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**REFLECTING ON *KEJAWEN*:
JAVANESE ESOTERIC TEACHINGS IN INDONESIAN
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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List of Acronyms

AMAN	<i>Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara</i> (the Alliance of Nusantara Adat Communities)
PKN	<i>Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan</i> (Civic Education)
PKS	<i>Partai Keadilan Sejahtera</i> (Justice and Prosperity Party)
NU	<i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (Biggest Indonesian Islamic Organization)
FPI	<i>Forum Pembela Islam</i>

Abstract

Kejawen as a concept of spirituality arose out of ancient Javanese society. Many Western scholars have used the term 'Javanese mysticism' to refer to *Kejawen* teachings, which focus on inward rather than outward religious expression and feeling. *Kejawen* teaching offers an esoteric understanding of religion and spirituality, one that seems to circulate mainly outside formal religious traditions. This paper demonstrates the significance of *Kejawen* teaching in spiritual, psychological, and social development in Indonesia, suggesting it has especial relevance to issues of peace and violence. Placing *Kejawen* in its context, this study shows how after independence, national development in Indonesia was influenced by the esoteric ideas of *Kejawen*, as portrayed in the national motto "unity in diversity". This expression resembles the post-independence state ideology of *Pancasila*. Through analysis of key nationalist texts, themes linked to elements of *Kejawen* teachings, are identified and analysed in this study. This is done by analysing key texts, including Soekarno's independence speech of July 1945, *Pancasila* itself, and material from more recent social media. The reader will find out more about the need for comprehensive symbolic and resource-based recognition of *Kejawen* teachings in Indonesian society.

Relevance to Development Studies

Indigenous perspectives on development are rarely referred to in contemporary development studies approaches. If this neglect continues, then in some settings, indigenous knowledge may gradually decrease to the point where there is little chance of knowledge reproduction over time. An effort must be made to avoid such cultural genocide, which can be of salience for national and individual identity, conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence. Lack of cultural sense of identity indicates rampant hegemony and domination, and can even indicate a form of colonialization, whether through cultural politics, religion or other forms of identity politics. The more comprehensive – moral and material - recognition of *Kejawen* teaching by the Indonesian government, could formalize and protect its significance and influence in issues of social development and peaceful coexistence. This can help reinforce a sense of strong, yet open, national identity and protect citizens, in line with wider human development goals. As a form of alternative knowledge, *Kejawen* can certainly provide a unique perspective on discussions of social development, peace and tolerance in Indonesian society.

Keywords: *Kejawen*, religions, esoteric teachings, indigenous knowledge, spirituality, Java, nationalism, resources, recognition, *Pancasila*.

Chapter 1: Opening the Door: *Kejawen*

1.1 Introduction: What is *Kejawen*?

In this study, *Kejawen* is looked at as a set of spiritual practices and beliefs that arose out of ancient Javanese society. Many Western scholars have used the term ‘Javanese mysticism’ to refer to *Kejawen* teachings, which focus on inward rather than outward religious expression and feeling. *Kejawen* teaching offers an esoteric understanding of religion and spirituality, one that seems to circulate mainly outside formal religious traditions. Other great esoteric traditions, like Sufism, Christian spirituality, and Jewish Kabbalah share many of similar ideas to *Kejawen* teachings, and require deep attention from practitioners to the essence of religion itself, represented as a state of unity or oneness with God and the universe (Shashangka, 2014: 84).

All external rituals and religious laws are viewed as only preliminary preparations, their form being secondary to their function as a means towards attaining the true spiritual path of wholeness. Rituals and beliefs, according to *Kejawen* principles, should not be regarded as the fundamental precursor to action but as broad principles or forms of guidance that help to come in touch with and observe God’s existence through on-going psychological struggle.

Kejawen teaching does not deal with the debate of how to worship; instead it discusses the similarity of the fundamental principles of all religions. In its teaching, *Kejawen* encourages self-observation of the mind, which allows one to study the inward psychological problems of human thinking and feeling (Shashangka, 2014: 80). *Kejawen* followers believe that meditative silence and focusing the mind can bring stability to one’s psyche, and that in turn a stable psyche or mind will be far removed from thoughts of violence. This is because they view violence as the result of division caused by the ego. There are strong echoes in this also, of the meditative practices of Buddhism.

Indonesia as a highly religious society often employs religious and spiritual concepts to justify its human rights perspective (ter Haar 2009, 5). In addition, human rights debates at international or national level, are often limited to the discussion of human rights as legal instrument without looking at the religious concepts of humans as beings with innate rights derived from their spirituality and connection with God (ter Haar 2009, 9). In a country with a fervent religious climate like Indonesia, human rights discussions are supposed to be discussed using the ‘indigenous language’, which is supposed to match and also help to communicate the multi-dimensional morality of the Indonesia people (ter Haar 2009, 10). This study will show that after independence national development in Indonesia was deeply embedded in the esoteric ideas of *Kejawen*, as portrayed in the motto “unity in diversity”. This expression resembles the new state ideology of *Pancasila*. As an instrument for national development, a single pan-national language, Bahasa Indonesian, was created and taught in schools as the official language, which made cross-community and inter-regional communication possible. Along with this, a form of enshrined cultural wisdom, involving coexistence of major religious communities and beliefs, within the nation adopted these kinds of pluralist and inclusive forms of ideology, expressed in *Pancasila*, and arguably rooted in *Kejawen*.

1.2 The Research Problem

This research paper discusses the significance of *Kejawen* teaching as both spiritual concept and method in modern Indonesian society. The recognition of Indigenous faiths has been rather slow since independence. It was only in 2016 that the Indonesian Constitutional Court granted a lawsuit by indigenous communities, which led to the creation of an NGO called the Alliance of Nusantara Adat Communities or *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* (AMAN). The court verdict states that indigenous people can use their indigenous religious identity in civil registration, as for example on the Indonesian civil identity card, the *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* (KTP). Subsequently, only six major religions in Indonesia are recognized administratively by the government. With the ruling of Indonesian Constitutional Court case number 97/PUU-XIV/2016, indigenous people can enjoy their religious right in civil manner like in marriage ceremony. However, this administrative recognition is inadequate for *Kejawen* teaching and other indigenous faiths. Indonesian government understands indigenous faith only as identity not as a knowledge whose survival is depend on the distribution of resource which is through the dissemination of knowledge. Thus, the symbolic recognition is less important than the comprehensive recognition

The paradox is that *Kejawen* teaching has historically been excluded from formal Indonesian religious orthodoxy since the nation state was proclaimed in 1945. The survival of a *Kejawen* narrative is preserved by relatively few individuals and groups. Therefore, it is uncertain whether *Kejawen* narratives and esoteric traditions can continue to be reproduced in future. *Kejawen* teachings are disseminated only through local, informal agency. Today it is common people, like village elders, spiritual teachers, and independence practitioners who are the only remaining sources of *Kejawen* teachings. The teaching of *Kejawen* knowledge of the esoteric rests in the closed and more or less exclusive relationship between individual teachers (the *guru*) and individual students (the *murid*) (Geertz 1960, 328). The need for this relationship between teacher and student makes *Kejawen* teaching circulate rather slowly, hardly reaching the masses. In addition, *Kejawen* communities in Central and East Java are separated into several sects. *Sumarah*, *Kawruh Bedja*, *Ilmu Sedjati*, and *Budi Setia* are the best-known *Kejawen* associations (*pangnyuban*) in Java (Geertz 1960, 339-348). Currently, new associations have been proliferated, some proclaimed under the banner of *Kejawen* and some refuse to be called *Kejawen* association rather prefer the term general spiritual teaching. One of author interviewees, Mr. Setyo Hajar Dewantoro refuses to call his association called Mahadaya Institute as *Kejawen* sect, he also adopts other spiritual traditions like Gnosticism, Zen Buddhism, and Theosophy. Although, *Kejawen* has its own social organizations, in the form of these associations, they cannot be considered social organizations in the formal sense. The associations are only concerned with the spiritual development of their members, and they are a-political in nature. Unlike Islamic parties in Java which have strong formal organizational structures, ready to expand and recruit new members, with governing boards, commissioners, regional representative, and formal rank-and-file membership, *Kejawen* has been a largely informal, loosely arranged set of spiritual practices (Geertz 1960, 331).

The traditional sense of disseminating spiritual knowledge from person to person, in an esoteric or mystical style, has become a shortcoming for *Kejawen* adherents, becoming left behind it seems, in an era of fast communication and number of adherents as measures of salience and relevance. On the other hand, larger religious groups that use mass-communication techniques, for instance for mass congregations on television, and by uploading sermons on YouTube, or by finding celebrities who follow their religious lifestyle and provide endorsement, all tend to move away from esoteric and syncretic beliefs that underpin syncretism and religious tolerance. Although some young *Kejawen* practitioners like *Eanisme TV*

(a YouTuber that provided the author the contact of the interviewees) are shifting into social media to promote and distribute their teachings, they often reach an impasse in the face of popular social sentiment, especially among the Wahhabis groups who consider their own brand of Islam the only 'true faith'. This study will examine the struggle for recognition of *Kejawen*, in a context where the distribution of religious resources is based both on legal protections and the social legitimacy of various kinds of religious beliefs in contemporary Indonesia.

From 2014 to 2020, the rise of extreme political polarization has reinforced delegitimizing social sentiments towards *Kejawen* teachings, as groups like Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), *Forum Pembela Islam* (FPI), and a handful of other non-affiliated preachers like Yazid bin Abdul Qadir Jawas, Khalid Basalamah, and even the moderate Islamic organization like *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) have all rejected or partly rejected the existence of *Kejawen* teaching as part of Islam. It has been branded as heretical teaching under the principle of *Shirk* and *Bid'ah*, discussed further in chapter six (Armstrong 2015, 39). In this study, I argue that such narratives of *Shirk* and *Bid'ah* are not necessarily targeted at the Javanese *Kejawen* community. The study examines how *Kejawen* teachings relate to such delegitimizing narratives, from religious authorities and political parties who endorse more puritanical forms of Islam or moderate version of Islam under the banner of NU. Do such forms of religious intolerance inevitably weaken *Kejawen* communities, or not? *Kejawen* teaching seem a less attractive constituency for political parties to mobilise than those who adopt a fixed ideological compass like the purists and the moderates (Firro 2013, 771). Above all, I will suggest that it is not so much any deficiency in their esoteric or spiritual teachings that is jeopardizing the survival of *Kejawen*, but the very unequal distribution of resources and recognition. External pressures from less tolerant, more ritual-based, as well as highly organized and commercialized forms of Islam, also threaten to overwhelm the syncretism of *Kejawen*.

The study will show how those associated with *Kejawen* teachings and beliefs are placed in ambivalent and marginalized positions within the contemporary social and political climate in Indonesia, and are by-passed by unhealthy forms of political contestation that focus almost solely on external values of power accumulation, rather than on collective civil welfare and cultural preservation. In some ways, these recent developments are coming to impede the development of democratic process and even recognition of diverse cultural identities within Indonesia. Thus, this research paper addresses the historical significance of *Kejawen* teachings and beliefs, and shows how previous ideologies of the state and social structure of Indonesian society recognized this Javanese spiritual tradition, which will be shown to have been especially influential in the early formulation of Indonesian nationalism. In addition, the study seeks to draw out some lessons from the recent past, examining *Kejawen* texts and a range of rarely-examined *Kejawen* teachings. Finally, the research also discusses the continued relevance of esoteric *Kejawen* teachings today. It is suggested this belief systems, can potentially contribute to continued development of a peaceful and tolerant society in Indonesia. In addition, it can reinforce on democratic practices for political parties and social actors in the country. Lastly, the paper discusses what are the main obstacles for gaining resources, recognition and respect for *Kejawen* teaching, viewing Javanese religious beliefs as cultural rights, especially in the modern and digital era.

1.3 Research Questions

This research paper has one main question:

How has Kejawen teaching been recognized in post-independence Indonesian society?

There are three sub-questions which are:

- (1) To what extent did *Kejawen* teachings contribute towards formulation of the ideal of Indonesian national society after independence?
- (2) What kinds of perspectives on national development on peace can *Kejawen* teaching offer Indonesian society?
- (3) How do current political and social realities in Indonesia influence recognition and distribution of *Kejawen* teachings, and participation of *Kejawen* practitioners in religious and public life?

1.4 Methodology

This research paper relies mostly on secondary data for analysis. Although it is mainly literature-based research, this is supplemented by the use of visual and on-line materials, as well as selected number of open-ended and semi structural interviews. The author interviewed nine individuals, four of them are *Kejawen* teachers and practitioner. They are Romo Suryo, a *Kejawen* teacher from *paguyuban sambung rasa*, Mbah Harjo, a spiritual guide and community healer, Mr. Setyo Hajar Dewantoro, the head of Mahadaya Institute, and Mr. Widhy Artono Andy Pratikto, a *Kejawen* practitioner who is also author's uncle. Also, the author interviewed five high schoolers from Al-Izhar Pondok Labu Islamic school regarding the moral and religious education discusses in chapter four. In addition, as qualitative research, the study relies on the author's observations as a social actor who has lived in the social environment being researched. The analysis will be conducted in a dialogic manner, meaning that analysis will interchangeably move between reviewing scholarly and other literature, data from interviews and social media, alongside some experience-based observations. Although the selection of literature is subjective, its selection and interpretation has been guided by the need to address the main focus of the study, set by the research question and sub-questions. The author has therefore tried to locate the most relevant available research and data in both English and Bahasa, highlighting the relevance of content through both text analysis and coding, and matching of keywords (Archer 2018, 7). Thus, it can ensure data saturation.

The interviews of four *Kejawen* teachers and practitioners were conducted as part of this research paper uses the phenomenological method which is an intensive conversation that is intended to gather information and impressions from interviewees' interior awareness around a specific concern (Mohajan 2018, 9). The author uses chat apps like WhatsApp and Instagram to discuss the contexts and problems that arise from the research. Thus, the interview becomes a psychological tool that is conducted over several encounters with the same individuals, over time. This helps ensure that their psychological state and perceptions are well understood, which is important when considering the esoteric teachings of *Kejawen* and their influence on national development imaginaries in Indonesia. It can be noted that using the phenomenologic method of gaining deeper insights has involved reflecting deeply, not only on interview material around *Kejawen* esoteric teachings and ideas, but also by following up with questions and deeper explorations via extensive texting of interviewees around potential sources of insight (Mohajan 2018, 9). In addition, the interview with Mbah

Harjo is recorded and uploaded to YouTube (the link can be found in appendices). In this method, the author benefits to the discussion of the viewer in the comment section. The reactions of the viewers can indicate the people perspective on *Kejawen* teaching.

1.5 Chapter outline

The literature review of this research paper is in Chapter 2, which focuses on problems of lack of recognition and resources for *Kejawen* teaching. This chapter also reviews theories of religion and development, and meanings of key terms like syncretism, esoteric and spirituality. In Chapter 3, analysis of classic Indonesian nationalist texts is linked to elements of *Kejawen* teachings. This is done through analysing texts like Soekarno's independence speech of July 1945, the Preamble of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution, the Indonesian national motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and *Pancasila* itself (Mohajan 2018, 6). Chapter 3 also provides historical background to the chapters that follow. Chapter 4 then considers spaces available for teaching about *Kejawen* in formal and informal education. Finally, Chapter 5 and 6 ask how *Kejawen* teachings can survive in a context of the increasing appeal of less unitary forms of religious belief, especially those propagated by religious influencers and political parties in Indonesia. This chapter examines whether more formal recognition of the *Kejaswen* legacy might provide a solution, or at least an alternative. Given how marginalized, and even stigmatized, *Kejawen* beliefs and practices are today, how could recognition and improved resources help disseminate esoteric *Kejawen* teachings with a view to promoting more peaceful coexistence and democratic values? On the other hand, what risks could formal religious recognition and added state resources pose for the esoteric, syncretic teachings of *Kejawen* in future?

Chapter 2: *Kejawen*: a ‘Radical View of Unity’

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for the rest of the study. The moral dimensions of *Kejawen* teachings and its philosophy are discussed, and shown to have been a profound element influencing construction of Indonesia’s moral standards as a nation. Since modernity and globalization often repress the moral identity of individual societies, it follows that Indonesia has the right to determine its own national perspectives on moral philosophy and human rights, on the basis of its own people’s religious, spiritual, and cultural values (ter Haar 2009, 12). At the same time, a level of openness to the universality of beliefs should also be encouraged as part of nationalism, since the global movement of ideas, particularly regarding moral philosophy, has become almost inevitable.

2.2 Esoteric *Kejawen* teachings on unity of existence

Like Buddhism, and many other ‘spiritual’ religious traditions, *Kejawen* teaching stresses the ideals of psychological development and the freedom of human beings from fear and suffering. It concerns itself with the inner development of the human psyche (Shashangka 2014, 107), and in a sense aims to observe the problem of human suffering through working on the basis of emotions like fear, grief and sadness, as well as with situations of loneliness and insecurity. *Kejawen* teaching believes that human suffering is the outcome of separation, which means the separation of the self or the ego. When human beings operate through their ego, their actions become self-centered. A self-centered mindset is viewed as fertile ground for conflict and vice to be manifested.

The importance of dealing with human suffering is because of the social problems that suffering is believed to lead to, including violence, conflict, greed, corruption, aggression and the abuse of weaker others. Ideally, therefore, *Kejawen* teachings consider self-reflection as potentially a wider solution for moral and ethical problems in society, contributing in this way to a corresponding formulation of a more just and inclusive society. The teachings thus have goals of individual spiritual advancement, which in turn is taken to form the basis on which collective spiritual development can be constructed, at the level of society as a whole. Therefore, *Kejawen* teaching encourages individual spiritual development before collective spiritual development.

Most writings on the *Kejawen* teachings, emphasize the principle of the ‘unity of existence’ (*manunggaling kawulo gusti*) which is seen as the central tenet of *Kejawen* teaching. The principle of *manunggaling kawulo gusti* postulates the totality of world existence which connects the ontology of the natural world, with the notion of human thought and rationality, human imagination, and the existence of the soul. This principle of oneness of all existence, views human beings as micro-models of wider existence (*jagat kecil*) and the natural world as a macro-model of human existence (*jagat besar*) (Asmara 2013, 154). These models are seen as a reflection of how everything is inter-connected, and *Kejawen* teaching intends to explain the patterns involved, and in this way show the connections between ‘everything’.

This principle can be described through the story of infamous Javanese-*Kejawen* sage Syekh Siti Jenar. In the story Syekh Siti Jenar received enlightenment in the form of unique knowledge that said he was a God or Allah. He was charged with heresy by the Islamic

monarch at that time because he violated the first tenet of Syariah which is the act of *Shirk* or recognizing another god besides the one true god. This story was recounted in folklore as the story of a prominent scholar who went mad, because he kept shouting “I am a god”, allegedly after receiving the mystical knowledge of oneness. Because of that knowledge, he was deemed as troublemaker because he was challenging the religious tradition in that time as well as contesting the authority of religious leaders. On the other hand, he was deemed as a revolutionary figure of true religious teaching.

In the story, and perhaps in real life, he was decapitated for heresy and a miracle happened. His body disappeared a moment after his head fell off, and his splattered blood on the ground miraculously shaped the Arabic word for Allah, the name of God. This very folkloric story postulates that the teaching of the ‘unity of existence’ within the Javanese community has a history of martyrdom, one that arises out of a mismatch – or misunderstanding - between the insight of oneness, and the definition of correct conduct in the Islamic religion, through the Syariah (*shariah*). The story is also interesting, since in many ways, this clash of understandings continues between *Kejawen* and more formal versions of Islam even today, as this study will discuss.

Furthermore, *Manunggaling kawulo gusti* can be defined as total awareness of the oneness of perception, that means the actuality of one’s existence without denying the existence of the other. *Kejawen* teaching recognizes the principle of *manunggaling kawulo gusti* as a state of consciousness which is developed by a set of rituals that symbolize the quality of realizing one’s existence. So, *manunggaling kawulo gusti* is not an achievement but a state of adjusting and balancing the gaze of perception towards being able to perceive the unity of existence. It is also analogous with the concept of the perceiver is the perceived as well as the observer being the observed.

2.3 Oneness through the ages: pluralism and syncretisation

This principle of the unity of existence resonates with the concept coined by Jiddu Krishnamurti of ‘seeing what actually is’. Krishnamurti sees truth as total awareness and distinct from the kind of thoughts and sensations that come from the conscious thinking process and the external senses. For instance, one sees trees and mountains which are there as a fact. Furthermore, one says that trees and mountains are beautiful, or one wants to go hiking because trees and mountains are pretty. This is the product of conscious thinking processes and the external senses.

Krishnamurti argues that the state of total awareness require silence from thinking processes and the senses, as a precursor of understanding ‘what actually is’, a notion similar to ‘the unity of existence’. On the other hand, *manunggaling kawulo gusti* also explains the totality of all existence without a sense of external separation, resulting from what psychiatry calls ‘the ego’. In this psychological or spiritual state of total awareness, the ego is also perceived so that it cannot function to separate the self, because the ego has been paralyzed by the gaze of inner awareness that has unveiled how this separation works. However, the death of ego does not mean the non-existence of ego; it means sovereignty over one’s own ego. One may slip back into egoistical thinking and action, but one can readjust and rebalance that act of ego with a sense of remembrance (*eling*) which is able to turn an egotistical state back towards a state of total awareness of the ‘unity of everything’ (Asmara 2013, 154).

Manunggaling kawulo gusti, as a grand, holistic concept of unity, can be useful in explaining individual psychological and religious development. It can also be used as an alternative perspective for finding solutions for violence, injustices and conflicts in society. In the *Republic*, as Plato explains, justice is tied to a 'quality of the soul', and Plato places considerable emphasis on the importance of the individual's internal psychic state, as well as their actions and an individual's conduct in striving for just outcomes. Plato argues that there are internal and external aspects to justice. He explains that external acts of injustice will eventually disturb the internal balance of the soul, upsetting the modality of one's own happiness. Furthermore, according to Klosko, Plato also explains the characteristics of the just and unjust soul as the metaphysical foundation of his entire political theory (Klosko 2012, 8).

On the other hand, *manunggaling kawulo gusti* differs from Plato's notions of justice and injustice, since it explains the relationship between harmony of the soul or the psyche and acts of injustice the other way around. Whereas in Plato's *Republic*, he focuses on how an act of injustice or justice shapes the psyche or soul, he does not suggest the psyche or soul is shaping the external acts, reversing the relationship between consciousness and deeds (Klosko 2012, 8). Whereas Plato postulates that quality of one's soul will be reflected in the form of external deeds, his concern is from the perspective of external consequences of internal states, rather than from the perspective of the cause of internal states themselves.

In contrast, the concept of *manunggaling kawulo gusti*, especially in its mechanisms and methodology in teachings reflects an understanding that a just soul is the product of a perpetual inner struggles, involving perpetual efforts to realise the unity of existence. Therefore, a person behaves justly because he or she has managed to settle their inner conflicts and master the ego. To put this simply, both concepts emphasize the importance of the quality of the human soul. The *Kejawen* principle of *manunggaling kawulo gusti* starts with teachings about gaining first person insights and perspectives into how to be a just soul through internal struggle and religious exercise. Plato's concept provides a second person perspective for knowing or judging those who may be 'possessed' of a just soul; the focus is not on inner reflection, from the outside inwards, but on detecting the inner state of mind from external actions.

Interestingly, Plato's elaboration of the concept of the quality of the soul is implied in anthropological approaches to knowledge, which tend to look at external empirical reality to deduce inner values, cultural ideas, beliefs and psychological states of peoples. Plato especially analyses the characteristic of just and unjust souls through their religious attitudes. The attitudes of a just soul become embodied in the set of ritual values, which in turn determine how one recognizes that character as reflecting a just, or an unjust, soul. On the other hand, *manunggaling kawulo gusti* presupposes a spiritual mode of being that can produce a character that has the quality of a just soul without the influence of external human agency. Instead, a just soul arises through the agency of individual mind on itself, through the exercise of awareness and self-rule.

The use of metaphysical reflection to address social problems is not a popular approach to development in modern times, although the commonly-used expression in social movement circles 'be the change you want to see in the world', which is attributed to Gandhi, does reflect something of that quality. Also, in the thinking of Thomas Aquinas the same significance of theology in the construction of social and political philosophy, can be seen. This suggests that it is widely considered plausible to connect religious assumption with social and political behavior of people in society, including in a society heavily influenced by religious and spiritual value like Indonesia.

The concept of *manunggaling kawulo gusti* could in theory be an effective tool of esoteric spiritual learning, to shape personal social and political behavior in the direction of greater tolerance, democracy and peace. In his famous *Summa Theologiae*, influenced by Neo-Platonism in his view of the hierarchal cosmology of human beings, Aquinas combines the Christian cosmological view with a Neo-Platonic cosmological view (Sigmund 2012, 2). In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas cites the story of Dionysus going into the underworld. He suggests the idea parallels that of human beings' journey from the lower worlds of desires into the higher existence of the gods. In fact, the concept of *manunggaling kawulo gusti* is the product of theological acculturation between Islam and indigenous Javanese spirituality.

In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas also syncretizes two sets of beliefs - the Christian and the Neo-Platonic understandings of the relations between physical reality and the realm of the spiritual, beyond physical reality (Sigmund 2012, 3). Also, in *manunggaling kawulo gusti*, there is an elaboration of the concept of *tawhid* (oneness of God) also found in Islamic theology. Aquinas was trying to harmonize philosophical and theological thinking in an environment where Greek literature and art was prominent, and Christianity the chief religion.

2.4 The political economy of religion

Neoliberal ethics have had ambivalent implications for Indonesia's religious and spiritual development in recent decades (Gonzales-Vicente 2018, 101). Rationalization processes in Indonesia do not appear to work as they did in Europe from the early 1900s, with the decline of organized religions and a growing interest in new forms of spirituality. In North America, by contrast, religion remains an important factor in the political marketplace and in the neo-liberal market of ideas. Unlike the rise of atheistic discourses in Europe, and the growing tendency for total withdrawal from all forms of religious life, mystical thinking and superstition have not been replaced by science in the West either. In the USA and in other Western countries, religion and science have instead continued to coexisted, without any apparent incompatibilities.

Similarly, Indonesian society remains embedded within religious principle, combined with strong beliefs in superstition and magic. In such a setting, the neoliberal ethics of the marketplace, which transforms everything, turn religious principles and mystical thinking and imagination into a currency. By combining forms of entertainment and forms of resource mobilization, distribution and even modes of recognition, through law, and of redistribution of resources and participation, religion becomes a core issues of public associational life (Fraser 1998, 1). Religious organisations sell the 'commodity' of faith to the common people, and this market comes to be of interest to oligarchs who use it as an economic and political tool to control minds, gain power and make profits. We consider this further in Chapter 5.

This process is full of risks for society (as in the US, with the election of Trump). This is because the neo-liberal mobilizing of religious markets for 'salvation' both amplifies religious orthodoxy, and become a means of wealth creation, reinforcing the distance between religious traditions and mobilizing 'followers' around powerful leaders, who influence public opinion and even elections. As such a religious 'market' develops, and creates greater intolerance for other religious or spiritual ideas. This can even produce forms of religious fascism that end up polarizing society in ways that ensure continued control of elites over the majority. This is the more deceptive and alluring secularization rather than oppressive approach of total religious banning which is happened in Soviet Lenin and China Mao Gon-

zales-Vicente 2018, 101). Commodification of religious values has to be observed and analyzed through education, especially in elementary school because it will transform religious values to mere production of commodity which is contrary to idea of social justice and freedom.

2.5 Critical thinking for moral and religious education

In the spirit of reflecting towards unity of existence, *Kejawen* teaching postulates the importance of critical thinking which is best described in the practice of *Shalat Daim* or eternal prayer. *Shalat daim* is a form of meditative practice that could be done every time and everywhere, also it does not need any kind of ritual posture like *Padmasana* or lotus position which is sitting on cross-legged. *Shalat daim* is a practice of observation and realization of one thinking process which tells that the thinker is not distinct from the thinking rather it is interconnected with one another (Shashangka 2014, 261).

The concept of *Sholat daim* resembles the concept of ‘thinking being’ coined by Martin Heidegger. He explains that ‘thinking Being does not mean to think “about” Being. Nor does it mean that the human being is a being that thinks’ (Dahlin 2009, 540). This form of thinking is believed to be lacking in educational institution (ibid). Heidegger believes that this form of thinking is the beginning of philosophy which presupposes the calculative thinking and instrumental reason (Ibid). This form of thinking promotes the realization of freedom of thinking and expression which is often controlled by authoritarian politics.

In social science, critical thinking is imperative to understand the structures of social institution (Weinstein 1995, 38). Historical and cultural elements of social institution can be analyzed to uncover the construction of thought and idea (ibid). Education institution in Indonesia attaches to the framework of *Pancasila* and the constitution. Those instrument of law and ethic were emerging from religious and cultural insights through human agency that has multicultural complexity. Thus, authoritarian tendency to create definitive and absolute guidelines cannot be realized, considering the nature of knowledge that still on perpetual construction. This idea strengthens the notion of democracy and challenge the assertion of dominance. In conclusion, this chapter has shown that *Kejawen* teachings postulate the existence of shared identities among human beings, and tend towards seeing similarities across religious divides rather than differences

2.6 Conclusion

Kejawen teaching promotes inclusive view that shared by great religious traditions. The inclusive view is represented by the concept of unity of existence or *manunggaling kawulo gusti*. This view connects the various religious and moral traditions that are contesting in Indonesia, considering that Indonesia has multicultural society. It leads to long syncretisation process that inevitably connecting religion and culture. However, current modernisation and globalisation create more dynamic exchange of ideas, including foreign ideas. Neoliberal perspective on market of ideas undermines the proliferation of minority view like *Kejawen* teaching because of monopoly and inequality of resource. In addition, unawareness of conflicting ideas in modern Indonesian society does not given adequate attention. Thus, critical thinking in analysing the history of religious and moral ideas is needed in order to gain clear understanding how these ideas were constructed.

Chapter 3: An esoteric perspective on national unity

3.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly discusses the position of *Kejawen* as an esoteric form of belief, within the national ideology of *Pancasila*, which as explained in an earlier chapter was the basis for the official post-independence ideology of nationalism in Indonesia. This chapter uncovers how *Pancasila* has connected philosophy and religion into the Indonesian national framework in a way that is analogous to the nature of esotericism. In addition, *Pancasila* carries the doctrine of “secret of state” or *Arcana Imperii* which is placing the philosophy of *Pancasila* as a foundation where all the national political project refers to (Vatter 2015, 183). Every nation inspires their collective political struggle not only through material ends as well as through spiritual ends. The latter proves to be effective because it plays with human impulsive emotion. Using spiritual ends for national political struggle is best portrayed when Soekarno instills the idea of unity of existence (*Manunggaling kawulo gusti*) into *Pancasila* and Indonesian national motto (*Bhineka tunggal ika*).

3.2 Background and context of *Pancasila*

Pancasila was established as a political consensus of the republic which consists various aspiration of Indonesian people. As political consensus, *Pancasila* also accommodates the metaphysical and spiritual view of the people. The problem of the existence of humankind, world, and god are enshrined within the virtue of *Pancasila* (Harjosatoto 1996, 2). Thus, *Pancasila* could be approached from the metaphysical and spiritual point of view, through the principle of *genetivus objectivus* which is placed *Pancasila* as a philosophical object that derives its values from religious and spiritual tradition that embraced by the people (ibid). Interestingly, Soekarno postulates that the first clause of *Pancasila* which is belief in one god derives from indigenous value, could it be the philosophical basis of the first clause of *Pancasila* adopts *Kejawen* view on unity of existence? Based from the discussion with Romo Suryo, he believes that Soekarno is a fervent follower of *Kejawen* and he understands about the notion of *manunggaling kawulo gusti* or unity of existence. Romo Suryo argues that Soekarno always acknowledge different philosophical tradition of Indonesian people. He tends to syncretize different world view in the name of national unity. It proven when he coined the term of *Nasakom* which is translated as nationalism, religion, and communism. This concept was intended to ease the political contestation in that time when nationalist, religious people, and communist are contesting in the politics. The connection of *Pancasila* as political consensus that carries the doctrine of *Arcana Imperii* and esoteric teaching of *Kejawen* is best described by the argument of Arthur Melzer:

“esotericism in philosophy seems to be the analogon of the *arcana imperii* in politics, as it is the analogon of the mysteries in most religions: in all these cases, the secret is in reality the basis of the claims to rule and to authority on the part of the few (philosophers, statesmen, priests) over the many.” (cited in Vatter 2015, 183).

Moreover, *Pancasila* has a significance metaphysical component which deals with form or ideal which implies its perpetual function to formulate ideal future and actuality which implies the existence of truth. The actuality of *Pancasila* refers to the actuality of god which deemed to be the highest form of reality. Thus, individual or group can utilize *Pancasila* to

reflect on current reality and its problems, hence, one can formulate a form or ideal in order to achieve the actuality, in this case is the actuality of god which is the highest form of reality (Harjosatoto 1996, 7). Yet, the failure to understand the salience point about the nature of god or the highest form of reality doom the process to wrong direction. Thus, religious teaching plays a great deal of importance in understanding the proper religiosity, what means to be religious and what are the characteristic of religious person. *Kejawen* teaching could lends a great deal of lexicon to understand the notion of religious life. Predisposition of its syncretic and apolitical nature could elevate *Kejawen* teaching above the problem of division and exclusiveness.

3.3 *Kejawen*, state ideology and national development

After Indonesia seized independence in the year 1945, three national figures namely Soekarno, Moh. Yamin, and Soepomo formulated a state ideology in the form of a set of philosophical principles known as *Pancasila* (Mudhofir 1996, 10). This contains five principles which are (i) belief in one God, (ii) humanitarianism, (iii) national unity, (iv) consensual democracy, and (v) social justice. *Pancasila* is considered the constitutional basis of the state, which means the policies and practices of by the state (the government) should adopt and refer to the principles contained in *Pancasila*. Even though *Pancasila* is considered a national ideology, the formulation of its principles cannot be separated from the cultural setting in which it was formulated. That means the national spirits contained in *Pancasila* which is presumably adopted by all Indonesians are derived from their own cultural and religious perspective. The goal of *Pancasila* was explicitly to bring together and compile all cultural perspectives from numerous ethnic groups in the country and label them as national culture or *kebudayaan nasional* (Sastrapratedja 1996, 24).

In the realm of philosophical inquiry, Dr. Sukanto Notonagoro finds that *Pancasila* is underpinned by three principles: the cultural principle, the religious principle, and the state principle. These principles correspond to the formulation of *Pancasila* and the conceptual basis of its various clauses. For instance, the cultural principle of *musyawarah* or public discussion is enshrined in the fourth clause of *Pancasila* and later became the model for the legislative system in Indonesia. Historically, *musyawarah* is a concept that arises from the tendency of Indonesian society to settle conflicts publicly. In addition, Islamic scholar like Dr. Nurcholis Madjid have postulated that *Pancasila* has been “the meeting point” of all the worldviews of the Indonesian people, including between the religious views of the people (cited in Hidayatullah 2006, 38). *Pancasila* is considered to be designed to accommodate the spiritual nature of religious views to fit into the public realm. The aim was that the spiritual nature of religion, especially the common unity concerning the desirability of peace, would contribute to the formulation of social conditioning to form the nation as a whole. As Dr Sukanto Notonagoro suggests, the spiritual dimension of *Pancasila* would especially apply to political life. In his rather abstract understanding of the spirituality of *Pancasila*, Dr Notonagoro was trying to expound the view that political life in Indonesia should be exercised in accordance with human needs. These include cultural and religious needs, involving strong cultural and religious attachments that are important for developing an individual identity.

However, implementation of *Pancasila* over the course of Indonesia’s development has been deemed unsatisfactory. During the years from 1967 to 1985, Soeharto ordered the operationalization of *Pancasila* in terms of policies and practices (Weatherbee 1985, 133). One instance of unsatisfactory changes of reiterating the principles of *Pancasila* was when as Pres-

ident Soeharto used *Pancasila* to legitimize his authoritarian rule and to silence political opposition. To oppose his regime was considered tantamount to opposing *Pancasila*, making the Soeharto government the sole interpreter of whether a political act could be considered *Pancasila*, or in accordance with *Pancasila* principles. By 1985, Soeharto set up an indoctrination program around *Pancasila* democracy and its implementation. This program is required for junior and senior high school through the *Pancasila* Moral Education (PMP) (Weatherbee 1985, 134). Soeharto's effort to make *Pancasila* into the sole guiding philosophy of post-independence social and political practices, was filled with controversy, however, and especially regarding the position of religion and political opposition (Weatherbee 1985: 133).

The issue of multiculturalism, or cultural pluralism, has to be taken seriously, because movement of ideas leads to reconstruction of ideas. Modern Indonesia suffers from confusion around how to reconstructs and reformulate ideas of public, private and national morality. Indonesia's religious beliefs emerged from the various moral and spiritual traditions of the world (ter Haar 2009, 10). Ironically, for a society as religious as Indonesia, the anti-colonial mindset that challenged western traditions also introduced the idea of the nation state, as the basis of Indonesian constitutional and secular values (Sudarsono 0AD, 1). On the other hand, people in Indonesia had strong religious and cultural values that would prove resistant to secular nationalism.

In subtle ways, *Kejawen* teachings have contributed to the formulation of ideal society through practice and custom. However, *Kejawen* teachings cannot simply be equated with Javanese culture. It is a misunderstanding to think that *Kejawen* teaching belongs to Javanese people. From my own my interpretation, *Kejawen* deals with human problems, especially, psychological problem. It advocates inner healing, how to deal with inner conflict so a person who practices *Kejawen* would not manifest conflict in society (Chakim 2007, 262). Like other religion which originated from particular geographical region. The problem with *Kejawen*'s inclusivity is where it came from as many labelled religions and philosophies. It might seem strange to see Western people adopt *Kejawen* teachings, yet, it is quite normal to see Javanese people adopt *Kejawen*. However, many Western figures like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alan Watts, and current popular spiritual guru Eckhart Tolle derived some part of their teachings from eastern spirituality. Thus, by implication, *Kejawen* is inclusive and can also be studied by all human beings regardless of their personal or national backgrounds. In addition, the context of *Kejawen* teaching can be found in other religion but with different elaborations, reflecting its syncretic nature (Susilo 2016, 162).

3.4 Interpretation of *Pancasila*

Pancasila as philosophical system and state ideology becomes the academic and political entry point to insert *Kejawen* teaching into Indonesian political and social consensus (Sudharmono 1995, 1). It is possible to re-interpret *Pancasila* because its nature is dynamic and perpetual (Naim 2015, 3). *Pancasila* is not a mere state ideology, but it is an ideology of process in achieving people freedom (Pranarka 1996, 20). Thus, any modification or development is possible to be realized. From its creation, *Pancasila* has been an ideology of the people which means its legitimacy depends on sovereignty of the people (Soeprapto 2013, 107). Thus, people must involve in interpreting *Pancasila* in order to achieve freedom and welfare which is also the foundation of democracy.

The difference perspective of general welfare, education, order, peace, and social justice as well as its implementation between nationalist and *Kejawen* teaching are becoming debatable discourse. The discourses have not been mediated properly because the innate nature of

nation state is forcing different beliefs and cultures to merge under the rule of state. Like all former colonized nation, Indonesia does not have other option to bind its vast territory. Predisposition of nation state to merge different identity into one rule is problematic, it could also perceive as an illusion. Because the failure to uphold justice caused by unequal relation whether it is social, political, and economic would be a threat to ruler legitimacy. Whatever form of state and government one has, it does not really matter, Because the real problem is always the failure to establish peace and justice which leads to division. Unaddressed division will inevitably bring instability as well as violence.

Modernity and the *weltanschauung*, or worldview, of neoliberalism can be translated into the methodology of benchmarking national country-by-country achievements. A state deemed 'successful' or 'developed' is always so considered because of the accumulation of wealth, total production, advancement of technology, and because of so called political stability and democracy. These kinds of benchmark can obstruct recognition of the rights of minorities, however (Sudjito et al 2018, 70). National growth and international rank can become political tools to deceive people into believing that their country is on the right track and is making 'great strides' forward. Politicians find that their legitimacy can depend on how their record in economic growth, employment and material progress, is perceived. This encourages them to produce the desired economic and material results, rather than to focus on their own responsibility as state agents, to emancipate minorities and those who are disadvantaged from discrimination and suffering.

This way of thinking serves different political purposes. It has also shifted a state that claimed to be grounded in morally good attributes, a state whose core principle was to protect the dignity of the person, into different trajectories. The first clause of *Pancasila* has lost its meaning, as the notion of "believing in one god" as the clause says has been twisted away from its previous, inclusive meaning. For political convenience, the politics of religion has moved towards a strict monotheistic view of god, under the influence of ultra-Conservative Islamic group like *forum pembela Islam*. They believe that the first clause of *Pancasila* is derived from the concept of *Tawhid* or the oneness of god, which departs from all notions of diverse manifestations of God in other forms of religion. Thus, *Pancasila* is now deemed to be inspired solely with reference to the Holy Quran (Sudjito et. al 2018, 71). Consequently, this gives the impression that Islam has higher legitimacy than all other religions, in forming the Indonesian nation.

The discussion about this clause is often limited to freedom of belief and worship, and usually becomes a topic of debate around the organized religions as established and authorized places of worship. Hardly ever is the important notion of living religiously alongside various faith-based communities, discussed or elaborated on. Unmanaged modernity has become a factor that is contributing to the devastation of national, cultural, and religious identities across different parts of Indonesia. Those identities are still needed to distinguish a nation from its colonial roots, albeit, in holistic spiritual perspective like *Kejawen* there is ultimately no such thing as different, mutually exclusive or essentialized identities. In actuality, a nation needs those identities to contemplate whether their way of life is right or wrong according to the goals and the visions that they have established. Colonial ways of thinking are still prevalent in Indonesian society because of people's dependency on foreign culture and religious values, whether secular or in the form of organized religion. Indonesian people are not yet ready to embrace their own national identity fully, in part because the colonial mindset is perpetuated by the educational system, both the western-oriented elements, and the more Islamic teachings. Students from elementary school to high school are merely trained to memorize *Pancasila* which is relatively easy (Mudhofir 1996, 11). However, the

interpretation of *Pancasila*, and how it became the key Indonesian national ideology in the first place, and what lies behind it philosophically.

3.5 Conclusion

Pancasila reflects the attributes of unity of existence which are inclusive, dynamic and perpetual. It postulates the struggle to unite regardless the social and political differences in society. The founding fathers like Soekarno, Moh. Yamin, and Soepomo foresees the multicultural reality of Indonesian people that naturally hostile to each other if there is not understanding about the common ground that presupposes the contesting values. Esoteric view of *Kejawen* teaching is actually influence the basis of *Pancasila* which today is still become the chief concept to determine the next political project of Indonesia.

Chapter 4: *Kejawen* Teachings in Educational Institutions

4.1 Introduction

Until today, *Kejawen* teachings remain largely informal, and are not explicitly mentioned in school curricula, most media or in moral philosophy, whether inside Indonesia or outside. This absence is especially significant in the context of primary and secondary education which is meant to be the cornerstone of national development. Thus, for children to have access and familiarity towards *Kejawen* teachings, this would require a formal place in the curriculum of schools, for these teachings. This chapter discusses author recommendations for formal educational institution in Indonesia to develop moral and religious education that has esoteric perspective not only exoteric through the pedagogical technique of critical thinking. This esoteric paradigm believes to develop the understanding of pluralism and syncretism within Indonesian plural society (Kuswanjono 2006, 77).

This in turn would require, first and foremost, *Kejawen* to be recognized by the state as a religion, and consequently, for *Kejawen* teachers to benefit from the distribution of resources for education. *Kejawen* teachings provided for children in schools today are not part of the formal curriculum, so today there is neither recognition nor resources for such beliefs to be taught or disseminated formally. This problem is very much in line with what Nancy Fraser suggests are the principles of resources, recognition and participation; all three elements are needed, and each implies to some extent the other (Fraser 1998, 6).

4.2 PKN and *Kejawen* in civic education

Moral and religious education in school (both state and private) is conveyed in two subjects namely civic education (*pendidikan Pancasila dan kewarganegaraan/ PKN*) and religious education (*pendidikan agama*). Those two subjects are not necessarily the same, albeit, they are containing similar purpose and content. The purpose is to familiarize student in how they perceive what is good which is a deed and attribute that should be conducted and what is bad which is a deed and attribute that is should be avoided. However, the content of both subject derived from quite distant sources which are the constitution (law of rights) that based from Kantian perspective of perpetual peace and religious texts. (Ibda 2012, 339).

PKN derives its sources from constitutional law which is borrowing the liberal ideological framework of United Nation as a new nation state emerging from the aftermath of World War II. This secular perspective of norm and ethic contributes huge portion of the formulation of *PKN* curriculum. However, there is incongruency from the historical-ideological teaching of *PKN* as the author experienced when he was learning *PKN* in high school. The teacher and the textbook do not explain the root of what nationalism we have today (Maftuh 2008, 137). Many students are confused about whether the moral framework is secular or religious. Within the household, Indonesians are still using religious perspective of looking at norm. yet, the constitution is actually very secular in nature, but religious mindset of the people fails to realize that they live in a society binds by secular ideology.

PKN derives its sources from universal rather undebatable attribute of noble individual which is reflected from Pancasila. Attributes like compassion, politeness, empathy, sympathy,

bravery, commitment, dedication, and justice. It implies nationalistic spirit that acquired based on the story of revolutionary war and independence (Hidayah 2018, 71).

On other hand, *Pendidikan agama* derives its sources from respective theologies depend on the religion of the student. Unlike *PKN*, *Pendidikan agama* naturally includes reflection on how the morality is constructed. It is because theology always gives transcendental view of nature. Thus, it makes this subject more appealing and stimulate student to perceive morality beyond the facts. In addition, religion offers romantic perspective which serve as a reward from doing what it thinks is good.

Although nowadays, *Pendidikan agama* has been tainted because of the rise of radical group which is quite rampant in Indonesia. These radical groups advocate polarization which is contrary to the idea of unity of existence that the author has mentioned in chapter two of this paper. Politically geared religious radicalism has turned the true religious meaning which is inclusive into polarization. *Pendidikan agama* should not be politicized because it meant to be an education which is sensitive to peace-making (Ridwan 2013, 173).

Pancasila is recognized as *a priori* of public policy formulation. Therefore, the formulation of educational curriculum in general has to deduct its principle from *Pancasila*. Education practice must be done by negotiation and dialectical manner not by hegemony of ideas (Ridwan 2013, 176). In addition, *Pancasila* does not allow indoctrination in educational system.

4.3 Promising Developments in Elementary Schools

There has been some major development in Cilacap and Yogyakarta. Religious class based on Kejawen has been introduced and established. There are fifty students joining in this Kejawen class in Cilacap and seven students joining in Yogyakarta. Muslim Hadiwiguna Putra a cultural practitioner or *Budayawan* in Cilacap has been appointed as teacher in this subject (Rachmawati 2020). However, the subject is called *Pendidikan untuk penghayat kepercayaan* which is translated as religious education for indigenous believe.

This naming preference exists because the implication of constitutional court ruling in 2017 that generalize indigenous beliefs and followers to one integrated term which is *penghayat kepercayaan*. The author argues that to recognize a concept, idea, or group of people needs to explicitly mention the exact term preferred by those who follow. *Kejawen* should be called *Kejawen* to give sense of recognition towards its follower and it should also apply to other indigenous beliefs that exist in Indonesia. Moreover, there is a problem regarding to administrative infrastructure of this subject. Muslim is not receiving salary from the government because he is not a government employee, he is only recognized as a volunteer. Thus, there are still inequality of access on resource which very apparent if we compare Kejawen teaching with other main religions.

The inequality remains because the government is rarely recognizing and focusing on the local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*) in formulating the design of local development. The local development must include the existing attributes and elements in the society. The government should make the marketplace of commodities and ideas in favor of the local. the development that heavily relied on economic development must be shifted to development which focuses more on human development. The case mentioned above is an example of positive development that is very late. But it is quintessential to the development that focus on marketplace of ideas. Local development that exclude local perspective on how they perceive and understand development would make the policy impotent. It best portrayed when the regime of Soeharto (*Orde Baru*) handles local development that was relying on profit (Asrom 2007, 205). There was cultural domination from modern and urban people over

traditional and rural people. Besides, uneven economic development between urban and rural areas is creating a social gap which makes the rural people feels inferior towards urban people.

4.4 The benefit of spiritual teaching on youth mental health

In recent years, some psychotherapists have found promising evidence of the importance of spiritual identity in relation to the mental health of a person (Poll & Smith 2012, 129). A sense of spiritual identity, often represented as the sense of a connection between the person and god, proves to be effective in restoring and recuperating from mental health problems. This research also explains that healthy identity and sense of connection with the spiritual world can help prolong lifespan and may lower chances of succumbing to depression.

That is resonant with the quintessential tenets of *Kejawen* teachings, which speak of the importance of certainty as well as doubt in one inner life. A person should have doubt when it comes to questioning their existence and their connection to god. On the other hand they should not doubt everything because this endangers their sense of self; there should be an inner sense of certainty that comes from a sense of oneness and which in turn can avoid that excessive doubts, including self-doubts, and questioning the existence of God, can cause harm to one's mental health.

William James introduces the development of the spiritual self-theory in which he explains that every individual has two aspects of the self which are the "I" and the "me". The "me" consists of material "me", social "me", and spiritual "me". The material "me" consists of one body, looks, and possessions. The social "me" implies how one is seen and responded to by other people, or another person. The spiritual "me" describes one's internal thinking processes, reflections, and contemplation. The conscious "I" projects various images of "me" and connects various aspects of "me" to create one whole identity as a person.

However, William James argues that spiritual "me" is the permanent component that "I" needs to seek for integration, because it has an intimate and metaphysical relationship in how the "I" perceives its own existence. The other "me" aspects are not permanent, since death exists, and possessions vanish, so the significance of material "me" and social "me" diminishes. However, spiritual "me" can persist, well into old age, and even beyond death. Thus, in James' approach the spiritual "me" is recognized as the core of one actualization of existence. The spiritual "me" can be described psychologically and physiologically, however in theistic terms it is also possible to describe it metaphysically (Poll & Smith 2012, 130). It is akin to the concept to soul in the discussion so far.

4.5 In defence of informality

In *Kejawen*, as in many other spiritual teachings, the existence of moral and ethical value is located within the individual. It is aligned with the teaching of *Kejawen* which place internal or psychological development on personal level. The term of *guru sejati* or the true teacher implies individual to seek truth within themselves before following or asking any religious leader about the notion of reality and challenges one faces in their life. *Kejawen* teacher gives full authority to its disciples in order to process their own thought, feeling, and intuition, this concept is called *olah rasa*. *Olah rasa* can only be achieved when there is freedom of the indi-

viduals who are doing it, otherwise, one cannot fully reflect and observe his/her life complexity thoroughly and independently. Moreover, *olah rasa* correlates with critical thinking which dare to question any facts that happened in one own life and society with utmost freedom. The author suggests that educational institution to gradually begin tearing any of the components that become the obstacles in achieving academic freedom. The predisposition of being afraid that freedom of thought could destroy moral order should be vanquished and faced with reasonable approach (Maftuh 2008, 135).

I argue that the development of moral and religious teaching in formal institution is stagnantly slow and rather not having any fundamental change. It is barely discussing any so called abstract or unusual subjects like human suffering, nature of desire, nature of violent, esoteric interpretation of scriptures, religious syncretism, cultural pluralism, etc. It is only confined in simple and banal subjects like free sex, brawl, stealing, bullying, and other teenage misdemeanors. I do not say that those things are not important but these kind of “politically correct” subjects of discussion are antithetical to significance development which is desperately needed in the actuality of complex society. Most importantly, the sense of self authority as a method to develop one psychological development is paramount. *PPKN* derives its mode of teaching from the religious and cultural identity of the nation. In fact, eastern religious tradition encourages doubt to examine reality, it is in contrast with western religious tradition that substitutes doubt with faith. *Kejawen* teaching also encourages doubt as an important component to understand reality and unveiling illusion. In addition, doubt is an attribute of inquisitive person which also linked to the critical approach of thinking. Generally, the principle of doubt and inquisitive quality encouraged by *Kejawen* not necessarily need to be institutionalized. However, because of unequal power relation which historically almost always in the hand of political regime which predominantly anti critics, *Kejawen* teaching has become the idea of minority and perceived as an artifact of past culture rather than sophisticated religious and spiritual legacy (Lubis 2019, 271).

Conservatism of education has been the scourge of minority groups including *Kejawen* follower. It is quite an interesting phenomenon that Javanese as an ethnic group is the dominant ethnic-political group in Indonesia, especially in Yogyakarta. However, the Javanese seems to be marginalized in their religious culture. Uncritical implementation of syncretism gradually erodes the authentic Javanese religious and spiritual values (ibid). Religious empires like Majapahit which has Hindu and Buddhist influence and later sultanate of Yogyakarta which has Islamic influence has put *Kejawen* teaching on bargaining situation. Thus, uncritical implementation of syncretism could erase some of the contents from the parties that have less power. In this case, *Kejawen* puts its teaching on the pedestal of bigger religious idea of organized religions. This kind of implication also occurs when Indonesia obtained its independence. Hegemony of nationalist ideas which reflected in Pancasila is also the product of syncretism between nationalism, socialism, communism, Islamism, and indigenous beliefs.

4.6 Critical pedagogy

The method of critical pedagogy can elevate *Kejawen* teaching into the surface of mainstream education. Critical pedagogy could transform deeply politicized school into educational institution that has justice and liberation orientation. As the author mentioned earlier, freedom is the fundamental principle of democratic society which rest its sovereignty on the people. Thus, freedom in education should be endeavored to stimulate student awareness in perceiving social reality. Critical pedagogy has been used by Marxist, Frankfurt school of thought,

and Feminist to advocate minority rights. It can also tackle the hegemony of political economy by focusing education towards the complexity of human problems which is obviously not only limited to economic (Ahmad 2016, 96).

Elementary education which consist of primary school (*sekolah dasar*), middle school (*sekolah menengah pertama*), and senior high school (*sekolah menengah akhir*) are the proper institutions to have a critical approach to religious pedagogy (Ahmad 2016, 129). It is because those institutions have greater access and reach across society than universities, for instance, which educate only the children of the elite, for the most part. Thus, people from diverse economic background can enjoy high quality education without paying a lot of money. Also, involving teacher from minority group like in the story of Mr. Muslim is one of the commendable progress in promoting indigenous narrative. Although, the government should notice the lack of proper salary for teachers. One of the major inequalities that become main problem of Indonesian education is about the amount of salary. There are two types of teacher, one is state official teacher (guru PNS) which receive salary around two million to five million rupiah according to education level, for instance teacher that has high school diploma would get three million rupiah while teacher that has bachelor degree would get four million rupiah per month. However, there is honorary teacher (guru honorer) which does not get much salary. They only get fifty thousand rupiah to two hundred thousand rupiah per month. That salary cannot even cover daily expenses let alone monthly expenses. That is inhumane treatment given to the most vital profession in a country.

4.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter we have seen that a lesson in class is naturally framed to a particular curriculum, a syllabus, and the limited time for discussion, as well as students' capacity to understand the subject matter, as well as being tailored to the different ethnic origins of students. Not all students in Yogyakarta are Javanese, of course, and the children in one class are likely to come originally, or their parents will come, from many different ethnic and even religious backgrounds, even if the vast majority will consider themselves Muslims. To insert *Kejawen* teaching into the classroom will encounter obstacles that go beyond non-recognition from the government or a hostile attitude from religious groups with a strong social media presence. Obstacles also arise from the school pupils who are psychologically conditioned by their home life and previous education, inside and outside the classroom, to adhere to particular ideas, and consider other kinds of practices not worth of respect. Thus, such esoteric and spiritual subject matter is perhaps best introduced to children and in classes in informal ways, rather than being formalized and placed in the curriculum where it may cause open contention. The very first thing to be recognized is that *Kejawen* teaching is not an exclusive religious teaching for Javanese people but it is actually a philosophy to human psychological freedom.

Chapter 5: Commodification: Religion and Esoteric *Kejawen* Knowledge

5.1 Introduction

Religion as a system of conduct influences the economic behavior of its subject which later relate to the degree of individual consumption. Spiritual values often commodified to strengthen the sense of belonging (as later will be explained in this chapter) between individuals that have claim to embrace those values. For instances, *Kejawen* aestheticism encourages to live meekly and humbly which means less consumption (Tietje 2019, 705). On the other hand, pro-economic growth faith like Protestantism encourages accumulation of wealth for the purpose of greater good (Koehler 2019, 447). Those examples portray how religious principle influences the economic behavior of believer. This chapter explains how transcendental spirit of religious economy affects the social order and how the politicians and social elites in Indonesia use this instrument to reinforce their political struggle.

5.2 The rise of religious neo-liberalism

Discussing such esoteric religious groupings is made even more difficult since some adherents do not use their 'brand' name, not binding themselves specifically to the named tradition of spiritual teachings. For instance, most *Kejawen* followers do not label themselves as *Kejawen* practitioners, but borrowing common religious identities like Islam, to describe their religious beliefs. One reason for the loose allegiance of adherents to the label is precisely the open, tolerant message of most such esoteric spiritual beliefs and traditions, which are syncretic nature. Its influence still lingers through the construction of idea, but its own discourse rarely given adequate attention, thus it borrows another discourse to survive. This scenario is happened to *Kejawen* teaching for millennia. *Kejawen* as a way of looking at things through the lens of a Javanese cultural perspective, reflective perhaps of people who managed to survive the hegemony of many successive religious empires one after the other, from Buddhism and Hinduism, to versions of Christianity and Islam. In modern times, with globalization and the neo-liberal logic of the market, branding and followers, the scenario that is developing is more complex because of the strong element of internationalism that promotes a neoliberal ethic based on gaining power and profit through religious scams and manipulation of the market in belief (Gonzales-Vicente 2018, 102). This is not so different from nationalist approaches to religious organisations, which uses the strongest and most dominant beliefs to gain adherence to nationalist values. Later political parties use religious intolerance to mobilise supporters and gain electoral victory.

The rise of literalist interpretations of religious principles based on holy texts can also be seen as intertwined with the hegemony of neoliberal worldviews and radical secularization through mass media and mass markets. The hegemony of construction and reconstruction of religious principles by elites can be linked to the theory of the difference between dynamic and static forms of religious belief. Henri Bergson in his book *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, describes how morality and religion develop along two different lines (Lenoir 2003). He said that:

“The static religion was connected to dogma, morality and ritual. It was intended for the general congregation. The dynamic religion was to be found in mysticism” (Lenoir 2003).

By implication, the dynamic religion was for elites, and those who wanted to go 'deeper', not necessarily deeper into theology or texts, but into a speculative philosophy of faith. Bergson defined religion as dynamic if it imposes creative emotions and freedom either collectively or individually as a precursor to formulating or reformulating norms in relation with religious principles. A dynamic approach to religious belief, for Bergson is manifested, or made visible, in the way communication takes place among members around constructing their shared ideal. Dynamic religion is linked with the open morality theorem, which includes everyone and aims at peace. A dynamic approach also reflects principles of universality and oneness (Harjosatoto 1996, 8). Open morality, where religion is viewed as something dynamic, postulates creation not causal representation, so that adherents of that faith or religion are seen as possessing creative emotions. From this perspective, the self or the soul has sovereignty over what it perceives and is not merely passively programed from the outset through causal connections. Therefore, the emotion comes first and then creates representations which in turn represent those emotion.

This approach has been used by Emha Ainun Nadjib (also called Cak Nun). He is an Indonesian poet with a background in Sufism and Kejawen (Tirto.id 2020). In his commune (*pengajian*), Cak Nun employs critical thinking in the form of discussion, unlike traditional Islamic sermon that only require the Imam to speak. Cak Nun approach involves the audience giving their opinions and asking questions, as well as making suggestions. Also, the topic Cak Nun chooses is not usually based on a single text in the Quran, but is philosophical or esoteric, a form of moral philosophy. This raises questions that are not tied too closely to specific texts and scriptures. In the interests of making religious principles personal for his audience, Cak Nun does not seek to convince his audience of the 'truth' by repeating what the Imam has said. Instead, the message is to "think for yourself". This especially appeals to younger people, such as university students, as well as lecturers and those in education and the caring professions. Because of how he preaches, and because his focus is on questioning rather than clear, direct messages, Cak Nun is often harshly criticized by right-wing Moslems for breaking with contemporary orthodoxy about how to preach and what to teach true believers (Kurtz 1983, 1085)

However, religion becomes static and stale if it does not allow for any bottom-up interpretation. It imposes obedience and order. In practice, modification and alteration rest on the hand of religious elites (Kurtz 1983, 1091). The result in almost every religion on the planet is to reinforce the tendency to create some kind of permanent religious aristocracy. This religious elite is rarely questioned about what they claim, or how the principles are reflected in their way of working. They are assumed to be worthy to interpret the principles in some way that cannot easily be questioned. This may reinforce group cohesion and strengthen solidarity among members. It can also lead to rejection, however, of those who ask questions or doubt the given interpretations. Anyone who contests or rejects the leader's interpretation may well find themselves excluded or accused of heresy. The only influences that are welcomed in the group come from within the cognate group, where dissimilarities are judged undesirable and invalidated.

Indonesian populist-religious scholars from well-known religious organization and alleged Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) descendants, the latter known as *Habib*, tend to take advantage of this unquestioning approach to religion. It focuses on legal-literal interpretation of scripture with rigid norm and positivist tradition. The concept of learning from dogma and tradition encloses individual freedom of interpretation on the scripture. the legitimacy is determined by position whether academic, political, economic, and even inherited or by blood. Thus, the distribution of power is mostly channeled to one side. The Nietzschean concept of the nobles as the few and the bad is in many ways comparable with the

self-serving practice of static religion in Indonesia today. Political Islam has become an effective tool to control the moral construction of the masses (Myhill 2010, 21). The actors employ this static approach of religion or the political Islam are not necessarily operating in the framework of state politics like executive and legislative branch of government, these actors create complex discourse that supposedly serve the idea, but actually they are serving handful of elites for their accumulation of power and profit (Persico 2017, 108). This proven with the publication of support from several famous *ulama* or Islamic scholars toward presidential candidate. In 2019, Abdul Somad expresses his support toward Prabowo Subianto, he believes that he dreamt about Prabowo's victory in the last election, yet it turns out false (Kholid 2019)

Moreover, Indonesian national motto indicates the concept of dynamic religion and open morality. It implies different ways to pursue truth and suggest that to achieve the truth is not necessarily done by following a singular path. Other paths besides one's own can also lead to truth. The motto reiterates and matches the pluralistic actuality of Indonesian society, where a syncretic approach to religious belief is less likely to generate conflict or violence than strong adherence to literal and book-based monotheism. The author wants to explain how the consistency in analyzing nation's philosophy is imperative to construct the reality. The solution of given society problem. This can be seen in the following translation of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which is the national motto of Indonesia that adopt the concept of unity in diversity:

“It is said that the well-known Buddha and Shiva are two different substances. They are indeed different, yet how is it possible to recognize their difference in a glance, since the truth of Jina (Buddha) and the truth of Shiva is one. They are indeed different, but they are of the same kind, as there is no duality in Truth” (reference needed).

The author uses nationalist approach in promoting Kejawen teaching is not merely intended to make the teaching political, but rather to protect and preserve this indigenous belief which has been shunned and abandoned (Kuipers & Askuri 2017, 2). The author does not try to promote different theoretical and ideological framework from the one that the nation adopts. It is best to safe the debates and the arguments on how to repel corruption and violence rather to debate and argue over which ideal is the best. Luckily, Pancasila as an open ideology (*ideologi terbuka*) acknowledges difference and pluralistic character of society. Thus, any ideals that are promoting social justice and freedom ought to be allowed, preserved and encouraged among Indonesian citizens.

The nation state relies on government and law and order. Thus, it is best to obtain legitimacy and protection from the main setting of the state. The author argues that it is best not to think from an anti-state perspective because Indonesia already has *de jure* self-rule through independence from the Dutch. Even so, post-colonial corruption and colonial way of thinking are still there, thus the deconstruction and reinterpretation of principles and customs which are not oriented to social justice is needed (Maftuh 2008, 134). In addition, Kejawen teaching needs the state and government to ensure its survival through this neoliberal time when the politicians are always talking in term of profit and foreign investment and economical resources become heavily monopolized. In addition, distribution of state budget is only given in term of cultural preservation not development and participation. It means that the term “cultural” is perceived as model of antiquity not as objective values that can contribute to the development of society. That is why there has been no changes or reform in education related to cultural development. There is inequality of recognition between Javanese culture (as in art and music) and Kejawen teaching. The state and the government

have exuberant predisposition to promote Javanese culture just for the show and entertainment, but never really recognize the ideal behind the culture.

Ideological market in Indonesia resembles a warfront. Political and religious leaders (even entrepreneurs) are competing to make their ideal sit on the top of power structure, albeit they did not realize that local wisdom and indigenous believe are losing its vigor and doomed to cast out from existence because of their negligence and reckless political practice (Fealy & White 2008, 29).

The author argues that the problem of human suffering and societal decadence is not merely rest upon the form of government rather it is based on rampant corruption that happened in one country (Henderson & Kuncoro 2004). Therefore, observation and contemplation in regard with religious values are important element to know how to transform individuals and society. In Indonesia let alone in Yogyakarta which happens to be this paper research *locus*, the discussion of religious values is steered by the market system which derive its principle from capitalist point of view. Majority of religious school of thought dominates the discourse with the help of prominent financial power which owns most of administrative, political, educational, media, and philanthropy institutions (Fealy & White 2008, 25). This kind of situation makes unhindered bias and dishonesty in discussing religious values. Thus, to settle this problem, it requires equal power distribution between each school of religious thoughts, and it should be conducted with the spirit of plurality and inclusiveness to avoid the sentiment between them. Only with this kind of arrangement we can expect healthy development on this matter.

Political economy contributes massively in the matter of production and dissemination of ideas. An idea is produced and disseminated not merely because it is beneficial for the people but because it generates income and economical value. Free market dictates the hegemony of certain ideas. This resembles the theorem proposed by John Locke as quoted as "*The search for religious truth is best advanced by such a marketplace in religious ideas*" (Mack 2012, 12). However, this underlying principle is not suitable in Indonesia which still ruled by capitalistic mentality. Because the commercialization of religion would insist the producer to focus in generating income instead to focus on social problem, in this case is the education business. Religious private schools are spreading across Indonesia, especially in urban area of Java Island. It is hard not to suggest that religious private school is a business model which emphasize the marketing element to entice consumer impulses on product that has religious theme.

The huge gap of education cost between state school and religious private school induces question what is the motive in procuring this religious education service. Al-Izhar Pondok Labu, a famous Islamic private school located in South Jakarta costs thirty-five million rupiah for just the admission fee, plus two million rupiah for the monthly fees. Also, Sekolah Pelita Harapan Kemang Village, a Catholic school chain owned by leading Indonesian businessman James Riyadi costs twenty-one million rupiah for the admission fee and sixth point twenty-five million rupiah for the monthly fees. It is a massive price gap if we compare to state school fees which consist of five hundred thousand rupiah for the admission fee and one hundred thousand rupiah for monthly fees. Yet, many upper-middle class parents prefer to enroll their child to modern-religious school. Is it about the quality of education or is it because the religious theme that makes the parents feel secure about their children religiosity?

Does the consumption of religious education service is driven by emotional or rational consumption? The author himself went to one of the private religious school listed above (Al-Izhar Pondok Labu), most of his relatives (brother, cousins, nephews, and nieces) went

to the same school as well. The most common reasons why the parents enroll their children to that school are because they expect intensive religious education which cannot be obtained in state school, thus the children will get comprehensive understanding about theology as well as religious law, this reason is still debatable whether private religious school imposes more intensive learning in theology and religious law than state school which also provides religious subject for fair amount of learning duration.

Moreover, they want their children to carry Islamic values throughout their life, thus he or she would not easily be influenced by foreign ideas and thoughts. The parents feel that they should still uphold the traditional values, namely traditional Islamic values, in order to buffer themselves against the destructive aspects of the modern, liberal world, such as disobedience, and rudeness towards parents, as well as immoral sexual conduct and use of drugs and alcohol. However, in term of religious appearance and fashion symbol like wearing hijab and overall Islamic way of dressing, for instance not wearing any tight shirt and trouser for girls are not imposed in Al-Izhar Pondok Labu. When the author was studying there, only two girls wear hijab among one hundred forty students. This is unlike other, more conservative Islamic schools that require female students to wear hijab in their school territory. It is not necessary that Al-Izhar Pondok Labu does not uphold Islamic values just looking to one indicator which not obliging female student to wear hijab but the uncertainty of parent's expectation to make their children "more Islamic" by admitting their children to private Islamic school is questionable and having tendency of emotional consumption based on religious labeled products. Thus, the school is likely to be perceived by people outside the school community as expensive modern school rather than legit Islamic school that produces Muslim intellectual which normally adhere to Islamic norm and ethic.

Other reason that indicates the emotional tendency in consuming religious labelled products is the parent inconsistency in controlling their children religious orientation. Based on author observation from his school colleagues. Most of the parents do not mind that their children are pursuing lifestyle, career, and business activities which are not align with Islamic values. For instance, there is one of author colleague that owned liquor bar, also there is one of author school senior who is transgender. Thus, there is contradiction towards the general motives why the parents are admitting their children to expensive religious private school. It might be that the motive is complex and divergent, or is it because the sense of security lies behind the Islamic label (Fealy & White 2008, 21)?

Also, there is other reason from testimony of the parent which is the actual quality of the school as well as its infrastructure. However, the term Islamic school is still subjected to main consideration. Thus, there is an ambivalent respond to what is the strongest motive in admitting their children to Islamic school. But, the most significant pattern which is driving these parents is the Islamic label that attached to the school (ibid).

This blurry expectation of the parents and security based on religious label are susceptible to the predatory practice of capitalistic mindset. This practice would result to popular market framing which hinder the critical examination of values outside market narrative. In media studies, popular narrative obstructs and shifts the attention of audience from another narrative that might be imperative to social justice. In addition, economic incentive is an effective tool to retain the *status quo* by compelling the producer to submit to consumer trend in order to get more profit. However, the producer could also modify and alter the trend and preference but not to change it radically. Thus, the cycle is still circulating within the market framework, it cannot turn to different direction that has no economic value (ibid).

According to marketing mechanism and ethics, producer as major player in commercialization should give transparency and goodwill about the product to the traders (if any)

and consumer. Thus, the trader and the consumer are also involving in decision making process. In Al-Izhar Pondok Labu case, there is a council for student parent which functioned as school watchdog. The council is intended to file a petition or complaint when there is a problem regarding the teacher conduct or in very rare case about the learning materials. However, the commercialization of education happens outside institution. It is very subtle mechanism, which is conditioning the psychology of consumer, thus it cannot be explained only through the perspective of consumer but also the producer and other stakeholders that the consumer may not know. It is not only the problem of shunning minority narrative like Kejawen, but it is also about the access of good quality education for all Indonesian. Only few state schools that have good reputation and infrastructure, the rest cannot compete with private school that has more advance management and infrastructure.

Recognition cannot effectively implemented without the distribution of resource. *Kejawen* teaching has been recognized by the state yet the distribution of resource still hampered by the predatory practice of capitalist and neoliberal economy. It is impossible to tackle inequality with the intention to obtain profit. It should be done with the spirit of altruism. Thus, the state should intervene in distributing the resource evenly. What the author means by resource is education resource. It consists of establishment of indigenous faith subject (*mata pelajaran agama untuk penghayat kepercayaan*) in all level of elementary school, along with the teaching apparatus and comprehensive curriculum on the subject. *Kejawen* and other indigenous faith should be accessible for all indigenous student. There will be political obstacle caused by this implementation, thus the government must mitigate the unequal interest of opposing groups. Because historically indigenous people never had formal education about their faith before the case of Mr. Muslim in Cilacap. Also, total reform in education with critical pedagogy orientation is needed to ensure the academic freedom and minority narrative (Ahmad 2016, 96).

5.3 Conclusion

Neoliberal attitudes in the marketplace of ideas should be controlled, in a sense that minority knowledge has to be protected because of inequality of resource. Profit oriented market of ideas will diminish the survivability of minority knowledge caused by monopoly, hegemony, and dominance. Thus, the state should regulate the egalitarian policy in the reproduction of knowledge. This is a subtle form of coloniality which is targeting the control of ideas should be acknowledged to preserve the identity of Indonesian people.

Chapter 6: Reflecting on Orthodoxy and Heresy

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how politics of heresy undermine the distribution of *Kejawen*'s knowledge. The construction of heresy helps to understand the connection between belief system and social organization (Kurtz 1983, 1087). In Indonesia, *Kejawen* discourse is intertwined with the Islamic discourse, because many Muslims claim that *Kejawen* is an offshoot of Islamic teaching. On the other hand, *Kejawen* followers also claim that *Kejawen* tenet resembles Islamic tenet, for instance the principle of *Tawhid* (oneness of god) and principle of *Manunggaling kawulo gusti* (unity of existence). However, the emergence of puritan type of Islam, which is influenced from Wahabis, Salafi, and Muslim Brotherhood types of Islam. These Islamic groups reject the existence of *Kejawen* esoteric teaching and insist purification of Islamic practice in their organization as well as promulgate the dogma to the public. The moderates Muslims like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are supposedly more open to the existence of *Kejawen* teaching, even though in practice they also partially dismiss the radical element of *Kejawen*. The extremist and moderates are fighting for dominance in the social, yet *Kejawen* teaching's existence is largely ignored by calling it heresy.

6.2 Caught in ideological fight

Since Joko Widodo got elected as the president in 2014, religious politics has been reignited to serve the electoral ends. His consecutive victories have frightened the opposition and it was so monumental that the political parties which are supporting Joko Widodo have immense political prospect. The situation exacerbates when his former vice governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) took his former office as governor of Jakarta. Some Jakartan Muslims who are supporting Prabowo Subianto (the other presidential candidate) believe that Ahok will not make policies in favour of Muslims, because of his background as Chinese Indonesian and Christian. The situation culminates when Ahok charged with blasphemy act after making a statement regarding Holy Quran.

That major political event is the beginning of massive polarization of Islam and Muslim societies in Indonesia. This polarization undermines the existence of other religious idea which relates to Islamic tradition like *Kejawen* and even Shia Islam. Even though, it is a political contestation, the parties involved inevitably must construct an ideological basis to justify the norm that they promote. The moderates which lead by Islamic organization called Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) which is also the supporter of Joko Widodo administration coined a concept of *Islam Nusantara*. Historically, the concept was not founded merely because the aftermath of 2014 political climate, it existed way long since NU was founded. Basically, *Islam Nusantara* means a version of Islam that accultures with local values in establishing its jurisprudence. It promotes a version of Islam that friendly and amiable, which also acknowledge and respect other religion (Kasdi 2018, 301).

However, this pluralistic view of Islam does not merely accommodate all religious views which are distinct from the views of the religious organization, in this case is NU. As the biggest Islamic organization in Indonesia, NU has the most political significance and contribution in shaping Indonesian politics. Thus, NU must retain its ideological and political boundaries toward religious view that too radical like esoteric teaching of *Kejawen*. If NU tries

to embrace radical view of *Kejawen* like *manunggaling kawulo gusti* and the practice of *shalat daim*, it is certain that the public will disagree, and NU will lose part of its legitimacy in public. It is because the *Kejawen* tenets have been famous as heretical teaching and the public has been long aware of it. Said Aqil Qiraj as head of NU says that NU will always right in the center (moderate), NU cannot support the radical right which is the Wahhabis or the radical left which is liberal Muslims as well as the follower of *Kejawen*, their institutional compass is sacrosanct.

On the other hand, the Wahhabis promotes the concept of *Islam Kaffah* which is translated as 'the true Islam'. This concept only acknowledges the authority of Holy Quran and Hadith to establish set of ritual and jurisprudence. It is different with the view of NU which is adding *ijma* or the consensus of Islamic scholars and *qiyas* or the judgment of individual Islamic scholar. The Wahhabis argues that NU has been performing ritual innovation or *bid'ah* which is considered heresy. It excludes any religious practice which does not have legal basis (dalil). Those practices which do not have the dalil are *bid'ah*. The *bid'ah* discourse is being disseminated to the people in order to create a chasm between religion and culture. Cultural practices that are already syncretize with Islamic ritual like veneration of saint's tomb, funeral ceremony (*tahililan*), and celebrating Prophet birthday (*maulidan*) are perceived as *bid'ah* and polytheistic which creates sentiment towards the majority of Muslim population who are still practicing those kind of ritual as well as *Kejawen* practitioner who shares similar pattern of ritual.

In the realm of knowledge production, the discourse between *Islam Kaffah* and *Islam Nusantara* breeds competing school and educational institution. NU is promoting Islam that espouse local culture, to tackle the rising Neo-Wahhabis, Salafis, and Muslim Brotherhood school of thought that also building their own Madrasah to promote "the true Islamic teaching" without interference from local culture. The Wahhabis school of thought calls for "deculturized religion" approach as Oliver Roy mentioned. The term "deculturized religion" postulates to abandonment of local culture as well as nationalist culture in exchange of modified Islamic culture which has strong reference to gulf Arabic culture like Saudi Arabian (Woodward et al 2012, 173).

There are three religious groups that allegedly considered practicing *bid'ah* in the eyes of Wahhabis. They are NU, *Islam abangan* (a form of Islam that mixed with great deal of *Kejawen* principle), and *Kejawen* group itself. However, *Kejawen* group does not explicitly attacked by the Wahhabis in their public argument, instead they specifically attack Nahdlatul Ulama because of their massive political and social power which is directly competing and opposing the *bid'ah* discourse. *Kejawen* groups is in dilemmatic position because of the political competition between Nahdlatul Ulama and Wahhabis. The people who thinks that *bid'ah* is sinful practice would reject and distant themselves to principle that they think affiliated with *bid'ah*, thus the people would feel reluctant to learn about *Kejawen* because it against with popular view of Wahhabist. (Firro 2013, 775).

The discourse of *bid'ah* has more political overtone than social one, because many agencies use narrative of *bid'ah* for political purpose. After 1989 reformation and the fall of Soeharto's authoritarian regime, huge number of new political parties were created. Islamic political parties are also sprouting after more than three decades being suppressed by Soeharto's iron will. Justice and Prosperity Party/PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) makes it way to Indonesian political arena by adopting the ideology of Muslim Brotherhood which can be recognized by its fervent effort to promulgate the idea of Khilafah or Islamic state ruled by single Caliph. Also, PKS opposes the idea of merging Islamic values with cultural practices. Thus, it calls for "purification of Islam" and it gains popularity with that narrative.

However, because majority of Muslim in Indonesia come from different types of Islamic ideological background. PKS cannot deliberately push the agenda of Khilafah and “purification of Islam” in order to win election and secure seats in the House of Representative. Nahdlatul Ulama as oldest traditional Islamic organization as well as Muhamadiyah as oldest modern Islamic organization have distinguish ideology that would repel PKS agenda if it is done coercively instead of persuasively (Woodward et al 2012, 174).

Kejawen discourse is placed within the greater Islamic discourse. Even though, *Kejawen* also has Hindu-Buddhist roots, but because of total Islamization in Java since 18th century and partition of Java and Bali, the discourse progresses under Islamic principle. Damar Shashangka in his book titled *Induk Ilmu Kejawen* explicitly says that *Kejawen* is a term for Javanese-Islamic spirituality. Other combination like Hinduism-Javanese spirituality or Buddhism-Javanese spirituality fall under different category which is *Jawadipa*. In fact, not all *Kejawen* practitioner agree about the proper use of term coined by Damar Shashangka (Shashangka, 2014: 25). Most of *Kejawen* practitioners do not concern with the term rather they emphasize on the principle and custom that makes *Kejawen*. On the other hand, majority of Indonesian recognizes and generalizes *Kejawen* as part of Islam because majority of *Kejawen* follower borrows Islamic identity in their civil registration matter. The syncretization process has gone too deep that makes *Kejawen* dependent to Islamic discourse. Thus, the practice of political Islam tremendously affects *Kejawen* survival, even more the bid’ah narrative has put *Kejawen* far more detach from current Islamic orthodoxy.

6.3 Conclusion

The construction of heresy and orthodoxy between NU and the Wahhabis are undermining the dissemination of *Kejawen* teaching. Not only branding *Kejawen* teaching as heresy but also the endless debate on the discourse between *Islam Nusantara* and *Islam Kaffah* greatly captivate public attention. Lack of historical understanding in Indonesian religious dynamic and the tendency of neoliberal economics which serves the capitalist agenda of political parties in electoral contestation are the fundamental obstruction to recognize *Kejawen* teaching as Indonesian religious tradition. Egalitarian approach on the distribution of religious knowledge has to be realized in order to avoid dominance and monopoly.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Currently, *Kejawen* teachings seems to be facing the prospect of gradually being discarded through domination of an Islamic theology and secular values that leaves little room for syncretism of religious and cultural beliefs, in line with the 'unity of existence' principle associated with *Kejawen*. The public prefers to have one final answer to the questions of human existence, whilst not realizing that other religions may well share parallel, largely similar concepts, based on very similar notions. In this setting, a singular religious doctrine is not balanced by any strong counterpart in cultural or political philosophy that could lead to a syncretic solution such as is generally needed in plural environments. This may imply that Indonesia may be becoming a less plural environment in practice.

Philosophical discussion about the roots of the existence of Indonesia should be encouraged in order to know what are the values that are functioning in the society. This knowledge about the roots of various moral traditions in Indonesia, ideally have to be understood by all people, not just the elites who can afford better education. Thus, pre-collapse education has to be reformed to be more critical in its approach, especially in the moral and religious subject. In addition, academic freedom should break the construction of heresy and orthodoxy. The transparency of academic system is crucial for equal reproduction of knowledge. Minority knowledge and rights should be prioritized, considering their fragility in the economic competition.

The inequality of resource in disseminating and proliferating minority knowledge is the fundamental problem. Stigmatization that caused from political and religious figures that trying to polarize the people into two separated groups are damaging the minority narrative, not to mention, it begets conflict and other social problems. The stigmatization continues the inequality of resource because stigmatization equals to the moral construction of the public. In this case, *Kejawen* teaching stigmatized as heretical teaching that reject or not in accordance to Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia. With the approach of critical thinking which postulate the academic freedom, I think *Kejawen* teaching could retrieve its dignity back as great spiritual tradition of Indonesia.

Lastly, the struggle to unite people through spiritual tradition is not new thing. However, the force that divide us is seemingly more powerful because of the greed that has been endorsed by the capitalistic mindset. Therefore, humanistic perspective is required to deal with the great problem of our time. Human problem cannot be dealt only with economic incentives, other aspect like psychological, spiritual, social, and other human needs and inclination should be analyzed carefully and thoroughly to create precise and holistic solution to a problem.

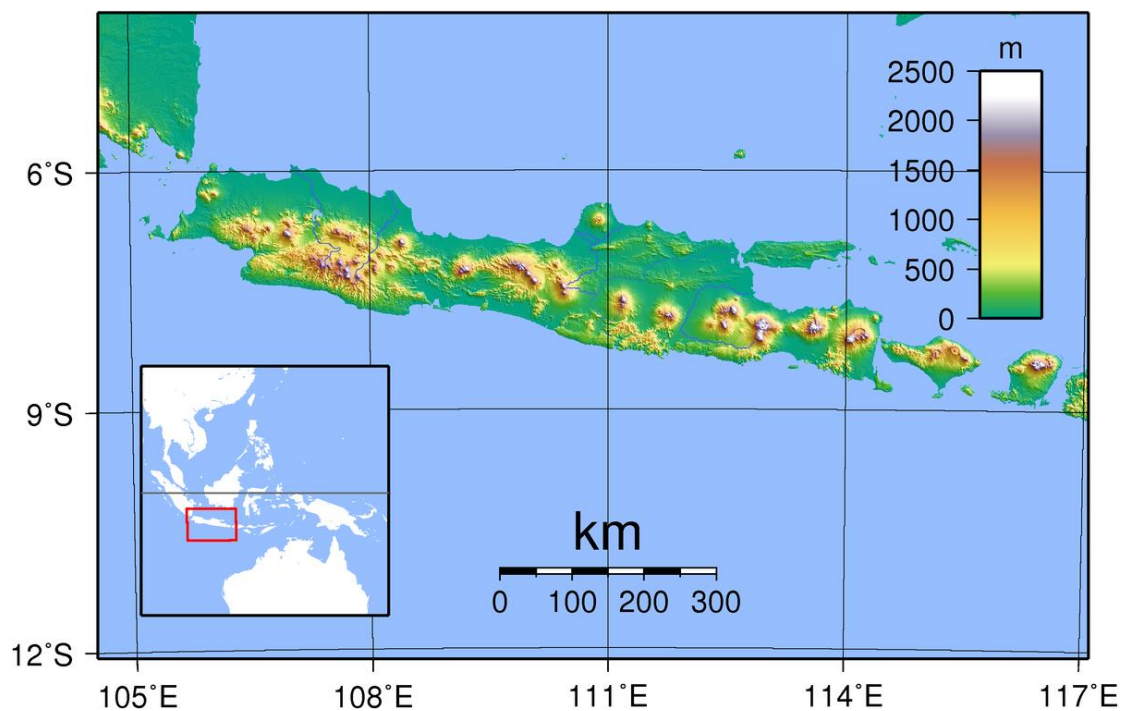
Maps

Map 1.1
The Archipelago of Indonesia



Source: Google Images

Map 1.2
Map of Java Island



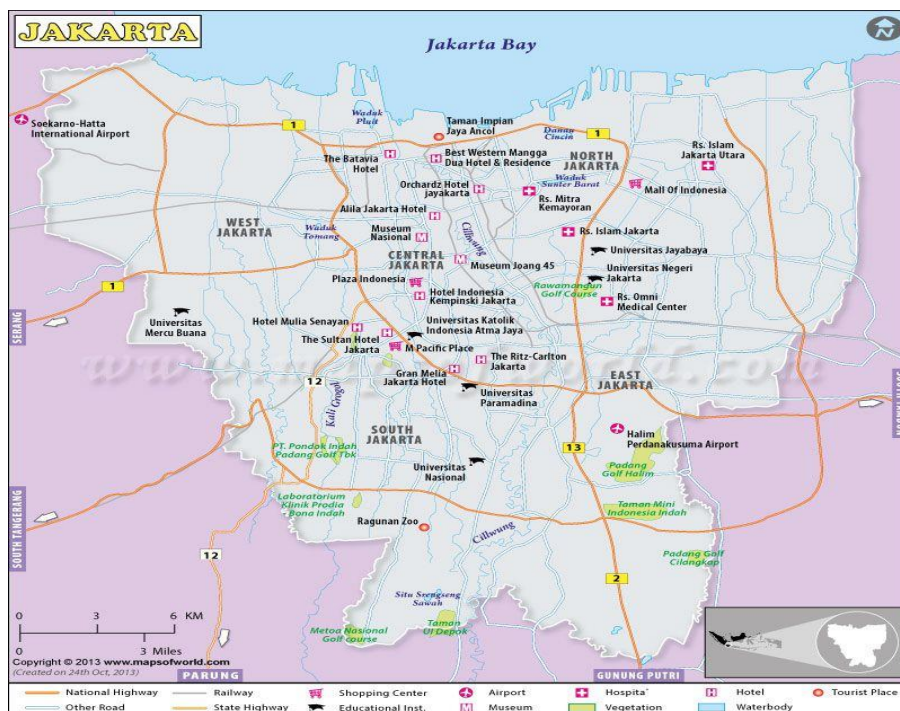
Source: Google Images

Map 1.3
Map of Yogyakarta



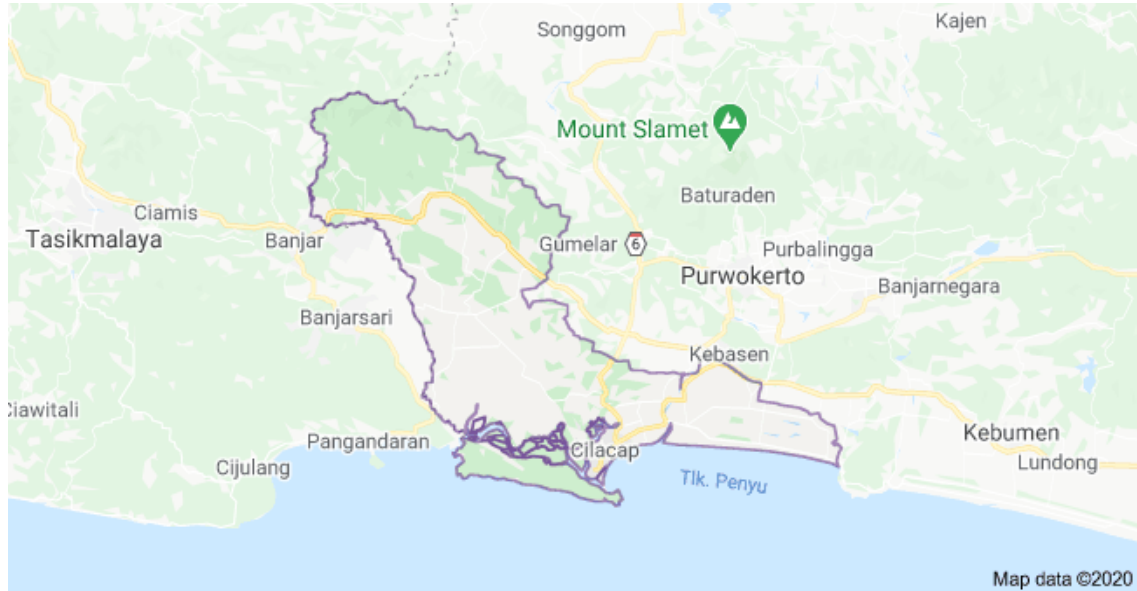
Source: Google Images

Map 1.4
Map of Jakarta



Source: Google Images

Map 1.5
Map of Cilacap



Source: Google Images

Appendices

Appendix A:
Interview questions for Romo Suryo
List of questions for the thesis interview entitled: Reflecting on <i>Kejawen</i> : Javanese esoteric teachings in Indonesian national development.
This script is intended to obtain data on how Javanese spiritual teachings (Kejawen) are applied to national development and horizontal conflict resolution between religious communities. The questions below are "open questions" in which the interpretation of these questions does not have to be in accordance with academic methodology.
1. How do you view the teachings of Javanese or Javanese spirituality, given the different definitions between anthropologists, sociologists and practitioners (Clifford, 1976) (Shashangka, 2014)?
2. Given the many intolerances and conflicts between religious communities, can the teachings of Kejawen be used as a solution to serve as a reference or model for interaction between religious communities?
3. Given the explanation of the first principle of Pancasila by (late) Soekarno, where the meaning of "divinity" is purely taken from the principles of indigenous teachings (Schindehütte, Matti Justus 2006), is he referring to the teachings of Kejawen? If so, what principles do you mean by him?
4. Can the syncretism and inclusiveness of Kejawen have a positive effect on national development, in particular, in the realm of religious interactions?
5. According to you, should Kejawen teachings be institutionalized into formal education, given the busyness of religious education from outside?
6. Can Takfiri understand or ignore other groups with different opinions, damaging the religious order in Indonesia?
7. What do you think about foreign concepts that are applied to the political, social and economic order, especially those with a religious character? Do young people now need to be reintroduced to the original Javanese / Kejawen teachings or philosophies?
Greetings,
Muhammad Adiz Wasisto

Appendix B:
Interview questions for Mbah Harjo
List of questions for the thesis interview entitled: Reflecting on Kejawen: Javanese esoteric teachings in Indonesian national development.
This script is intended to obtain data on how Javanese spiritual teachings (Kejawen) are applied to national development and horizontal conflict resolution between religious communities. The questions below are "open questions" in which the interpretation of these questions does not have to be in accordance with academic methodology.

1. According to you, what is the exact definition of Kejawen or Javanese mysticism?
2. Is there pure Javanese mysticism? Or have you been influenced by other teachings (Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam)?
3. According to you, is it necessary for the younger generation to learn Javanese mysticism? If so, should Javanese mysticism education be formalized (included in the school curriculum)?
4. According to you, why is it important for Javanese people to learn Kejawen?
5. What are your views about fundamentalist groups who disbelieve other sects, right?
Greetings,
Muhammad Adiz Wasisto
(Interviewer)

Appendix C:
Interview questions for Mr. Setyo Hajar Dewantoro
List of questions for the thesis interview entitled: Last Bastion of Kejawen in Java? Esoteric Teaching in National Development, Indonesia. A Qualitative Study.
This questionnaire is intended to obtain data on how Javanese spiritual teachings (Kejawen) are applied to national development and the resolution of horizontal conflicts between religious communities. The questions below are "open questions" in which the interpretation of these questions does not have to be in accordance with academic methodology.
1. How do you view the teachings of Javanese or Javanese spirituality, given the different definitions between anthropologists, sociologists and practitioners (Clifford, 1976) (Shashangka, 2014)?
2. Given the many intolerances and conflicts between religious communities, can the teachings of Kejawen be used as a solution to serve as a reference or model for interaction between religious communities?
3. Given the explanation of the first principle of Pancasila by (late) Soekarno, where the meaning of "divinity" is purely taken from the principles of indigenous teachings (Schindehütte, Matti Justus 2006), is he referring to the teachings of Kejawen? If so, what principles do you think he meant?
4. Can the syncretism and inclusiveness of Kejawen have a positive effect on national development, in particular, in the realm of religious interactions?
5. According to you, should Kejawen teachings be institutionalized into formal education, given the busyness of religious education from outside?
6. Can Takfiri understand or ignore other groups with different opinions, damaging the religious order in Indonesia?
7. What is your opinion regarding the foreign concepts applied to the political, social and economic order, especially those of a religious character? Do young people now need to be reintroduced to the original Javanese / Kejawen teachings or philosophies?

Greetings,
Muhammad Adiz Wasisto

Appendix D:
Interview questions for Mr. Widhy Artono Andy Pratikto
List of questions for the thesis interview entitled: Reflecting on Kejawen: Javanese esoteric teachings in Indonesian national development.
This script is intended to obtain data on how Javanese spiritual teachings (Kejawen) are applied to national development and horizontal conflict resolution between religious communities. The questions below are "open questions" in which the interpretation of these questions does not have to be in accordance with academic methodology.
1. How do you view the teachings of Javanese or Javanese spirituality, given the different definitions between anthropologists, sociologists and practitioners (Clifford, 1976) (Shashangka, 2014)?
2. Given the many intolerances and conflicts between religious communities, can the teachings of Kejawen be used as a solution to serve as a reference or model for interaction between religious communities?
3. Given the explanation of the first principle of Pancasila by (late) Soekarno, where the meaning of "divinity" is purely taken from the principles of indigenous teachings (Schindehütte, Matti Justus 2006), is he referring to the teachings of Kejawen? If so, what principles do you mean by him?
4. Can the syncretism and inclusiveness of Kejawen have a positive effect on national development, in particular, in the realm of religious interactions?
5. According to you, should Kejawen teachings be institutionalized into formal education, given the busyness of religious education from outside?
6. Can Takfiri understand or ignore other groups with different opinions, damaging the religious order in Indonesia?
7. What do you think about foreign concepts that are applied to the political, social and economic order, especially those with a religious character? Do young people now need to be reintroduced to the original Javanese / Kejawen teachings or philosophies?
Greetings,
Muhammad Adiz Wasisto

Appendix E:
Interview questions for moral education in <i>Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan</i> (PKN)
List of questions for the thesis interview entitled: Reflecting on Kejawen: Javanese esoteric teachings in Indonesian national development.

This questionnaire is intended to obtain data on how the relationship between Javanese spiritual teachings (Kejawen) and local wisdom in a broad sense with the development of national education in the framework of civic education. The questions below are "open questions" in which the interpretation of these questions is subjective and based on experience.
1. According to all of you, is the PPKn an important subject? Considering its epistemology and also its use in a career?
2. Is PPKn one of your favorite subjects? If not, what makes PPKn less attractive in your view?
3. In your view, which subject is more suitable as a guide in studying norms and ethics. Is it PPKn or religious lessons? Or are both equally important?
4. According to your experience following PPKn lessons in Senior High Schools, are PPKn lessons critical and actual in discussing human rights issues? If it is less critical and actual, do you have other expectations for how the KDP lessons will be presented in class?
5. Was local culture and wisdom involved when the brothers attended the PPKn lessons? Considering that the PPKn lesson focuses on a constitutional perspective (law of rights).
6. Do you think it is necessary to involve cultural education in discussing PPKn?
7. Do you feel that the KDP lessons are sufficiently substantial and comprehensive?
The questions above are only asked as an interview reference. Interviewer from time to time can add questions according to the response of the resource person.
Best regards,
Muhammad Adiz Wasisto

Appendix F:

Interview video with Mbah Harjo



Eanisme TV (2020) "Mahasiswa S2 Belanda Bertanya Serius Pada Mbah Harjo" Accessed 11 November 2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vuXTebmOxM&ab_channel=eanismeTV

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