of the opinion that

6 *Tanya-Jawab Agama II*, ed. H. Asyuni Abdurahman and H. Moelyadi (n.p.: Suara Muhammadiyah, 1991, rpt. 1992), 13–17.

7 H. Ibnu Djarir, ‘Muhammadiyah dan Tasawuf’, in *Tasawuf dan Krisis*, ed. M. Amin Syukur (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001), 178–97, 189; and *1 Abad Muhammadiyah. Gagasan Pembaruan Sosial Keagamaan*, ed. Syarifuddin Jurdi a.o. (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), 17.

8 E.g., Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Nyufi Cara Baru. Kiai Ahmad Dahlan dan Petani Modernis* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2003), 100 ff.; cf. Kraus, ‘Die indonesischen islamischen Bruderschaften’, 24.

Islamic law without Islamic mysticism would become barren, while Islamic mysticism without Islamic law would lead to chaos. He also held that everything that could direct man to God without being contrary to the Islamic creed should be tolerated in Islam. In this way, he created a place for Islamic mysticism within Islam.⁹ A similar attitude seems to have characterized Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905), who is considered to be the founder of Islamic modernism. Following ‘Abduh, Ahmad Dahlan founded the Muhammadiyah in 1912 as Indonesia’s first modernist Muslim movement. Al-Ghazālī, ‘Abduh and Ahmad Dahlan seemed to share the conviction that the value of Sufism was based on its possible contribution to a positive identification of its adherents with Islam and to an enhancement of their ethical behaviour (Ar. *akhlāq*). It is necessary, however, to point out that some Muhammadiyah members believe Ahmad Dahlan to have opposed the mysticism of the *tarekats* because of their violation of the sharia (Ind.: *syariah*, the Islamic law). Therefore, he is thought to have criticized those forms of *tarekat* mysticism that might result in the abolition of the sharia.¹⁰

After Ahmad Dahlan passed away in 1923, the appreciation of Sufism seems to have decreased rapidly. On the one hand, this development was connected with the rise of modernist and nationalistic organizations in the country, many of whose members had received a Western-style education, while the educational background of the members of the religious fraternities traditionally was that of religious *pesantren* training. As a result, the modernist and nationalistic organizations were better equipped to cope with the challenges of modern times than the religious fraternities. These modernist and nationalistic organizations—the Muhammadiyah being one of them—thus duly took over the political functions of the religious fraternities, which resulted in the diminishing popularity of Sufism as manifested in the religious fraternities and in a dramatic decrease of their membership.¹¹ On the other hand, the decreasing appreciation of mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats* also seems to be connected with the increasing influence of organizations like the Muhammadiyah. This development followed the pattern of Islamic modernism with its stress on the fact that the monotheism of Islam was irreconcilable with certain aspects of mysticism, such as the pantheistic doctrine of the unity of being. This critical

9 See, e.g., Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 91–7.

10 Yusuf Abdullah Puar, *Perjuangan dan Pengabdian Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1989), 170.

11 Martin van Bruinessen, ‘The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (*Tarekat*) in Southeast Asia’, *Studia Islamika. Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 1.1 (1994): 1–23, 17.

stance against what, from the perspective of the Muhammadiyah, was considered to be heterodoxy and/or heteropraxy became institutionalized in the establishment of the Majlis Tarjih, the Muhammadiyah's 'Council of Consideration' in 1927.¹² This institution issued instructions and opinions in accordance with the rules of the sharia and thus led to a more rigid form of orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

The growth and increasing influence of modernist Muslim movements such as the Muhammadiyah and others incited the so-called 'traditionalist' Muslim ulamas, 'religious scholars', to join forces to counterbalance 'modernist' Islam, to foster 'traditionalist' Islam and 'to give organisational voice to the interests of traditional Islam, and particularly the *pesantren* system'.¹³ The traditionalist ulamas feared that Islamic modernism would seriously affect their authority and harm their social and economic position.¹⁴ To resist this danger the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was founded by Wahab Chasbullah (1888–1971) on 31 January, 1926, with the support of Hasjim Asj'ari (d. 1947), the *éminence grise* of traditionalist Indonesian Islam at that time. Many Sufi shaykhs and

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- 12 The Majlis Tarjih was established in 1927 on the initiative of Mas Mansur during the 16th congress of the Muhammadiyah in Pekalongan. In their book, aimed at upper secondary school students, Poesposuwarno and Siradj mention the following tasks of the Majlis Tarjih: to give fatwas and advice to the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah; to help the Central Board to discover and determine the good works of Islam; and to channel the differences of opinion in legal questions both in the field of Islam and of the nation. M. Margono Poesposuwarno and Solihin M. Siradj, *Beberapa soal jawab ke-Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, n.d.), 28. See Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1942* (Singapore, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1973), 80–1: 'The function of this council was to issue *fatwa* or to ascertain the *hukum* (*hukum*, judgment) of particular questions on which the Muslim community differed among itself. The problems did not necessarily concern ritual or religious practices but might also be of non-religious character although all judgments should be based, of course, on the *šjarī'ah*'. Cf., also, Fathurrahman Djamil, 'The Muhammadiyah and the Theory of *Maqâsid al-Sharī'ah*', *Studia Islamika. Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 2.1 (1995): 53–68, 59: 'Initially, its task was to solve various problems relating to *'ibâdah mahdah*, such as salat, zakat and hajj. Since 1968, however, it has also dealt with contemporary problems relating to worldly matters (*al-umûr al-dunyâwiyyah*), such as bank interest, insurance, in vitro fertilization and inter-religious marriages'. See also Fathurrahman Djamil, *Metode Ijtihad Majlis Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta: Logos Publishing House, 1995), 7.
- 13 Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, 'Introduction', in *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1996), xix–xxvi, xix.
- 14 Greg Fealy, 'Wahab Chasbullah, Traditionalism and the Political Development of the Nahdlatul Ulama', in *Nahdlatul Ulama*, 1–41, 9, 12–14.

leaders of *tarekats*, who very often also possessed their own *pesantren* (a traditional Indonesian Islamic boarding school for studying classical Islamic subjects), associated themselves with the NU. Depending on the closeness of the relationship between the Muhammadiyah and the NU, there would either be constant and fierce criticism of the close affiliation between the NU and the *tarekats*, or it would be cloaked in very implicit terms. In times when the Muhammadiyah and the NU were working closely together, as was the case for instance in the Majelis Islam A'la Indonesia from 1937 until the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, Muhammadiyah's criticism was no more than implicit and without mentioning the name of the NU.

Another reason for the decreasing appreciation of mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats* after Ahmad Dahlan's death is connected with the bitter criticism of the mysticism of the *tarekats* expressed by Muhammadiyah members and sympathizers in Minangkabau, West Sumatra. In this region, the modernist Hajji Abdul Karim Amrullah (1879–1945), better known under his nickname Hajji Rasul, father of the famous Muhammadiyah leader Hamka (1908–81),¹⁵ had a bitter struggle with the religious fraternities. He was sympathetic to the Muhammadiyah but, unlike his son Hamka, never became a member. In his opinion, the *tarekats* undermined Islam with their mysticism in which magic, ecstasy and animistic practices played an important role.¹⁶ According to Hamka in his biography of his father's life, the teachings of his father were directed against the pantheistic mysticism of al-Ḥallāj (858–922) as propagated by Hamzah Fansuri (d. 1590) in Sumatra.¹⁷ However, Rasul lashed out in particular against the practice of *rabita*, a technique with which the disciple learned to fully concentrate on his *shaykh* as the infallible guide on the mystical path. Rasul declared *rabita* a *bid'a*, an innovation and a heresy contrary to Islamic law, because the *shaykh* became the mediator between the novice and

15 Hamka is the acronym of Hajji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. For Hamka, see, e.g., Karel Steenbrink, 'Hamka (1908–1981) and the Integration of the Islamic *Ummah* of Indonesia', *Studia Islamika. Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 1.3 (1994): 119–47; Hery Sucipto, *Senarai Tokoh Muhammadiyah. Pemikiran dan Kiprahnya* (Jakarta: Grafindo, 2005), 121–38; and *Ensiklopedi Muhammadiyah*, ed. M. Yunan Yusuf (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2005), 134–6.

16 James L. Peacock, 'Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers', in *The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems*, ed. A.L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1979), 245–68, 258.

17 Hamka, *Ajahku. Riwajat hidup Dr. Abd. Karim Amrullah dan perjuangannya kaum agama di Sumatera* (Tjetakan ke-tiga, Djakarta: Djajamurni, 1950, rpt. 1967), 278–9.

God.¹⁸ The underlying thought is that mediatorship easily changes into attributing associates to God, (Ar.: *shirk*; Ind.: *syirik* and *syirk*, usually translated as 'polytheism'), one of the gravest sins in Islam, as is often repeated by prominent Muhammadiyah members.¹⁹ With this perspective Rasul set himself up as the strictest interpreter in Indonesia of the opinions of Ahmad Khatib (d. 1916).²⁰ This scholar was born in Minangkabau but lived and worked for the greater part of his life in Mecca. He enjoyed great fame among Indonesians who came to the Holy City of Islam to study under his spiritual guidance. Through his teaching and books, Ahmad Khatib had a far-reaching influence on his countrymen, both modernists and traditionalists. In several of his books, he denounced the practices of the Naqshbandiyya (Ind.: *Naqsyabandiyah*) fraternity regarding mysticism, especially its technique of *rabita*. Apparently, Rasul proved such a good student of Ahmad Khatib that many Muhammadiyah members considered his attitude worthy of imitation. After all, notwithstanding the fact that his father Muhammad Amrullah was a Naqshbandiyya *shaykh*, Rasul mercilessly combated the mysticism of this religious fraternity in both word and in deed.²¹

Rasul, however, seemed to have been more lenient regarding Sufism than regarding the *tarekats*, which is evident from an article he published in 1932 in the *Almanak Moehammadijah Tahoen Hidjrah 1351*. In this article, entitled 'Tasawoef Islam', Rasul listed five principles Sufism had to comply with to be acceptable to Islam. These five principles all dealt with the role Sufism had to play in purifying the inner self of the Muslims and in keeping it from heretical innovations and sins.²² Thus, only if mysticism contributed to purifying the faith and stimulating good works, was it acceptable to Islam according to

18 Hamka, *Ajahku*, 77; and Kraus, 'Die indonesischen islamischen Bruderschaften', 27. For *rabita*, see also Imron Abu Amar, *Di sekitar masalah Thariqat (Naqsyabandiyah)* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1980), 56–71; and Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia. Survei Historis, Geografis, dan Sosiologis* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), 82–5.

19 See, e.g., Djarnawi Hadikusuma, *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah. Bida'ah. Khurafat* (cetakan ke V, Yogyakarta: Persatuan, n.d.), 47.

20 Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 31–3; Akhria Nazwar, *Ahmad Khatib. Ilmuwan Islam di Permulaan Abad Ini* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983); and *Ensiklopedi Islam*, ed. Harun Nasution, A. Mukti Ali et al., 3 vols. (Jakarta: Departemen Agama R.I., 1987), 1:73–6.

21 Tamar Djaja, *Pusaka Indonesia. Riwajat hidup orang-orang besar Tanah Air*, 2 vols. (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1965–6), 2:751.

22 Mohammad Damami, *Tasawuf Positif dalam Pemikiran HAMKA* (Yogyakarta: Fajar Pustaka Baru, 2000), 117–9, 134–7.

Rasul.²³ In this respect, Hamka seemingly followed in the footsteps of his father Rasul. In his very popular and often reprinted book *Tasauf Moderen*, which was in fact a collection of previously published articles and was published as a book for the first time in 1939, Hamka defended the view that the Sufism of early, pristine Islam was focused on the formation of a noble character and that indeed the aim of Sufism was to purify the soul and to educate the inner self. However, he rejected the kind of Sufism that stressed asceticism by which, according to Hamka, both the individual Muslim and the Islamic community were weakened.²⁴ According to Julia Howell, Hamka's *Tasauf Moderen* 'made him one of the most important figures in the popularisation of Sufism amongst Indonesia's modernising elites'. On the basis of several of Hamka's later books on Sufism, Howell also showed that for him Sufism was 'part, indeed the core (*inti*), of authentic Islam with its roots in the devotional life of the Prophet himself'.²⁵

Another eminent Muhammadiyah figure was Ki Bagus Hadikusuma (1890–1954). He had been a student of Ahmad Dahlan and was chairman of the Muhammadiyah from 1942 to 1953. He also played a significant role as one of the nineteen members of Indonesia's Independence Preparatory Committee.²⁶ Like his teacher Ahmad Dahlan, Ki Bagus Hadikusuma was considered to be so important for an independent Indonesia that he was declared a national hero. In his father's biography Djarnawi Hadikusuma (1920–93) stated that Ki Bagus Hadikusuma, in his *Pustaka Ihsan* (1941), stood up for the value of

23 Rasul, as rendered by Archer: '(to) cleanse the devotion of the heart and spirit of mankind from all attributes of uncleanness, meanness, and faults; . . . To cleanse one's purpose and faith from innovations; To cleanse the secrets of man and his hidden purposes from hypocrisy and envy. . . . (to) perfect faith; modesty; sincerity before the face of Allah and a search for the approval of Allah; remembrance of the greatness of Allah; humility; praise; patience; a disposition inclined towards righteousness; a love for good works, a dislike for all wickedness; perfect unity; justice; faith and all profitable knowledge, together with perfect wisdom. To guard and to cleanse all outward members from all sin and base conduct together with good behaviour and sensible disposition in the presence of all creatures, following the perfect character of our lord Muhammad' (Raymond Le Roy Archer, 'Muhammadan Mysticism in Sumatra', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15.2 [1937]: 1–126, 112).

24 Hamka, *Tasauf Moderen* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1930, rpt. 1990), 17; cf. also, M.C. Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java, c. 1930 to the Present* (Singapore: NU Press, 2012), 52–5.

25 Julia Day Howell, 'Indonesia's Salafist Sufis', *Modern Asian Studies* 44.5 (2010): 1029–51, 1031–3.

26 Bernard Johan Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: De Nederlandsche Boek- en Steendrukkerij v/h H.C. Smits, 1971), 34–5.

Sufism, just as Hamka had done. He defended Sufism's right to exist by stimulating *ihsan* (Ar. *iḥsān*), which is the right attitude to life, characterised by ethics, faith, piety, patience and trust in God.²⁷ After the 'turn to spirituality' of the 43rd Muktamar of 1995, *ihsan* would become the key concept by which a certain kind of Sufism was justified as compatible with the views of the Muhammadiyah.²⁸

By the end of the 1930s, however, the interest of many Indonesians in mysticism turned out never to have entirely disappeared. In Java, mysticism was revived, on the one hand, in the introduction and establishment of religious fraternities such as the Tijāniyya and the Idrīsiyya alongside the regeneration of the fraternities that had already been around for a long time such as the Naqshbandiyya and Shaṭṭāriyya (Ind.: Syattariyah) and, on the other hand, in the forming of *kebatinan* movements.²⁹ *Kebatinan*, 'inwardness',³⁰ which is derived from the Arabic *bāṭiniyya*, literally, 'what is not visible; the inner-self; the innermost life', has been used since 1955 as a technical term to denote all kinds of different syncretistic-mystical movements, which before that year were known by different names, such as, 'new religions'.³¹ *Kebatinan* is a very complicated phenomenon comprising various spiritual movements differing widely in manifestation and representing miscellaneous values. If there is a common denominator in *kebatinan*, according to Indrakusuma, it is the primacy of the inner reality and the search for inner harmony and inner peace,

27 Djarnawi Hadikusuma, *Derita Seorang Pemimpin. Riwayat Hidup Perjuangan dan Buah Pikiran Ki Bagus Hadikusuma* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Persatuan, cetakan ke 2, 1971, rpt. 1979), 14–5. For Ki Bagus Hadikusuma, see, e.g., *Ensiklopedi Muhammadiyah*.

28 See, e.g., Ahmad Muttaqin, 'Between Ihsan and Tasawwuf: The Muhammadiyah's Attitude toward Sufism and Its Promotion of 'Authentic' Islamic Spirituality' (unpublished paper presented at the International Research Conference on Muhammadiyah In Commemoration of its Centennial Anniversary, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia, November 29–December 2, 2012).

29 Van Bruinessen, 'Origins and Developments', 17.

30 Thus rendered by Julia Howell, 'Kebatinan and the Kejawen Traditions', in *Religion and Ritual*, ed. James J. Fox (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 1998), 62–3.

31 Samuel Agustinus Patty, 'Aliran Kepercayaan': A Socio-Religious Movement in Indonesia' (PhD. diss., Washington State University, 1986), 2. For the 'new religions', see, e.g., J.W.M. Bakker, 'Nieuwe godsdiensten in Indonesië', *Indisch Missietijdschrift* 41 (1958): 46–53. It is worth mentioning that this J.W.M. Bakker SJ is identical with Rahmat Subagya, the author of *Kepercayaan, kebatinan, kerohanian, kejiwaan dan agama* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1973, rpt. 1989). See Huub J.W.M. Boelaars, *Indonesianisasi. Het omvormingsproces van de katholieke kerk in Indonesië tot de Indonesische katholieke kerk* (Kampen: Kok, 1991), 368.

and for universal harmony.³² However, both the followers of *kebatinan* as well as their opponents tend to be rather vague when asked to define *kebatinan* precisely. In addition, both the fact that some *kebatinan* groups were organized like a *tarekat*³³ and the fact that many *kebatinan* groups counted Muslims among their members, sometimes make it almost impossible to give an exact definition of *kebatinan* and to indicate how it is distinct from or where exactly it differs from *tarekats*. The wish to create clarity in this matter can be considered one of the reasons for the Muhammadiyah to make a supreme effort to root out *kebatinan* during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

Despite its unfavourable disposition towards the various manifestations of mysticism, the Muhammadiyah, in its early history, was not opposed to all forms of mysticism.³⁴ From its very beginning, the Muhammadiyah has argued in favour of a type of Sufism that promoted the ethical attitude of believers and furthered the development of the moral education of Muslims.³⁵

The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s

The growing popularity of mysticism and the booming of *kebatinan* organizations since Indonesian Independence in 1945 created the impression that Indonesia was not predominantly populated by sharia-abiding Muslims. This fact was supposedly confirmed by the outcome of the first general elections of Indonesia in 1955, in which the Islamic parties received only 42% of the votes.³⁶ However, the Muhammadiyah continued to oppose the doctrines and practices of various mystical groups, which it rejected as *bid'a* or *shirk*. Moreover, it also strongly challenged the opinion that most of the adherents of those groups, commonly associated with *abangan* or 'nominal' Muslims, were not really Muslims. Therefore, the Muhammadiyah deemed it to be its duty to bring back

32 Johanes Indrakusuma, *L'homme parfait selon l'école du Pangestu. Étude de la spiritualité javanaise et de sa rencontre avec le Christianisme* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1973), 32. See also Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1985), 398: 'The name *kebatinan* refers to the fact that in all these movements their members search for the truth of the inner self, or *batin*, of human being'.

33 See Martin van Bruinessen, 'Global and Local in Indonesian Islam', in *Southeast Asian Studies* 37.2 (1999): 49–63.

34 See also A. Mukti Ali, *The Muhammadiyah Movement. A Bibliographical Introduction* (MA thesis, McGill University, 1957), 51.

35 Archer, 'Muhammadan Mysticism', 111.

36 See, e.g., Niels Mulder, *Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java: Cultural Persistence and Change* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978), 5.

these 'nominal' Muslims to what it considered to be 'true' Islam. A second reason for the Muhammadiyah to criticize *kebatinan* during these decades was its fear that the Indonesian government would officially recognize *kebatinan* as a religion. It can be said that, roughly speaking, the first motive was dominant during the regime of President Sukarno (r. 1945–65), while the second one was consequential especially in the 1970s, under the Suharto government.

Under Sukarno

The years after Independence were turbulent and unstable. After shaking off the yoke of colonial rule, Indonesia was confronted with the armed battle between government troops and Islamic movements, known as *Darul Islam* movements, which sought to make Indonesia a state under Islamic law.³⁷ During the same period (1948–65), communism gained an increasingly firm foothold in Indonesia, causing conflicts and clashes between different sides. Simultaneously, Christian missionary activities were expanding. The economy was in decline and so were prosperity and welfare. Urban migration disrupted society and traditional family life. In these circumstances, in which all moral values and norms seemed to have been eroded, the Javanese were searching for a new identity. Mysticism in its manifestation of *kebatinan*, according to researchers exploring the phenomenon during this period, offered the Javanese the possibility of rediscovering their authentic, original cultural identity, stripped of foreign ideologies such as Christianity, Islam and communism.³⁸

The proliferation of mysticism and mystical religious fraternities, often centred in '*tarekat, pesantren*' that were established in great numbers in the 1950s, was opposed passionately by Muhammadiyah members and other

37 Manning Nash, 'Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia and Indonesia', in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 691–739, 721. For the *Darul Islam* movements, see C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981); and Holk H. Dengel, *Darul-Islam. Kartosuwirjos Kampf um einen islamischen Staat Indonesien* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1986).

38 Harun Hadiwijono, *Man in the Present Javanese Mysticism* (Baarn: Bosch & Keuning, 1967), 3; Olaf H. Schumann, 'Indonesischer Mystizismus und Islam', *Zeitschrift für Mission* 2.2 (1976): 64–87, 83; Abdul Malik Hasan, 'Aliran kebatinan (Kajian singkat dari sudut pemikiran gnostik)', in *Kebatinan dan dakwah kepada orang Jawa*, ed. Abdul Munir Malkhan (this is his name on the title page; later the author's name is spelt Abdul Munir Mul Khan) (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1984 [only to be used in Muhammadiyah circles!]), 7–27, 9 ff.; and Geels, *Subud*, 21.

modernist Muslims.³⁹ Although during the period from Independence until the abortive coup of 30 September, 1965, the Muhammadiyah's criticism was primarily directed against the possible perverting influence of mysticism causing *bid'a* and *shirk*, the Muhammadiyah's fear that kebatinan would become a recognized religion was already perceptible as well. Some Muhammadiyah leaders showed their perseverance in pursuing one of the most important aims of their movement to purify Islam by opposing the manifestations of innovation, superstition and polytheism which had crept in, according to them, through mysticism and mystical religious fraternities.

The Muhammadiyah's Opposition against the Possible Perverting Influence of Mysticism

Moenawar Chalil (1908–61), from the Central Javanese city of Semarang, had been a prominent member of the Majelis Tarjih of the Muhammadiyah since 1930. He was known for his hostile attitude towards Islamic mysticism. He especially lashed out at the mystical practice of *zuhd*, 'asceticism' or abstinence and detachment from the world. He considered this way of life as a rejection of God's creation and, therefore, as a token of ingratitude, which in Islam is closely connected with unbelief (Ar.: *kufir*).⁴⁰ Moenawar Chalil blamed *zuhd* for its world-avoiding disposition that caused the stagnation of the development of mankind. He rejected the *tarekats*, first of all because, in his view, they did not belong to the pristine and pure legacy of original Islam and, secondly, because they introduced all kinds of heretical innovations (Ar.: *bid'a*) into

39 Kraus, 'Die indonesischen islamischen Bruderschaften', 53.

40 Toha Hamim, 'Moenawar Chalil: The Career and Thought of an Indonesian Muslim Reformist', *Studia Islamika. Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 4.2 (1997), 1–54, 14, 42. It deserves special mention that Moenawar Chalil was at the same time a member of Persatuan Islam and head of its Majelis Ulama. Persatuan Islam is a modernist movement which is considered to be more rigorous than the Muhammadiyah in many respects (Hamim, 'Moenawar Chalil', 8). However, it is very difficult to determine when Moenawar Chalil is speaking as a member of the Muhammadiyah or as a member of Persatuan Islam. For Persatuan Islam, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970); and Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957* (Leiden etc.: Brill, 2001). For ingratitude as *kufir*, see, e.g., Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966), 120–55.

Islam, for example, the practice of *dhikr*, the ‘incessant repetition of reciting the names of God or of other formulas remembering and praising God’.⁴¹

Another leading Muhammadiyah member who expressly denounced mysticism was Ahmad Rasyid Sutan Mansur (1895–1985).⁴² He was Rasul’s son-in-law and followed in his footsteps regarding mysticism. Together with his father-in-law, Sutan Mansur played an important role in the expansion of the Muhammadiyah in Minangkabau, their native region. He was chairman of the Muhammadiyah during the years 1953–9. Sutan Mansur’s view on mysticism is revealed in his book *Jihad*, a collection of the lectures he gave during his chairmanship in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. He discusses the Muslims who are led astray by the mysticism of the unity of being. He gives the example of, what he calls, a *tukang sihir*, a ‘specialist in black magic’ (Ar.: *sihr*), who confuses people by stating: ‘God has become me and I have become a part of God. God is in my inner self and my inner self is in God. I and God are one’. Sutan Mansur opposes this teaching vigorously as arrogance and pride, which ruin the human moral character.⁴³ Implicit in Sutan Mansur’s attitude is the Islamic rejection of arrogance and pride as *kufir* and *shirk*, because man puts himself on a par with God.⁴⁴

The connection made by Sutan Mansur between mysticism and black magic is a recurring theme in the Muhammadiyah’s criticism of Sufism and the *tarekats* during the 1950s and 1960s. It was already given a prominent place in Mas Mansoer’s *Risalah Tauhid dan Syirik* (The Book on Monotheism and Polytheism), which was published posthumously in 1952. Mas Mansoer (1896–1946) was chairman of the Muhammadiyah from 1937 to 1942 and one of its most influential leaders ever. Mas Mansoer was declared a national hero in 1964 because of his valuable work for Indonesia. In discussing several types of religious specialists (Ind.: *dukun*, often translated as ‘shaman’), Mas Mansoer also mentioned the *dukun pertapaan*, a ‘religious practitioner of asceticism; ascetic shaman’.⁴⁵ Many Indonesian Muslims felt attracted to the *dukun pertapaan* and his magical practices, but Mas Mansoer condemned their adherence to

41 Hamim, ‘Moenawar Chalil’, 42.

42 Hamka, *Ajahku*, 257–61.

43 A.R. Sutan Mansur, *Jihad* (Jakarta: Panji Masyarakat, 1982), 41.

44 Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, 145–55.

45 For the various kinds of *dukun*, see, e.g., Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960, rpt. 1976), 86–111; and Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, 422–6. For Sutan Mansur, see Sucipto, *Senarai Tokoh Muhammadiyah*, 75–86; and *Ensiklopedi Muhammadiyah*, 215–20. For Mas Mansoer, see Sucipto, *Senarai Tokoh Muhammadiyah*, 87–98; and *Ensiklopedi Muhammadiyah*, 223–8.

this kind of religious specialist as *shirk*.⁴⁶ However, the link between mysticism and black magic continued to occupy the minds of the Muhammadiyah members, witness the fact that a congress was devoted to the subject of *klenik* ('black magic') by the Pemuda Muhammadiyah, 'Muhammadiyah's Youth', in Jakarta, 26–7 May, 1965.⁴⁷ The majority of Muhammadiyah members and many other modernist Muslims clearly did not distinguish *kebatinan* from *klenik*. As a result of this association with black magic, they became deeply suspicious of all forms of *kebatinan*.⁴⁸ As is apparent from the activities of leaders like Moenawir Chalil, Sutan Mansur and Mas Mansoer, the Muhammadiyah tried to convince so-called 'nominal' Muslims of the danger of mysticism for the realisation of pure Islamic faith and practices. It was said to pervert and ruin Islam by introducing heretical innovations and all manner of superstition and polytheism. Nominal Muslims had to be brought back to the true religion.

The Muhammadiyah's Opposition against *Kebatinan*

The possibility of *kebatinan* becoming officially recognized as a religion had already been a source of anxiety among the Muhammadiyah during the 1950s and 1960s. The most striking example of this concern was probably Fakhri Usman's attempt in 1952 to formulate criteria to determine whether or not a certain religious movement was a religion. Usman (1902–68) was Minister of Religion at the time and had been a member of the Muhammadiyah since 1922. He became chairman of one of its branches in 1926 and held a leading position in the central board from 1953 until his death. Fakhri Usman was highly praised by the Muhammadiyah as a conscientious member who was loyal to the movement in terms of representing its values and views, even when holding a position outside the Muhammadiyah.⁴⁹ The trust of the Muhammadiyah

46 Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Syirik* (Surabaya: Al Ihsan, 1952, rpt. 1991), 62–4.

47 Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 120. N.B. Rahmat Subagyo is the *nom de plume* of J.W.M. Bakker SJ, see n. 31 above. In John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, *Kamus Indonesia-Inggris. An Indonesian-English Dictionary* (third ed., Jakarta: Gramedia 1992 [first ed. 1961]), 300, *klenik* is translated as 'secret mystical or magical practices of a questionable nature'.

48 See also Paul Denison Stange, "The Sumarah Movement in Javanese Mysticism" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1980), 56, 59.

49 See, e.g., *Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia*, s.v.; and Mustafa Kamal Pasha and Yusuf Chusnan, *Muhammadiyah sebagai gerakan Islam* (cetakan ke-VIII, Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1992), 88–9. Note, however, the differences in the years given by both sources. I follow the years given by the *Ensiklopedi*. Compare also Sucipto, *Senarai Tokoh Muhammadiyah*, 149–54.

in Fakhri Usman is evident from his election as its chairman in 1968, a position he only occupied for a couple of months due to his death the same year.

As Minister of Religion (1951–3) Fakhri Usman tried to suppress the aspirations of *kebatinan* movements to be officially recognized as a religion by the Indonesian state. This recognition would only be possible if a *kebatinan* movement possessed a holy book, a founder or prophet and international recognition as a religion.⁵⁰ Is it a coincidence that this proposal was presented when the Ministry of Religion was led by a member of the modernist Muhammadiyah, while until 1971 it had mostly been under ministers with a Nahdlatul Ulama background? In any case, Fakhri Usman took advantage of modernist voices heard in the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, the Indonesian legislative assembly, where Muhammad Dimiyati (1912–58) had argued in favour of the interdiction of *kebatinan*.⁵¹

Apparently, Fakhri Usman's proposal was not broadly supported, neither politically nor socially, one of the reasons being the protests of the adherents of Balinese Hinduism which did not meet the formal criteria either. As a result, the government shirked its responsibilities by rejecting the proposal, ascribing it to Fakhri Usman's personal conviction.⁵² However, the founding of PAKEM by the Department of Religion in October 1954 and, as a counter-reaction, the establishment of BKKI by thirty representatives of various mystical groups in August 1955, can be seen as one of the after-effects of this proposal. PAKEM (Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat), the 'Bureau for the Supervision of Religious Movements', had to monitor the development and activities of 'new religions' or mystical groups, which numbered 360 in the year 1953.⁵³ BKKI

50 Bakker, 'Nieuwe godsdiensten', 52–3; Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 116; and Mulder, *Mysticism*, 4. Bakker, 'Nieuwe godsdiensten', 53, also mentions a fourth element, namely, unity of doctrine.

51 Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 116. According to Bakker, 'Nieuwe godsdiensten', 52, Muhammad Dimiyati held the following, very negative opinion regarding *kebatinan*, which he calls 'new religions': 'These new religions are produced by people of unsound mind who do not actually understand the nature of Islam. Therefore, they themselves carelessly design "the true nature of Islam". Their doctrine found a ready reception with their disciples, who are nothing more than stupid fools without any understanding of Islam. These new religions are no religions and that is why they cannot be tolerated. They cause chaos and anarchy, and ruin our society. The same holds true for Hinduism and its propaganda. If tolerated, it will damage the interest of freedom and democracy because of its revitalization of pre-Muslim paganism by which our development will slide back for several thousands of years' (my translation).

52 Bakker, 'Nieuwe godsdiensten', 53; and Mulder, *Mysticism*, 4.

53 Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 117; and Mulder, *Mysticism*, 4.

(Badan Kongres Kebatinnan Seluruh Indonesia), the 'All Indonesian Congress of Kebatinnan', was established on the initiative of Wongsonegoro (1897–1978), a Minister in several cabinets and the leading member of the *kebatinnan*, to combine the forces of all mystical groups in one representative, official body. To avoid the association with religion and to refute the criticism of Muslims, the BKKI decided to renounce the term 'new religion' and to use the term *kebatinnan* henceforth. The second Congress of the BKKI, held in Solo in 1956, publicly stated that *kebatinnan* was not a religion but simply aimed to improve the quality of religious life in Indonesia. The way in which this was to be achieved was described by way of the three principles of *kebatinnan* during the fifth BKKI Congress in 1961. *Kebatinan* aimed at the perfection of man by stressing the fact that he must not be actuated by self-interest; that he had to receive a moral education focused on character building; and that he had to place God in the centre of his daily life, in his thoughts as well as in his deeds.⁵⁴ The Sukarno government subscribed to the opinion of the modernist Muslim opponents of *kebatinnan* that *kebatinnan* was not a religion and, in 1960, it transferred PAKEM to the Ministry of Justice, against the wishes of the Ministry of Religion, which from 1959 to 1961 was led by the Minister of Religious Affairs, K.H. Muhammad Wahib Wahab (1916–86), a son of K.H. Wahab Chasbullah, one of the founders of the NU.⁵⁵ PAKEM had to watch the *kebatinnan* groups to prevent them from threatening the stability of society by fomenting trouble among the officially recognized religions.⁵⁶

Under Suharto

It is a striking phenomenon in the contemporary history of Indonesia that time and again, when political oppression increases and social and economic circumstances are uncertain that the number of mystical movements grows. Such was the case after the abortive coup of 30 September, 1965. In addition to political oppression, several other reasons are given for the popularity and success of *kebatinnan* movements. For example, it has been argued that those people who no longer expected anything of the world turned to mysticism as a source of moral power. They felt disappointed by the officially recognized religions, in particular in that, in their view, they did not contribute in any way

54 Patty, 'Aliran Kepercayaan', 2, 71.

55 For Wahib Wahab, see also Fealy, 'Wahab Chasbullah', 37–8.

56 Patty, 'Aliran Kepercayaan', 4.

to the formation of a morally powerful human being.⁵⁷ Seeking solace in mysticism can also be viewed as a reaction against the dogmatism and ritualism of the officially recognized monotheistic religions that ignored the need of the Javanese to express their inner experiences in a mystical way.⁵⁸ A third possible explanation of the appeal of mysticism is its function as a haven for those who sought their salvation in the mysticism of religious fraternities and mystical associations because they were longing for the solidarity of a small community. This feeling of solidarity had been lost as a result of urban migration.⁵⁹ The growth of social mobility, the various types of work and the progress of urbanisation had ended in individualization and alienation that, in turn, had led to the loss of old social ties and networks. The mystical associations were expected to create a social and religious framework with common norms and values.⁶⁰ Thus, for the latter group of people, turning to mysticism was a reaction to the threat of modernity and a protest against its attendant deterioration of morals. A fourth explanation can be found in the politicisation of Islam. Efforts by Muslim modernists, among others, to give Islam a more important position in politics prompted Muslims not interested in politics to join mystical associations or religious fraternities. Finally, the search for a personal cultural identity, which was considered to have been lost as a result of the protracted foreign political and religious dominance, has been mentioned as a reason for turning to mysticism as well.⁶¹

In general, the position of several *kebatinan* groups and religious fraternities grew stronger after the abortive coup, although some groups, suspected of having been infiltrated by communists or of being inclined to subversive actions, were banned and suppressed.⁶² The *kebatinan* groups owed the strengthening of their position to their backing by the army and by Golkar, the 'government party'.⁶³ According to the modernist Muslim opponents of *kebatinan* the military and government circles believed that it was necessary to secure the support

57 Hadiwijono, *Man*, 248.

58 Mulder, *Mysticism*, 10.

59 Suffridus de Jong, *Een Javaanse levenshouding* (Wageningen: Veenman, 1973), 12–14.

60 Sartono Kartodirdjo, 'Religious Responses to Social Change in Indonesia. The Case of Pangestu', in idem, *Modern Indonesia: Tradition and Transformation, A Socio-Historical Perspective* (second ed.), (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1988 [first ed. 1984]), 263–86, 264–6.

61 Mulder, *Mysticism*, 11 ff. Geels subscribes to Mulder's view. Geels argues that the revival of mystical movements after Independence was connected with the Indonesians' search for their own cultural identity (Geels, *Subud*, 21).

62 Stange, *Sumarah Movement*, 55.

63 Golkar is the acronym of *golongan karya*, 'functional group'.

of Muslims who were affiliated with mystical associations. These organisations could counterbalance those Muslims whose activities, whether or not in connection with a Muslim political party, were considered by the government to be dangerous to the state. Muslims seeking to establish a state under Islamic Law were especially considered to be a threat which had to be counteracted. The leaders of the mystical associations and their members felt indebted to Golkar for the de facto recognition of their right to exist. Recognition also implied a certain protection against modernist and fundamentalist Muslims who did not have a great deal of sympathy for their mystical-minded fellow believers. Thus, with the invitation of Wongsonegoro, as the exponent of the *kebatinan* groups, to join Golkar, in February, 1970, the process of a kind of official recognition of *kebatinan* by the government was started.⁶⁴ This process is of vital importance for understanding the controversy between the Muhammadiyah and some *kebatinan* groups, like the Pangestu association.

The implications of the overtures made by Golkar to the *kebatinan* associations in view of the national elections of 1971 were well understood by politically engaged Muslims.⁶⁵ Golkar's rapprochement was a clear attempt to weaken the Muslim political parties. They reacted indirectly to the government's policy by criticizing the *kebatinan* associations. This criticism centred on their sustained effort to be recognized as a religion. To facilitate recognition, it was decided at the national *kebatinan* conference in Yogyakarta of 7–9 November, 1970 to use, from then on, the name of *aliran kepercayaan*, 'current of belief', instead of the name *aliran kebatinan*, 'current of mysticism'.⁶⁶ At the same time it was decided to create a new umbrella organisation, the Sekretariat Kerjasama antar Kepercayaan, Kebatnan, Kejiwaan dan Kerochian, the 'Coordinating Secretariat of Belief Movements', to replace the BKKI of 1955.⁶⁷ The two main reasons for the change of name were, first, the fact that the name *kebatinan* had been contaminated by its association with *klenik*. The second, more important reason was the connotation of the term *kepercayaan*, which suggested official recognition by the Indonesian Constitution in which 'religion' (Ind.: *agama*) and 'belief' (Ind.: *kepercayaan*) are mentioned in the

64 Mulder, *Mysticism*, 7; and Patty, 'Aliran Kepercayaan', 10.

65 Patty, 'Aliran Kepercayaan', 90.

66 Although from then on, the name *aliran kepercayaan* was officially used, I will, for the sake of clarity, continue to use the name of *kebatinan*. However, it is worth remembering that, until 1955, the name 'new religions' was generally used to indicate all kinds of mystical movements. From 1955 until 1970, the name *kebatinan* was popular; and after 1970, *aliran kepercayaan* was the official name.

67 Mulder, *Mysticism*, 8; and Patty, 'Aliran Kepercayaan', 162.

article on religion.⁶⁸ The juxtaposition of religion and belief in this article was understood by adherents of the *aliran kepercayaan* as recognition that belief was on par with religion, under the influence of the interpretation of Professor Pringgogidgo (1904–88), a former member of the committee which prepared the Indonesian Constitution of 1945.⁶⁹ In addition, by using this name, the adherents of the *aliran kepercayaan* wanted to express their loyalty to the Indonesian Constitution and to the government in power.⁷⁰

Criticism from the side of the modernist Muslims was expressed publicly. They contended that the adherents of *kebatinan* were in fact not at all loyal to the Indonesian Constitution since they were a source of discord in the country. For example, some very negative articles on *kebatinan* were published in *Harian Abadi*, an Islamic newspaper, between 9 and 13 March, 1972. The tenor of these articles was the fact that the glorification of the grand Javanese past was the central point of *kebatinan*. This glorification was a real threat to the national unity of the country, because the other Indonesian regions might start to glorify their own past in reaction to the Javanese attitude. The ultimate goal of *kebatinan*, according to *Harian Abadi*, was to supplant Islam and the other religions of Indonesia and to eliminate them. Thus, dissension would be sown among the Indonesian people.⁷¹ The Muslims, on the other hand, argued that Islam was characterized by its unifying and integrating power. As far as the Muhammadiyah was concerned, some of its officials warned against the danger of *kebatinan* and its threat to Islam as early as in 1958.⁷² Therefore it was not a surprise that Muhammadiyah members also became publicly engaged in the polemic with the *kebatinan* associations in general and the Pangestu association in particular. A few months after the aforementioned articles appeared in *Harian Abadi*, a heated dispute between a Pangestu adherent and two

68 UUD 1945, bab XI fasal 29 (as cited by Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 115): '1. Negara berdasar atas ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa. 2. Negara menjamin kemerdekaan tiap-tiap penduduk untuk memeluk agamanya masing-masing dan untuk beribadat menurut agamanya dan kepercayaannya itu.' ('1. The State is founded on [the belief in] the One and Only God. 2. The State guarantees the freedom of all inhabitants to profess their own religion and to worship according to his own religion and belief').

69 Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 121.

70 Patty, "Aliran Kepercayaan", 163.

71 See Indrakusuma, *L'homme parfait*, 28.

72 Sukrianta AR and Abdul Munir Malkhan (these are their names on the title page; later the authors became known as Syukrianto AR and Abdul Munir Mul Khan), *Perkembangan Pemikiran Muhammadiyah dari Masa ke Masa. Menyambut Mukhtamar ke-41* (Yogyakarta: Dua Dimensi, 1985), 309. The official was Professor KH. Abd. Kahar Mudzakir.

Muhammadiyah members was published in *Harian Kami Jakarta*, a Jakarta daily, in May and June, 1972.

In the dispute in *Harian Kami Jakarta*, the mystical association Pangestu was represented by an adherent, Mr. Warsito, a colonel living in the Central Javanese town of Magelang. Warsito, who also took active part in the mystical association Sumarah, was the self-appointed spokesperson of *kebatinan* at the national level.⁷³ The Muhammadiyah representatives were the well-known and very strict Professor M. Rasjidi and Mr. Hasbullah Bakry.⁷⁴ The dispute was started by Warsito, who had tried, in the first newspaper article, to refute 'the misunderstanding of *kebatinan* in Muslim circles'. Rasjidi and Hasbullah Bakry reacted vehemently to Warsito's article. Their reaction revealed the feeling of the Muhammadiyah as a modernist, yet orthodox Muslim movement towards *kebatinan*. The severe criticism of the two Muhammadiyah representatives towards the Pangestu association was perhaps also a reflection of the Muhammadiyah's concern about the great attention Pangestu received and about its growing membership, the majority of which had a Muslim background.

Rasjidi (1915–2001) was born in Kotagede, Central Java.⁷⁵ Although he came from a traditional and rather syncretistic Islamic background, he grew into a champion of Islamic modernism and Islamic orthodoxy. He became the first Minister of Religion of Indonesia in 1946. Some five years before the dispute with Warsito, Rasjidi had already expressed his opinion on *kebatinan* in a book entitled *Islam dan Kebatinan*.⁷⁶ The book originated from a lecture he gave in Jakarta on 29 January 1967. In this book, Rasjidi discussed the teachings of

73 Stange, *Sumarah Movement*, 261.

74 The articles constituting this controversy have been published in a book: *Disekitar Kebatinan. Pertukaran Pikiran antara Drs. Warsito S., Prof. Dr. H.M. Rasjidi, Drs. H. Hasbullah Bakry S.H.* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1973). For this controversy, see also Schumann, 'Indonesischer Mystizismus', 79–81.

75 See, e.g., Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1983), 82 ff.; I.N. Soebagijo, 'Dari Saridi ke Rasjidi', in *70 Tahun Prof. Dr. H.M. Rasjidi*, ed. Endang Basri Ananda (Jakarta: Harian Umum Pelita, 1985), 3–85; and Azyumardi Azra, 'Guarding the Faith of the *Ummah*: The Religio-Intellectual Journey of Mohammed Rasjidi', *Studia Islamika. Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 1.2 (1994): 87–119.

76 In his *Islam dan Kebatinan* (Djakarta: Media Da'wa, n.d.) M. Rasjidi gives us some information about his traditional, syncretistic Islamic background, which he calls *Islam Jawa*. He tells how his mother bought flowers every Thursday evening which, on some special other days, she placed in the corners of the house close to the door as a kind of offering. He also mentions the Makam Panembahan Senopati, the grave of the first Islamic ruler

some prominent representatives of mysticism in Indonesia.⁷⁷ He also wrote about the fact that mysticism, according to Professor M.M. Djajadiguna, should be distinguished into four different streams, namely *kebatinan* which focuses on: a) occultism; b) mysticism; c) metaphysics; and, d) ethics.⁷⁸ However, Rasjidi stated that *kebatinan* was never found in one of the four 'basic' forms, but always occurred in a distorted mixture with a strong tendency to reject this world and to search for another. To conclude, he rejected *kebatinan* for its negativism towards society.⁷⁹ According to Rasjidi, *kebatinan* was nothing but a kind of 'Yoga-Hindu-Buddhist' syncretism which centred on the doctrine that life meant suffering. Therefore, mankind should be freed from life. As opposed to *kebatinan*, Rasjidi mentioned the doctrine of Islam. Because, in Islam, man is God's vicar on earth (Ar.: *khalīfat Allāh*) and man must have a positive attitude to life and society in order to acquire God's grace through good deeds.⁸⁰ Thus, man's positive attitude towards the world in Islam was conducive to the development of society.

Strikingly, in his book *Islam dan Kebatinan* Rasjidi did not play the religious card in his refutation of *kebatinan*, although he did mention the difference between *wahy* (Ind.: *wahyu* or *wahju*), 'revelation', and *ilhām*, 'inspiration'.⁸¹ Rasjidi could easily have accused several *kebatinan* groups of claiming to possess a revelation, which, according to Islam, is a sign of unbelief. The Qur'an was God's latest revelation to mankind, after which he would send no other revelations. However, the card Rasjidi was playing was the political one. He pointed at the danger which *kebatinan* associations posed to the unity and stability of Indonesia and its potential put a brake on national development. Rasjidi knew better than anybody that the Indonesian government was more sensitive to the themes of unity, stability and development than to the subtleties of theological hair splitting. A religion would only catch on by linking it to the themes of the unity, stability and development of Indonesia.

The theme of Islam stimulating man to act positively to promote social progress also occupied a leading role in Rasjidi's dispute with Warsito. First of

of Central Java in Kotagede. This grave was the scene of many kinds of non-Islamic rituals and ceremonies.

77 Rasjidi, *Islam dan Kebatinan*, 7–38.

78 Ibid., 40–3.

79 However, attention should be paid to the fact that, in his *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Islam à Java* (Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1977), 221–5, Rasjidi takes a much more moderate, even positive position.

80 Rasjidi, *Islam dan Kebatinan*, 92.

81 Ibid., 79–80.

all, he blamed Warsito for wrongly considering adherents of *kebatinan* not to be Muslims. Actually, they were Muslims, although their knowledge of Islam was very often poor or even false. Rasjidi was especially infuriated by Warsito's remarks that Sultan Agung (r. 1613–46) and Sultan Hamengkubuwono I (d. 1792) were not Muslims. He gave Warsito a serious warning, given the danger of his opinions in the highly inflammable religious situation in Indonesia.⁸² Secondly, Rasjidi stressed the fact that a true Muslim did not pursue the mystical union of man and God because that attitude obstructed every possibility of development. In other words, mysticism or *kebatinan* ended in stagnation.⁸³

In refuting Warsito's argument, Rasjidi played the trump card regarding stability and development, which were the two main points of the policies of the early Suharto government. After the abortive coup of 30 September, 1965, Suharto was fully aware of the explosive religious situation in his country. He realised that stability was a prerequisite for building up the nation under the New Order. Only after stability was established in Indonesia could the development of the country in the social, economic, and political fields be taken up. Therefore, religious stability was essential. Indeed, religion had to be called in for the sake of the socio-economic construction of the country. By revealing the threat which *kebatinan* in general, and Pangestu in particular, posed to stability, and, in consequence, their obstruction of national development, Rasjidi was trying to win the government over to support the case of Islam instead of the case of *kebatinan*.

82 *Disekitar Kebatinan*, 36, 97–9.

83 *Ibid.*, 38. It is interesting to note that there was also a discussion among Western scholars of Indonesian mysticism and its stagnating or stimulating influence. E.g., Allan M. Sievers, *The Mystical World of Indonesia: Culture and Economic Development in Conflict* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 295, 302: 'Neomysticism... contributes to Indonesia's state of unhealth, and it is also a major barrier to modernization. ... [N]o rational solution to the nation's problem is really possible in a mystical context. ... [A]s long as mysticism plays a role in policy making and in administration, in planning and organizing, in human relations and in politics, we are indeed confronted with what Lubis calls a black morass. ... [C]entral to everything is the problem of mysticism. If modernity is to be the goal, there must be a transformation of values, which means the abandonment of mysticism. ... In some sense, mysticism is all that the *tani* has left. ... [A]nd it is a primary barrier to his modernization'. Contra, e.g., Peacock, 'Creativity of tradition', 351: 'In general, however, the deepest and most enduring forces of change and renewal in Indonesian life seem to have come less from the reforms urged by purism than from the frustratingly enigmatic and only seemingly stagnant symbols, practices, and worldview of a mystical syncretism'.

In his contribution to the dispute with Warsito, Hasbullah Bakry also strongly rejected Pangestu's view. Bakry (b. 1926) was a member of the Muhammadiyah and a lecturer at various Islamic institutes of higher education. In 1977, he was appointed Professor of Islamic law and the Study of Comparative Religion at the Universitas Islam in Jakarta. According to Bakry, the study of comparative religion played an important part in showing the superiority of Islam and in revealing the inadequacy of all non-Islamic religions and beliefs.⁸⁴ Islam is the touchstone for judging *kebatinan*. Hasbullah Bakry stated that the doctrine of man becoming one with God was absolutely wrong. The only correct belief was that man must serve God as his servant.⁸⁵ Likewise, Bakry was opposed to Pangestu's 'Trinitarian' doctrine of God and the doctrine of the unity of being. He condemned the first doctrine as polytheism while the second was denounced as pantheism. Actually, according to Hasbullah Bakry, adherents of Pangestu could be put on a par with Christians and Buddhists; they were unbelievers (Ar.: *kāfir*) and polytheists (Ar.: *mushrik*).⁸⁶ The doctrine of Pangestu was also repudiated in other Muhammadiyah publications as a doctrine incompatible with the teachings of Islam. The belief that creator and creature were identical was founded on pantheism and clashed with Islamic orthodoxy.⁸⁷

However, in spite of the fierce criticism from the Muslim quarter, especially from modernists like members of the Muhammadiyah, the process of trying to get *kebatinan* accepted as a religion continued. The year 1973 was promising for the adherents of *kebatinan*. After its victory in the 1971 general elections, Golkar used its majority in the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR), the 'People's Consultative Assembly' or Indonesian Parliament, to reward *kebatinan* adherents for their support. In the *Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara*, the 'Broad Lines of the State Policy' of 1973,⁸⁸ the MPR mentioned the adherents of *kebatinan* in such a way that they could consider themselves to be on par

84 For Bakry's study of comparative religion, see Herman L. Beck, 'A Pillar of Social Harmony: The Study of Comparative Religion in Contemporary Indonesia', in *Modern Societies and the Science of Religions*, ed. Gerard Wiegers (Leiden etc.: Brill, 2002), 329–49, 333–4.

85 *Disekitar Kebatinan*, 143.

86 *Ibid.*, 142, 144.

87 See, e.g., Abdul Malik Hasan, 'Aliran kebatinan (Kajian singkat dari sudut pemikiran gnostik)', in *Kebatinan dan dakwah kepada orang Jawa*, ed. Abdul Munir Malkhan (this is his name on the title page; later the author became known as Abdul Munir Mul Khan) (Yogyakarta: Percetakan Persatuan, 1984, rpt. 1987 [only to be used in Muhammadiyah's own circle!]), 7–27; and Abdul Malik Hasan, 'Konsepsi Ketuhanan dalam ajaran Pangestu', in *Kebatinan dan dakwah*, 29–84, 33, 79, 84.

88 Mulder, *Mysticism*, 8: 'the Perspectives of the Course of the Nation'.

with the adherents of the officially recognized religions.⁸⁹ The reaction of the Muhammadiyah on the juxtaposition of *agama*, 'religion', and *kepercayaan*, 'belief', taking place in the MPR was vehement. In an editorial in the *Suara Muhammadiyah* of February, 1973, this process was called a strong opposition against Islam and a glorification of pre-Islamic Javanese tradition. The bi-weekly Muhammadiyah magazine, for instance, referred to the plan of *kebatinan* adherents to introduce an official *kebatinan* holiday, 1 Sura (the first day of the Javanese calendar year), with ceremonies which, according to Islam, were pagan. The magazine expressed its disapproval of the food offerings (Jav.: *sesajen*) which were brought on 1 Sura and the procession which took place on that day. The objects from the Mangkunegaran court of Surakarta which were carried around during the procession were certainly not only meant for tourists but were considered to be sacred heirlooms possessing supernatural qualities and magic powers (Ind.: *keramat*).⁹⁰ The 29 March, 1973 edition of the Islamic newspaper *Harian Abadi* was even more explicit in its editorial. It stated that never before in the history of Indonesia since its Independence, had *kebatinan* been equated with Islam. In fact, *kebatinan* could only be ranked with religious phenomena such as spiritualism. Thus, *kebatinan* was labelled *takhayul*, 'superstition'.⁹¹

The controversy between modernist Muslims and *kebatinan* witnessed a new climax at the end of 1977. At that time, it became publicly known that, when they were to be inaugurated as members of Parliament on 1 October, 1977, the adherents of *kebatinan* intended to swear their oath or to make their affirmation as adherents of the *aliran kepercayaan*. Up to that moment, it had only been possible to swear the oath or to make the affirmation as an adherent of one of the recognized religions, namely Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, or Buddhism. Again, modernists and other Muslims were afraid that the authorization of swearing the oath or making the affirmation as an adherent of the *aliran kepercayaan* could be interpreted as a recognition of this religious movement as an official religion.⁹² Under the direction of Professor

89 See Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 125, and Mulder, *Mysticism*, 8–9 for the formulation of the articles according to which *kepercayaan* and *agama* were put on par with one another.

90 *Suara Muhammadiyah* as rendered by Puar, *Perjuangan*, 341–2.

91 Subagyo, *Kepercayaan*, 125–6. Jainuri translates *takhayul* as the 'belief in the disembodied spirit(s) of (a) dead person(s)', which could not but be aversive to any Muslim. Achmad Jainuri, 'The Muhammadiyah Movement in Twentieth-Century Indonesia: A Socio-Religious Study' (MA thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1992), 72.

92 MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia), *Masalah-masalah aliran kepercayaan di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 1977), 1.

Hamka, the abovementioned prominent member of the Muhammadiyah, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) lashed out at the ambition of the *kebatinan* adherents.

The MUI was a council of religious specialists established by the Indonesian government in 1975. It was supposedly independent of the government which it was tasked to advise, on request or otherwise, on religious affairs. From its very foundation, Hamka had been its chairman until, due to his *fatwa* on Christmas celebrations, he felt obliged to resign in 1981.⁹³ The MUI labelled the *aliran kepercayaan* as a false religion which had been created by the Dutch during their colonial rule to weaken Islam. In addition to this value judgment, the MUI formulated three firm arguments why the *aliran kepercayaan* should not be acknowledged as a religion. Firstly, the *aliran kepercayaan* was contrary to the doctrine of Pancasila and to the Constitution. The claim of the *kebatinan* adherents that the *aliran kepercayaan* had been recognized under the Constitution was invalid. The words 'according to his own religion and belief' ('*menurut agamanya dan kepercayaannya itu*', § 29:2 of the Constitution) could not, according to the MUI, be interpreted as an official recognition of the *aliran kepercayaan*. The demonstrative *itu* made it clear that *kepercayaan* referred to *agama*. Consequently, belief was not independent of religion. This interpretation of the MUI was shared by some prominent Indonesian Muslims. For instance, Hatta, a member of the preparatory committee of the Indonesian Constitution of 1945 and Indonesia's first vice-president, stated that *kepercayaan* in fact referred to Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism.⁹⁴ Given the separation of *kepercayaan* from *agama*, the *aliran kepercayaan* harmed the national unity of Indonesia and threatened its stability. Finally, it was at odds with Suharto's appeal of 29 April, 1976, where he summoned the adherents of the *aliran kepercayaan* to return to the bosom of their original religion. The MUI shared the President's point of view.⁹⁵ Hamka himself, in his address as chairman of the MUI on 2 October 1977, stated that *aliran kepercayaan* caricatured religion. This was confirmed by the fact that its name had been changed three times already.⁹⁶

93 Herman L. Beck, 'Christmas as Identity Marker: Three Islamic Examples', in *Christian Feast and Festival. The Dynamics of Western Liturgy and Culture*, ed. P. Post et al. (Leuven etc.: Peeters, 2001), 97–110, 105 ff.

94 Cf., however, the view of Pringgodigdo, who was also a member of the preparatory committee of the Indonesian Constitution of 1945.

95 MUI, *Masalah-masalah*, 2, 10, 17, 18.

96 *Ibid.*, 9.

The issue of the oath or affirmation as an adherent of the *aliran kepercayaan* also stirred emotions in Muhammadiyah circles. As a result, considerable attention was paid to the issue of the *aliran kepercayaan* during the meeting of its Majelis Tanwir, the highest advisory body of the Muhammadiyah, of 15–19 December 1977. Hamka again acted as the most important advisor of the Muhammadiyah regarding the issue of the *aliran kepercayaan*. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the Majelis Tanwir turned out to share the conclusions of the MUI. The attitude of the Muhammadiyah versus the adherents of the *aliran kepercayaan* was formulated in even stronger words: if the adherents of the *aliran kepercayaan* did not return to the bosom of their original religion, they had to be considered *murtadd*, ‘apostate’. As for the *aliran kepercayaan*, it was *inkonstitusional*, ‘unconstitutional’.⁹⁷

However, some Muhammadiyah members defended mysticism during the 1970s. One of them was A. Mukti Ali (1923–2006). Already in the 1950s, he pointed to the fact that, from its early history, the Muhammadiyah had always been receptive to the ethical and purifying potentialities of mysticism.⁹⁸ As Minister of Religion (1971–8), Mukti Ali recaptured this attitude to mysticism.⁹⁹ He tried to convince Muslim preachers that they had to pay more attention to the meaning of mysticism in the lives of the Javanese; they had to bear in mind that mysticism was the kind of belief which satisfied the Javanese mind best. Muslim preachers, especially Muhammadiyah ones, were too much inclined to focus on Islamic law and its injunctions. With this approach, they had alienated mystical-minded Muslims who detested Islam when it was interpreted in a too formal and narrow way.¹⁰⁰ Mukti Ali who, as a Minister of Religion and representative of the government, had to address *kebatinan* meetings several times on its 1 Sura holiday, exhorted the Muslim preachers to open their eyes to the spiritual needs of their fellow believers. He stressed that, if they continued to ignore these needs, the Javanese Muslims would search for truth in

97 Puar, *Perjuangan*, 134, 337–9.

98 Ali, *Muhammadiyah Movement*, 51. Cf. also A. Mukti Ali, *Interpretasi Amalan Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta: Harapan Melati, 1985), 20–1; and A. Mukti Ali, ‘Modern Islamic Thought in Indonesia’, *Mizan* 2.1 (1985), 11–29, 22.

99 For A. Mukti Ali, see Ali Munhanif, ‘Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Indonesia: A Political Reading of the Religious Thought of Mukti Ali’, *Studia Islamika. Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 3.1 (1996): 79–126. For A. Mukti Ali’s membership of the Muhammadiyah: Munhanif, ‘Islam’, 117–8. It is striking, however, that A. Mukti Ali has not been included in the *Ensiklopedi Muhammadiyah*. For Mukti Ali’s involvement in government policy, see Beck, ‘A Pillar of Social Harmony’.

100 A. Mukti Ali, *Faktor-faktor penjiaran Islam* (Jogjakarta: Jajasan Nida, 1971), 21; and Ali, ‘Interpretasi’, 20–1.

their own way.¹⁰¹ What Mukti Ali did not mention here, something which he had warned against some years before, is the fact that, in his view, a permanent disregard of their spiritual needs would force Javanese Muslims to adopt another religion, for example, Christianity, via mysticism.¹⁰² Mukti Ali was a good example of a Muhammadiyah individual acting as a government official sometimes defending the government policy at the expense of the ideals of the Muhammadiyah. Rasjidi severely criticized Mukti Ali for this attitude.¹⁰³

The controversy between modernists and other Muslims and *kebatinan* was eventually settled by the 1978 decision of the MPR to recognize the *aliran kepercayaan* not as a religion, but, because of the Muslim protests, as a 'formal cultural institution'. It was under Alamsjah Ratu Perwiranegara (1925–98), who was appointed Minister of Religious Affairs (1978–83) by Suharto to replace Mukti Ali, that the *aliran kepercayaan* were removed from the Department of Religious Affairs to the Department of Education and Culture, where the Direktorat Bina Hayat was established.¹⁰⁴ This special directorate was not only responsible for the registration and monitoring of mystical groups and organizations but also for tribal religions. With the founding of this directorate, the *aliran kepercayaan* had become legitimate and was entitled to government subsidy.¹⁰⁵

Transition from the 1970s to the 1990s

The danger of a change of denomination or even religion was not hypothetical. Many former students of Muhammadiyah educational institutions had already left the movement and joined the Shattariyah fraternity for instance, a *tarekat* affiliated with the NU, the largest Muslim organization of Indonesia representing the interests of traditionalist movements.¹⁰⁶ Several rather prominent

101 MUI, *Masalah-masalah*, 22–3: thus, Mukti Ali in an address in October, 1977.

102 Ali, *Faktor-faktor*, 28.

103 Munhanif, 'Islam', 117.

104 Cf. Moch Nur Ichwan, *The Making of a Pancasila State: Political Debates on Secularising Islam and the State in Indonesia*, SOIAS Research Paper Series no. 6 (Tokyo: Sophia Organization for Islamic Area Studies, Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University, 2012), 25–6.

105 Patty, '“Aliran Kepercayaan”', 92, 164. The full name of the Direktorat Bina Hayat is: Direktorat Pembinaan Penghayat Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, the 'Directorate for the supervision of the followers of the belief in the Oneness of God'.

106 Moeslim Abdurrahman, 'Zur heutigen sozialen Bedeutung der islamischen Bruderschaften in Java: Einige Feldforschungsnotizen', in *Islamische mystische Bruderschaften*, 75–90, 84.

figures of the Muhammadiyah joined the *kebatinan* association Sumarah.¹⁰⁷ This tendency did not pass unnoticed in Muhammadiyah circles. To counteract this tendency, the Muhammadiyah published the book *Kebatinan dan dakwah kepada orang Jawa* in 1984. This book was meant to be used only in Muhammadiyah circles and was aimed at discouraging the influence of Seh Siti Jenar and his doctrine on contemporary Indonesian Muslims. Seh Siti Jenar was a more-or-less legendary Muslim preacher from the fifteenth or sixteenth century who was sentenced to death because contemporary orthodox Muslims condemned his doctrine of radical monism as heretical. One of the contributors to the book was Syukriyanto AR (b. 1945). He was a son of AR Fachruddin and was one of the leaders of Muhammadiyah's Majlis Tabligh, the council concerned with the instruction methods of deepening the understanding regarding Islam of Muslims in general and its members in particular. Syukriyanto AR warned the missionaries of the Muhammadiyah to beware of Muslims who were dissatisfied with Islam and joined a *kebatinan* association as a result; many of them might ultimately convert to Christianity.¹⁰⁸ To discourage this tendency, the Muhammadiyah took a more positive attitude towards mysticism in the mid-1990s, despite its criticism of and anxiety about Sufism.¹⁰⁹

The threat of competition by *kebatinan* and other non-Islamic religions, especially Christianity, and doctrinal motives were two of the reasons why the Muhammadiyah opposed mysticism. The Muhammadiyah also feared mysticism to be only a transitional stage to a definitive change of religion. Already before the WWII, the Protestant mission had alluded to the possibilities of entering into relations with mysticism movements to forestall the modernist Muhammadiyah.¹¹⁰ Developments after the abortive coup of 30 September, 1965 caused the Muhammadiyah to take a firm stand towards *kebatinan*, as was shown by the sharp controversy between representatives of the Muhammadiyah and the Pangestu. However, it is also clear, *pace* Nakamura, that for the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s the same holds true as for the 1920s and 1930s: within the Muhammadiyah, there was neither room for esoteric mysticism with a renunciation of the world nor for *tarekats* threatening and violating the prescriptions and interdictions of the sharia. The fact that

107 Stange, *Sumarah*, 328.

108 Syukriyanto AR, 'Da'wah di kalangan Masyarakat Jawa (Abangan)', in *Kebatinan dan dakwah*, 133–48, 136.

109 Howell, 'Sufism', 712.

110 B.M. Schuurman, *Mystik und Glaube in Zusammenhang mit der Mission auf Java* (Haag: Nijhoff, 1933), 120.

Sufism stimulated *ihsan* and thus contributed to the formation of an ethical life was considered acceptable.¹¹¹

However, those practices and beliefs of Sufism and *tarekats* that contradicted the sharia and that, according to Muhammadiyah's normative standards, could be labelled as imaginations (Ind.: *takhayyul*), heretical innovations (Ind.: *bid'ah*) or superstition (Ind.: *khurafat* or *churafat*) resulting in unbelief and polytheism (Ar.: *shirk*; Ind.: *syirik*), were continuously and vigorously resisted. These three evils were mostly abbreviated to TBC, the Dutch and Indonesian acronym for tuberculosis, a long-time feared and often deadly disease. It has been claimed that in his struggle for the purification of Islam, Ahmad Dahlan had made the eradication of TBC one of the primary goals of the Muhammadiyah. Now, ever since the NU was founded, whenever there were tensions between the Muhammadiyah and the NU, the Muhammadiyah would often accuse the NU and especially its associated *tarekats* of suffering from TBC. Implicitly, this was also still the case in the 1970s, as becomes clear from the book *Muhammadiyah sebagai Gerakan Islam*, 'The Muhammadiyah as an Islamic movement', the first edition of which was published in 1971.¹¹² In this book, the authors look to explain to students attending the upper secondary schools of the Muhammadiyah, as well as to ordinary members of the organization, what kind of organization the Muhammadiyah is and what it stands for. To define the character of the Muhammadiyah, they deal with, for example, the position of the organization in relation to other Islamic groups and the Islamic schools of law. One of the organizations they pay attention to is the NU, which is described quite even-handedly in a separate section.¹¹³ However, in the section dedicated to Muhammadiyah's social and religious activities the authors mention the fact that the organization has always made great efforts to eradicate religious traditions which, according to its conviction, do not belong to pure and pristine Islam. Without mentioning the NU by name, they listed various reprehensible traditions, such as visiting the grave of the founder of a *tarekat* (Ar.: *ziyāra*; Ind.: *ziarah*) and seeking his intercession (*tawassul*) for the relief of needs or the fulfilment of wishes, both of which are typical of *tarekats* affiliated with the NU. *Selamatans* (the ritual, communal meals held in honour of the founder of a *tarekat*), *khauls* (the annual celebrations commemorating the death of the founder of a *tarekat*), *manaqibans* (the monthly ritual recita-

111 Mitsuo Nakamura, 'Unsur Sufi dalam Muhammadiyah? Catatan dari Kancuh', *Prisma* 9.8 (1980): 92–99, 96–8.

112 I am using the seventh edition of 1994: Musthafa Kamal, Chusnan Yusuf, A. Rosyad Sholeh, *Muhammadiyah sebagai Gerakan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1994).

113 Kamal a.o., *Muhammadiyah*, 20–1.

tions in praise of the excellences of the founder of a *tarekat*), and several other traditions practiced by members of the *tarekats*, such as certain forms of *dhikr* (repetition of the divine names or religious formulae), *tahlils* (repetition of the first part of the Islamic profession of faith) and *selawatans* (special invocation of the prophet Muhammad), are summed up by the authors of *Muhammadiyah sebagai Gerakan Islam* and severely criticised as heretical customs.¹¹⁴

The difference in attitude of the Muhammadiyah towards the *kebatinan* movements and the NU during the 1970s could possibly be explained by Suharto's policy of the 'domestication of Islam' in Indonesia.¹¹⁵ This policy was focused on the elimination of Islam as a political opponent and culminated in the forced acceptance of the Pancasila doctrine by all social and religious organizations as their 'one and only' principle. Reluctantly, the Muhammadiyah finally decided to accept this principle in 1984. The fact that a prominent Muhammadiyah representative like Rasjidi only used political arguments in his refutation of the *kebatinan* movements in my opinion proves that the Muhammadiyah considered them as being part of the tools in the hands of the Suharto government to counterbalance the political aspirations of modernist Muslims.

One of the measures taken to implement Suharto's policy of the 'domestication of Islam' was the introduction of all kinds of educational reforms aiming at the formation of loyal Pancasila citizens. As part of these reforms, important changes were made for instance in the curriculum of the IAINs (Institut Agama Islam Negeri), the higher educational 'State Institutes for Islamic Studies' operated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. A pivotal role in this reformation was played by Harun Nasution (1919–98), an influential and controversial leading Indonesian intellectual who became rector of the IAIN Jakarta in 1973. He wanted to develop and stimulate the morality of the students by introducing the study of Sufism as an obligatory discipline of the IAIN's curriculum.¹¹⁶ The

114 Ibid., 31–2. Cf. also, e.g., Martin van Bruinessen, 'Traditions for the Future: The Reconstruction of Traditionalist Discourse within NU', in *Nahdlatul Ulama*, 162–89, 170; and Zulkifli, *Sufism in Java: The Role of the Pesantren in the Maintenance of Sufism in Java* (Leiden and Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 52, 75.

115 I follow Thijl Sunier's definition of 'domestication of Islam': 'the political programs that emanate from the complex relationship between integration, and political priorities of security and national identity' (Thijl Sunier, *Beyond the Domestication of Islam in Europe: A Reflection on Research on Islam in European Societies* [Inaugural lecture, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2009], 4).

116 Zaim Uchrowi and Ahmadi Thaha, 'Menyeru Pemikiran Rasional Mu'tazilah', in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam. 70 tahun Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat, 1989), 3–62, 42; and Luthfi Assyaukanie, 'Muslim Discourse of Liberal Democracy

study of Sufism combined with the other disciplines taught at the IAINs and spread by its alumni was expected to contribute to the development of a kind of Islam consistent with the Pancasila ideology.

However, Suharto's policy of the 'domestication of Islam' also brought about, willy-nilly, both the 'privatization', 'individualization' and 'spiritualization' of Islam and its increasing diversity, varying from radical fundamentalism to enlightened spirituality and religious liberalism. Some of these tendencies turned out to be difficult to control by the government. Within the scope of this contribution it suffices to point out that from the beginning of the 1980s all sorts of spiritual activities, mostly referred to as *urban tasawwuf*, were booming and, sometimes, institutionalized. One of the champions of this new trend was Nurcholish Madjid (1939–2005). In the beginning of the 1980s, he lectured and published on this new form of Sufism. Finally, he institutionalized his thoughts and ideals in this field in the Paramadina Foundation, established in 1986 with the support of a number of prominent intellectuals and businessmen.¹¹⁷ Initiatives similar to that of Nurcholish Madjid were also taken by other leading Muslim figures who were aware of the spiritual needs of their fellow townsmen.¹¹⁸ Apparently, this new spirituality of *urban tasawwuf* had great appeal for a broad Muslim audience, particularly those from the (higher) middle class. Therefore, the Muhammadiyah—most of its members traditionally being from the cities—had to reconsider its position with regard to Sufism in its new manifestations.

in Indonesia', in *Muslim Politics and Democratisation in Indonesia*, Monash Asia Institute Annual Indonesian Lecture Series, no. 28 (Clayton, Vic.: Monash Asia Institute, 2008), 1–31, 4. Cf., also, Mirjam Künkler, 'How Pluralist Democracy Became the Consensual Discourse among Secular and Nonsecular Muslims in Indonesia', in *Democracy and Islam in Indonesia*, ed. By Mirjam Künkler and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 54–72, 57–8.

- 117 Ann Kull, *Piety and Politics: Nurcholish Madjid and His Interpretation of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, Lund Studies in History of Religions, vol. 21 (Lund: Dept. of History and Anthropology of Religion, Lund University, 2005), 149–79; cf., Martin van Bruinessen, *What Happened to the Smiling Face of Indonesian Islam? Muslim Intellectualism and the Conservative Turn in post-Suharto Indonesia*, RSIS Working Paper Series, no. 222 (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, 2011), 17, 39.
- 118 Cf., e.g., Oman Fathurahman, 'Urban Sufism: The Change and Continuity of the Tasawwuf Teaching', in *Islamic Thought and Movements in Contemporary Indonesia*, ed. Rizal Sukma and Clara Joewono (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), 237–56. On 242, Fathurahman also mentions Jalaluddin Rahmat who founded Tazkiya Sejati, and Haidar Bagir who coordinated 'IIMan—a centre for positive development of tasawwuf'.

The 1990s

At its 43rd Muktamar, held in Aceh in 1995, it was decided that the Muhammadiyah should take a more appreciative stance towards mysticism, now called *neo-Sufism*, merely to indicate the acceptance of the sharia and the rejection of the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujūd*. It engaged in the development of 'spiritual power', e.g., through supererogatory prayers usually associated with Sufism.¹¹⁹ From this national conference onwards, the Muhammadiyah started to stress the importance of the spiritual side of the sharia with the benefit of Sufism. A year later, during the meeting of the Majelis Tarjih in June, 1996, the meaning of Sufism for the Muhammadiyah received ample attention. It was suggested that Sufism should be developed as a core element of Islam promoting faith and morality. Therefore, Sufism should be developed as an integrated part of Islamic theology and Islamic jurisprudence and its meaning for daily social life of the Muslims should be stimulated.¹²⁰ In fact, it was claimed, ever since Ahmad Dahlan, that the Muhammadiyah had applied the idiom of Sufism to the ethical formation of its members.¹²¹ Several books were published to prove that, throughout the Muhammadiyah's history, Sufism always had been an undercurrent of the movement that every now and then was embodied in the words and deeds of some of its leading figures.¹²² Some contemporary prominent figures and leaders were even presented as a kind of model 'Sufi' whose spiritual leadership deserved to be followed by other Muhammadiyah members. To mention only three examples of different stature: AR. Fachruddin (1916–95), who was Muhammadiyah's chairman from 1968 through 1990,¹²³ A. Malik Fajar (b. 1939), who was rector of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang for a long time and served the nation as a minister

119 *Keputusan Muktamar Muhammadiyah 43 Beserta Makalah Prasarannya* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 1995), 67–8, 114.

120 Juhaya S. Praja, 'Dimensi spiritual dalam Muhammadiyah: Rekonstruksi pemikiran kalam dan tasawuf', in *Pengembangan Pemikiran Keislaman Muhammadiyah: Purifikasi dan Dinamisasi*, ed. Muhammad Azhar and Hamim Ilyas (Yogyakarta: LPPI-UMY, 2000), 123–41, 141.

121 Mulkhan, *Nyufi Cara Baru*, 101–5.

122 E.g., Mulkhan, *Nyufi Cara Baru*; and Moch Faried Cahyono and Yuliantoro Purwowiyadi, *Pak AR Sufi yang memimpin Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Ribathus Suffah, 2010).

123 Cahyono and Purwowiyadi, *Pak AR Sufi*; and Masyitoh Chusnan, *Tasawuf Muhammadiyah. Menyelami Spiritual Leadership AR. Fakhruddin* (Jakarta: Kubah Ilmu, 2009, rpt. 2012).

of several departments,¹²⁴ and Abdurrahim Nur (b. 1932), a Muhammadiyah activist and leader in East Java.¹²⁵

The Muhammadiyah's shift to a more positive evaluation of Sufism can be seen as a response to the growing popularity of mysticism emerging during the 1970s and 1980s. According to Julia Howell, this is borne out by the increasing sale of books on this topic and widespread discussions on university campuses regarding Sufism. She also points to the fact that Sufism and *tarekats* were especially popular with members of the 'well-educated and religiously committed Muslim middle and upper classes'.¹²⁶ As said in the previous section, a pivotal role in popularizing this new form of Sufism, or *urban taṣawwuf*, was played by the neo-modernist Nurcholish Madjid and his spiritual sympathizers, who were heavily influenced by Hamka's ideas of Sufism.¹²⁷ However, Howell also shows that Sufism and the *tarekats* were adapted 'to a variety of new institutional forms in urban settings' and that these 'new types of "Sufi" institutions of the 1990s avoid[ed] this association with *kebatinan* by explicitly presenting themselves as Muslim'.¹²⁸ The 'threat' of *kebatinan* lessened when it was brought under the newly created Department of Culture and Tourism. This allocation was regarded as a symbolical downgrading of the *kebatinan* groups, which were now perceived as a kind of 'folklore'.¹²⁹ As Indonesia was becoming more and more religiously diverse, Sufism was also growing more popular because, for many moderate Muslims, it counterbalanced the rise of religious fundamentalism in Indonesia since the 1980s.¹³⁰

124 Anwar Hudijono and Anshari Thayib, *Darah Guru Darah Muhammadiyah: Perjalanan Hidup Abdul Malik Fadjar* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2006, rpt. Malang: UMM Press, 2009).

125 A. Fatichuddin et al., *Pergumulan Tokoh Muhammadiyah Menuju Sufi. Catatan Pemikiran Abdurrahim Nur* (Surabaya: Hikmah Press, 2003); cf. Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents*, 186–7.

126 Julia Day Howell, 'Modernity and Islamic Spirituality in Indonesia's New Sufi Networks', in *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 217–40, 219.

127 See, e.g., Kull, *Piety and Politics*, 149–61.

128 Howell, 'Sufism', 718.

129 Julia Day Howell, 'Spirituality' vs 'Religion' Indonesian Style: Framing and Re-Framing Experiential Religiosity in Contemporary Indonesian Islam' (a paper presented to the 15th Biennial conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 29 June–2 July, 2004), 6–7.

130 Julia Day Howell, Subandi and Peter L. Nelson, 'Indonesian Sufism: Signs of Resurgence', in *New Trends and Developments in the World of Islam*, ed. Peter B. Clarke (London: Luzac Oriental, 1998), 277–97, 292.

However, since the 1970s, there had also been longstanding criticism of the 'spiritual dryness' of the organization within Muhammadiyah circles. This opinion was aired by, among others, Abdul Munir Mulkhan (b. 1946), vice-secretary of the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah from 2000 to 2005 in reaction to the spiritual activities of Arifin Ilham.¹³¹ Criticasters such as Kuntowijoyo (1943–2005), a prominent member of the Muhammadiyah, blamed the Muhammadiyah's 'spiritual dryness' during the 1980s and 1990s as the source of its incompetence to deal with popular culture in the right way. This incompetence has been caused by the fact that the Muhammadiyah had lost sight of contemporary day-to-day realities by focusing on what a modern society should be like, in theory.¹³² The acknowledgement of its 'spiritual dryness' and its 'turn to spirituality' since its 43rd Muktamar in 1995 made it easier for the Muhammadiyah leaders to turn a blind eye to activities that would have been condemned and/or rejected in former times. It even made it possible for them to comment in a positive way on *tarekat* practices previously repudiated. Arifin Ilham's *zikir* (Ar.: *dhikr*) ritual exercises performed in groups is a case in point. These rituals consist of repetitive prayers and sayings derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, with the participants preferably wearing white clothes and white caps. Arifin Ilham (b. 1969) is considered to belong to the 'extended family' of the Muhammadiyah. From his early youth in Banjarmasin, Kalimantan, he was influenced by the religious tradition of the Muhammadiyah because his father was connected to the organization.¹³³ Prominent Muhammadiyah leaders like A. Syafii Maarif, Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Syamsul Anwar, and even Yunahar Ilyas (who is known to be rather conservative) are of the opinion that Arifin Ilham's *tarekat*-like approach to Sufism should be considered by

131 See Endang Mintarja, *Arifin Ilham. Tarikat, Zikir, dan Muhammadiyah* (Bandung: Hikmah, 2004), 110–3. Abdul Munir Mulkhan dedicated a lot of attention to the study of mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats*. Several books are already mentioned and are sometimes published under different titles, e.g. *Nyufi Cara Baru* is identical to *Islam Sejati Kiai Ahmad Dahlan dan Petani Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2003). With regard to this subject his *Islam Murni dalam Masyarakat Petani* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 2000) is also worth mentioning.

132 See, e.g., Kuntowijoyo, 'Kemandirian Gerakan Muhammadiyah', in *Pergumulan Pemikiran dalam Muhammadiyah*, ed. Syukrianto AR and Abdul Munir Mulkhan (Yogyakarta: Sipress, 1990), 67–72, 71; idem, *Paradigma Islam. Interpretasi untuk Aksi*, ed. A.E. Priyono (Bandung: Mizan, 1991), 266; and idem, *Muslim Tanpa Masjid. Esai-Esai Agama, Budaya, dan Politik dalam Bingkai Strukturalisme Transendental* (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), passim.

133 Mintarja, *Arifin Ilham*, 39–41; Howell, 'Modulations of Active Piety', 54–6; cf. also idem, 'Indonesia's Salafist Sufis', 1042–6; and, especially, Arif Zamhari, *Rituals of Islamic Spirituality: A Study of Majelis Dhikr Groups in East Java* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2010), 15.

the organization because his ideas are rooted in the Qur'an and Sunna, and because his *zikir* method has already led to many a conversion of 'spiritually born-again' Muslims.¹³⁴ So far, Arifin Ilham's *tarekat*-like approach seems to have been positively received by the Muhammadiyah.

However, the case of Lia Aminuddin (b. 1947), the founder of the Salamullah movement, appears to be a different story. Like Arifin Ilham, she was of Muhammadiyah descent and came from Makassar, Sulawesi. One of her earliest and most faithful supporters, Abdul Rahman, also had a Muhammadiyah background.¹³⁵ The revelations Lia Aminuddin and Abdul Rahman received, their message, and their *tarekat*-like exercises were not favourably received in the circles of the Muhammadiyah board, probably because of their heterodox content. In 2005, the teachings of Lia Aminuddin, who is better known under the name of Lia Eden, were officially condemned by the MUI. The contribution from Muhammadiyah side should not be overlooked.¹³⁶ Thus, the case of Lia Aminuddin makes clear that Muhammadiyah's attitude towards sharia-abiding Sufism and *tarekat*-like groups meeting the spiritual needs of contemporary Muslims might be changed for the better. However, its stance towards new forms of spirituality considered to be heretical or heterodox such as the Salamullah movement, is as rigid as ever.

In 2005, a new Central Board of the Muhammadiyah was elected. According to both insiders and outsiders, this new board under the chairmanship of Muhammad Din Syamsuddin (b. 1958) is less favourably inclined towards religious pluralism, liberalism, and 'other modern phenomena' than the former Central Board. The ramifications of this attitude with regard to the Muhammadiyah's future stance towards mysticism, Sufism and *tarekats* are not yet clear.

Conclusions

In answering the three questions formulated at the beginning of this contribution, it should be concluded that Hardjono Kusumodiprodo's opinion regarding the Muhammadiyah's rejection of Sufism and '*tarekat*' teaching requires

134 Mintarja, *Arifin Ilham*, 50, 80, 109–14; cf. also, Howell, 'Modulations of Active Piety', 56–60.

135 Julia D. Howell, 'Muslims, the New Age and Marginal Religions in Indonesia: Changing Meanings of Religious Pluralism', in *Social Compass* 52.4 (2005): 473–93, 481, 483.

136 *Himpunan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia sejak 1975*, ed. Hijrah Saputra et al. (Jakarta: Sekretariat Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2011), 59–70; cf., also I.G.M. Nurdjana, *Hukum dan Aliran Kepercayaan Menyimpang di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009), 282–6.

some nuance. Throughout its history, the Muhammadiyah has accepted Sufism in its *'ihsan form'* but Sufism and *'tarekat'* teaching containing 'heretical' aspects were always repudiated. Kusumodiprodjo presented a rather biased view on the Muhammadiyah's stance towards mysticism, Sufism, and *tarekats*. However, it cannot be argued that a kind of 'officially' defined Muhammadiyah position vis-à-vis mysticism, Sufism, and *tarekats* ever existed. The Muhammadiyah's attitude to mysticism, Sufism, and *tarekats* could change depending on the contemporary social and political context, the 'spiritual' needs of the Indonesian Muslims, and the 'denominational spirit' of the Central Board in charge. This Central Board is elected once every five years and is supposed to represent, more-or-less, the mind of the majority of the members of the Muhammadiyah. It is important to take into account that, within such a huge organization like the Muhammadiyah, the existence of different denominational and political currents is unavoidable.¹³⁷ Understandably, the Muhammadiyah's policy was subject to fluctuation. Indeed, after its 43rd Mukhtamar in 1995, a 'spiritual spring' seems to have dawned with the election of a so-called 'progressive' Central Board. However, whether this 'spiritual spring' will continue is questionable because a 'conservative turn' seems to have taken place again since the election of the new Central Board in 2005.¹³⁸ In any case, whoever wants to make a guess at the Muhammadiyah's future attitude towards Sufism and *tarekats* would be wise to keep in mind the lesson the Muhammadiyah's history teaches us: as long as Sufism is sharia-abiding and promotes morality it will be tolerated by the Muhammadiyah, but as soon as it becomes heterodox and heteroprax it will be challenged.

137 To mention only two scholars who tried to label the different currents within the Muhammadiyah: a) Burhani distinguishes two main currents: the liberals (also labelled: 'progressive; inclusive; pluralist; moderate') and the conservative (also labelled: 'literalist; scripturalist; fundamentalist; purist') (Ahmad Najib Burhani, 'Liberal and Conservative Discourses in the Muhammadiyah: The Struggle for the Face of Reformist Islam in Indonesia', in *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the 'Conservative Turn'*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen [Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013], 105–44, 133–4; and, b) Mulkhan distinguishes four main currents: the *'Ikhlasists'*, the *'Dahlanists'*, the *'Neo-traditionalists'* and the *'Neo-syncretists'* (Mulkhan, *Islam Murni*, 251–4; cf. also, Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents*, 361).

138 For the 'conservative turn', see Martin van Bruinessen, 'Introduction: Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam and the 'Conservative Turn' of the Early Twenty-first Century', in *Contemporary Developments*, 1–20; and idem, *What Happened*, 3.

