

ISLAMIZATION AND IDENTITY IN INDONESIA: THE CASE OF ARABIC NAMES IN JAVA

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In November 2015, US President Barack Obama met with Malcolm Turnbull, the Australian prime minister, on the occasion of the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Summit. At that meeting in Manila, Obama described how Indonesia had changed since he lived there as a boy, from being a country that was religiously relaxed and tolerant, into one that is strict and less forgiving. As evidence, he observed that more women are wearing headscarves now as a sign of their piety. “Why did that happen?” Turnbull reportedly asked. According to Jeffrey Goldberg,¹ Obama answered that the Saudis and other Gulf Arabs have funneled money as well as large numbers of *imams* and teachers into the country. In the 1990s, the Saudis heavily funded Wahhabist *madrassas*, which Goldberg describes as seminaries that teach a

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¹ Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine: The U.S. President Talks through His Hardest Decisions about America’s Role in the World,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>, accessed April 9, 2017.

fundamentalist version of Islam favored by the Saudi ruling family. Today, Obama believes that Islam in Indonesia is much more Arab in orientation than it was forty years ago.²

While Obama is not, of course, a professional historian of Southeast Asia, his comments draw on, and resonate with, important scholarly and policy narratives circulating in many parts of Southeast Asia. In such accounts, the key struggles are between Islamization and cultural identity; Arab ethnicity and archipelagic diversity; the Other and the “natives”: the One and the Many. In Ricklefs’s sweeping trilogy of Javanese history,³ the coming of Islam to Southeast Asia was—and is—a continual process of grappling with local inherited beliefs, ideologies, and practices; and with the requirements of a totalizing, unifying, and absolutizing faith. Along a similar theme, Robert Hefner asks, “Where have all the *abangan* gone?”⁴ and argues that the local, Javanist varieties of Islam have been challenged by more orthodox influences since the 1980s, confrontations that were often coordinated with the support of modernizing Indonesian government agencies. He asserts that the past twenty years have witnessed the “collapse of the non-standard, syncretic varieties of Islam for which this sprawling Southeast Asian country was once renowned.”⁵ The Javanese *abangan* variety of Islam,⁶ once “one of most successful varieties of non-standard Islam to have survived into modern times,” larger even than Turkey’s *Alevis*, has, since the 1960s, dramatically declined in importance.⁷ Meanwhile, according to at least one worldwide survey of religious piety among Muslims, Indonesians lead in most measures of devoutness.⁸

Since the rise of religious orthodoxy in the 1980s and 1990s, there have been increasing debates about the relation between Islam and manifestations of Arabic culture in Indonesia. Indonesia’s former president and leader of NU (Nahdlatul Ulama, Revival/Awakening of Ulama), Abdul Rachman Wahid (known commonly as Gus Dur), stated that:

Islam did not come [to Indonesia] in order to change our ancestral culture into something Arabic. It did not come to turn “I” into “*ana*” [Arabic pronoun for “I”], or “you” into “*antum*” [a second-person Arabic pronoun], or “brother” into “*Akh*.” We can defend what is ours, we must filter the culture, but not its teachings.⁹

² Ibid.

³ See Merle C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Norwalk: Eastbridge, 2006). Ricklefs continued his review of Javanese history in “Religious Reform and Polarization in Java,” *ISIM Review: International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World* 21, 21 (2008): 34–35; and in *Islamisation and its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural, and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012).

⁴ Robert W. Hefner, “Where Have all the *Abangan* Gone? Religionization and the Decline of Non-standard Islam in Indonesia,” in *Religious Change in Modern Southeast Asia*, ed. Rémy Madinier and Michel Picard (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 71–91.

⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁶ See Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1960).

⁷ Hefner, “Where Have all the *Abangan* Gone?” 71.

⁸ Riaz Hassan, “On Being Religious: Patterns of Religious Commitment in Muslim Societies,” *The Muslim World* 97, 3 (2007): 437.

⁹ “Islam datang bukan untuk mengubah budaya leluhur kita jadi budaya Arab. Bukan untuk aku jadi *ana*, sampeyan jadi *antum*, sedelur jadi *akh*. Kita pertahankan milik kita, kita harus filtrasi budayanya, tapi bukan ajarannya ...” See:

While most criticisms of Arabic culture have been respectful, there have also been a number of high profile public scandals that have provoked outrage: the rise and fall of a slick, turbaned televangelist;¹⁰ thuggish behavior of the Arab-styled “Defenders of Islam”;¹¹ Saudi–Indonesian bank fraud;¹² Arab men frequenting prostitutes in Bogor;¹³ and the beheading of an Indonesian maid who had been abused by her Saudi employer.¹⁴ As reflected in ticket sales for the blockbuster film *Verses of Love* (2007)—which contains many scenes critical of Arab culture¹⁵—there is a growing re-evaluation of the esteem with which Arabs are held in many Javanese communities, and an increasing skepticism about whether becoming more pious means adopting a more Arabic lifestyle.¹⁶

In contrast to what Obama said about the growing influence of Arab culture in Indonesia, scandals such as those outlined above have begun to weaken the appeal of an Islam defined locally, while enhancing the attraction of an “Islam ... understood as knowledge and practices detached from any particular place,”¹⁷ including even the Arab world. Set in motion well before the 1990s, this tendency has much to do with the impact of compulsory schooling and religious education in Indonesia beginning in the 1970s and 1980s. At this time, Indonesians not only joined the ranks of the literate societies of the world (rising from 30 percent literacy in the post-WWII era to over 95 percent today), they were systematically exposed in elementary school to the formal, normative, and orthodox teachings of Islam.¹⁸

Over the past few decades a normative, widely accepted, and standard variety of Islam has been embraced throughout most of Indonesia, including Java. As noted

Sahal Akhmad, “Gusdar dan Pribumisasi Islam,” *Selasar Budaya*, June 10, 2016, <http://jurnal.selasar.com/budaya/gusdar-dan-pribumisasi-islam>, accessed April 9, 2017; Nurcholish Majid, “Universalisme Islam Dan Kedudukan of Bahasa Arab” [Universalism of Islam and the Status of the Arabic Language], in *Islam: Doktrin Dan Peradaban*, ed. Nurcholish Majid (Jakarta: Yayasan Wakaf Paraminda, 1992); and Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-Nilai Indonesia and Transformasi Kebudayaan, Cet. 1* (Jakarta: Wahid Institute, 2007).

¹⁰ See James Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

¹¹ Ian Wilson, “Continuity and Change: The Changing Contours of Organized Violence in Post–New Order Indonesia,” *Critical Asian Studies* 38, 2 (2006): 265–97.

¹² Garda Maeswara, *Opera Van Century: Kunci Rahasia Di Balik Skandal Bank Century* (Yogyakarta: Media Pressindo, 2010).

¹³ Sahroja Lumbanraja, “Prostitusi dan dominasi turis arab di puncak akibat krisis identitas masyarakat lokal” [Prostitution and Arab domination of the tourist market in Puncak West Java causes a local identity crisis], *Kompasiana*, September 15, 2014, http://www.kompasiana.com/sahroja.lumbanraja/prostitusi-dan-dominasi-turis-arab-di-puncak-akibat-krisis-identitas-masyarakat-lokal_54f5d398a333112b1f8b45e3, accessed April 11, 2017.

¹⁴ Herianto Batubara, “Siti Zaenab Was Executed in Saudi Arabia,” *Detik News*, April 14, 2015, <http://news.detik.com/berita/2887416/tki-siti-zaenab-dieksekusi-mati-di-arab-saudi>, accessed April 11, 2017.

¹⁵ Intan Paramaditha, “Passing and Conversion Narratives: *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and Muslim Performativity in Contemporary Indonesia,” *Asian Cinema* 21, 2 (2010): 69–90.

¹⁶ Randy Hendrawanto, “Antara Islam Dan Budaya Arab,” *Kompasiana*, December 5, 2014, http://www.kompasiana.com/randyhendrawanto/Antara-Islam-Dan-Budaya-arab_54f92ba8a333116c048b47d8, accessed April 11, 2017.

¹⁷ John Richard Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Robert W. Hefner, *Making Modern Muslims the Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009).

above, a comparative survey of Muslims in the world found that Indonesia is one of the most religiously devout countries in the world.¹⁹ Indonesians had the highest percentages—worldwide—of people who agreed with the statement “I know that Allah exists and I have no doubts about it.” Also, Indonesia is home to the highest percentage of people who said they pray five times a day.

It is important, however, not to exaggerate or overstate the significance of such observations. While there are many good descriptive and historical accounts of an Islamic revival in Indonesia—in the sense of resurgence in the intensity of religious practice—there is little or no change in the overall percentage of Muslims in Indonesian society, which has remained more or less steady, hovering at around 88 percent for forty years. Moreover, many of the impressive claims about Indonesian piety and devotion are based on surveys and self-reports, in a country where atheism is illegal and subject to prosecution. In the realm of politics, William Liddle and Saiful Mujani found that increased religiosity did not seem to exert an important influence on voting behavior.²⁰

In this paper, we argue that after years of nationalist, centripetal rhetoric stressing a unified, but “undifferentiated” body politic,²¹ as the Sukarno and Suharto years recede into memory,²² Indonesians have been developing a discourse of identity.²³ For example, Ariel Heryanto has explored how Islam, authoritarian pasts, and contemporary K-pop music are mediated by a pervasive and growing “screen culture” that privileges individual pleasure and personal experience.²⁴ We wish to focus on how identities are represented and enacted in language practices, specifically in Arabic naming practices. Drawing on a dataset of 3.7 million names collected from three different regencies in Central, North, and East Java, we analyze the ways in which Javanese names, over the course of the last century, are becoming longer,²⁵ more religious,²⁶ and more hybrid.²⁷ While it might be tempting to see this as a manifestation of a novel, unprecedented, *postmodern* condition,²⁸ in Indonesia there is a long tradition of fluid identities,²⁹ albeit one periodically challenged by a strong central

¹⁹ Hassan, “On Being Religious,” 437–78.

²⁰ William R. Liddle and Saiful Mujani, “Leadership, Party, and Religion: Explaining Voting Behavior in Indonesia,” *Comparative Political Studies* 40, 7 (2007): 851.

²¹ See Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).

²² Mary Sabina Zurbuchen, *Beginning to Remember: The Past in Indonesian Present* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2005).

²³ J. C. Kuipers, *Language, Identity, and Marginality in Indonesia: The Changing Nature of Ritual Speech on the Island of Sumba* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²⁴ Ariel Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014).

²⁵ Rusman and Evi Mariani, “Long Difficult Names for Kids is the New Trend in Indonesia,” *The Jakarta Post*, September 9, 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/09/19/long-difficult-names-children-new-trend.html>, accessed April 7, 2017.

²⁶ Howard M. Federspiel, “The Political and Social Language of Indonesian Muslims: The Case of Al-Muslimun,” *Indonesia* 38 (1984): 55–73.

²⁷ Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure*, 71–72.

²⁸ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford, England and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1989).

²⁹ See Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008); and Henk Maier, “‘We are Playing Relatives’: Riau, the Cradle of Reality and Hybridity,” *Bijdragen Tot De Taal, Land-En Volkenkunde* 4de Afl (1997): 672–98.

bureaucratic state—a *Beamtenstaat*³⁰—that guaranteed, and, indeed, enforced, an enduring, continuing “self-sameness” to individual identities through inflexible administrative documents such as resident identity cards (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*, KTPs) and birth certificates (*Surat Akte Kelahiran*).³¹ While syncretic religious practices may be in retreat—as Hefner³² and others seem to have suggested—the amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought expressed in the bestowal of identities through concatenations of Arabic and other names, in Java anyway, seems to be alive and well.

It is important also to clarify the limits of this project. We will not be looking at the changes in Islam in Java generally, but focusing instead on one aspect of Islam: the representation of Islamic identity. We realize, of course, that these overlap, and that while much of the experience of Islam comes to its adherents through action that can also be viewed as displays and representation of identity—the wearing of headscarves, participation in obligatory prayers, fasting, tithing, the *hajj*, the *al-fatihah*—these actions are also not the entirety of Islam, although they are forms of coherence, cultural logic, and “discursive traditions.”³³ These symbolic acts of identity do provide concrete forms that link the subjective experience of its adherents to larger analytical constructs. Just as the practice of donning headscarves—in Suzanne Brenner’s analysis—are linked to religious “awareness” and “consciousness” (*kesadaran*), which are in turn linked to larger analytical constructs such as the “Islamic revival,”³⁴ we want to argue that Arabic names are symbolic constructions that for Javanese are linked not only to parents’ “experience-near”³⁵ aspirations for raising a pious Muslim child, but to larger trends of changing Islamic identity.

Anthropology of Islamic Piety

Keeping in mind that studying the Islamic revival is difficult to pin down with simple external objective measures, such as the percentage of Muslims in Indonesian society, how should we approach our object of study? One way to begin is with a classic ethnographic move: eliciting the terms local people use and find relevant to describe the phenomenon. While the general term for the “awakening” is sometimes

³⁰ For further reading on the concept of *Beamtenstaat*, see Ruth McVey, “The *Beamtenstaat* in Indonesia,” in *Interpreting Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate*, ed. Benedict R. Anderson and Audrey Kahin (Singapore: Equinox Publishing, 1982); and Henk Schulte Nordholt, “Renegotiating Boundaries: Access, Agency, and Identity in Post-Soeharto Indonesia,” *Bijdragen Tot De Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde* 159, 4 (2003): 550–89.

³¹ See Filomeno V. Aguilar, “Citizenship, Inheritance, and the Indigenizing of ‘Orang Chinese’ in Indonesia,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 9, 3 (2001): 517; and Harriot Beazley, “Street Boys in Yogyakarta: Social and Spatial Exclusion in the Public Spaces of the City,” in *A Companion to the City*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000): 471.

³² Hefner, “Where Have all the *Abangan* Gone?”

³³ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993).

³⁴ Suzanne Brenner, “Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women and ‘The Veil,’” *American Ethnologist* 23, 4 (1996): 673.

³⁵ “An experience-near concept is, roughly, one that someone—a patient, a subject, in our case an informant—might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others.” See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973): 57.

described as part of the *dakwa* Islam—outreach, awakening of Islam—in fact, most Javanese we have spoken to describe it in terms of rising levels of piety. The sense of deepening commitment to Islam is often described by invoking the notion of piety. However, this immediately becomes complicated because Indonesians—and Javanese in particular—have several different words they use to describe piety.

Probably one of the most common Indonesian terms used to describe piety is *saleh* (noun: *kesalehan*); in Javanese, the word is often pronounced and written *soleh*. This term connotes someone whose actions are pious, and who engages in regular mosque or prayer group attendance, or pilgrimages. Other common terms are *taqwā* (a kind of awe and wariness—and fear of God—that leads to spiritual reflection) along with repentance (*tawba*), consistency with the straight way (*istiqāma*), truthfulness (*ṣidq*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), abstention (*zuhd*), reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), surrender to Allah (*taslīm*), good manners (*adab*), love (*maḥabba*), remembrance (*dhikr*), and more. Among the Javanese inclined toward *Sufi* practice, there is a tendency to define *taqwā* as self-defense and avoidance. The defense consists of protecting oneself from God's punishment by performing His commands and observing His prohibitions.

As Bryan Turner has observed, one of the major problems in studying piety is how to measure it.³⁶ That is, since piety is at once a subjective experience and an external act, it is often difficult to decide what will count as evidence of its presence in a particular individual. Some of the most common ways of expressing various types of piety include the wearing of headscarves, daily prayers, voting for Islamic political parties,³⁷ and the cultivation of the little black calluses on the forehead (*zebiba*)³⁸ that indicate the enthusiastic practice of *sujud*, or prostration.

But studying any one of those indicators of piety systematically poses analytical and practical problems for research. There are few empirical studies of headscarves,³⁹ as headscarves are subject to fashion whims, and are easy to put on and to take off, depending on the context. Some women wear them all day; others wear them only briefly in particular contexts. Attendance at mosques (in Indonesia, anyway) is nearly impossible to study systematically over time and in significant numbers because there are very few records of mosque attendance in Indonesia. Using the vote for Islamic political parties as an indicator of piety is also a problem in Indonesia—as Liddle and Mujani have suggested⁴⁰—because not voting for a PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, the Justice and Prosperity Party) candidate, for instance, does not mean one is not pious

³⁶ P. S. Brenner, "Testing the Veracity of Self-reported Religious Practice in the Muslim World," *Social Forces* 92, 3 (2014): 1009–37. Further readings in measuring piety in anthropological studies include Thomas B. Pepinsky, "Measuring Piety in Indonesia" (presentation, AALIMS Standard Conference on the Political Economy of Islam and Muslim Societies, Stanford, CA, April 16, 2016); and Bryan S. Turner, "Introduction: The Price of Piety: A Special Issue of Contemporary Islam on Piety, Politics, and Islam," *Contemporary Islam* 2, 1 (2008): 1–6.

³⁷ R. William Liddle, "The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation," *Journal of Asian Studies* 55, 3 (1996): 613.

³⁸ Michael Slackman, "Fashion and Faith Meet, on Foreheads of the Pious," *New York Times*, December 18, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/18/world/africa/18egypt.html>, accessed April 9, 2017.

³⁹ Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66, 2 (2007): 390.

⁴⁰ Liddle and Munjani, "Leadership, Party, and Religion," 832–57.

—it may mean one is disgusted with the scandals surrounding the party.⁴¹ The forehead calluses are actually fairly rare, and there are many people who could be considered pious who nonetheless do not have them, especially women.⁴²

Names as Evidence

In contrast to the kinds of evidence of piety listed above, names have certain advantages as a source of research data: (1) Everyone has one. Names appear to be a human universal; there are no human communities that do not name their children.⁴³ As such, the *experience* of having a name is something all people can relate to, although, not surprisingly, that experience varies widely. Thus, insofar as certain names are associated with piety, it is a way of linking piety with personal experience. (2) Names are often a matter of public record. With the emergence of state societies in the early nineteenth century, the modern census—in most cases a collection of personal names, ages, and addresses—was a critical component of its authority.⁴⁴ The accessibility of these “public” records, of course, varies. (3) As labels of identity in state societies, names are more or less stable representations. Once collected and inscribed in a public record, state societies seldom make it easy to change one’s name.⁴⁵ While name choices may be linked to trends and tastes,⁴⁶ their role in the state surveillance apparatus guarantees that these choices are not ephemeral whims, but linked to larger systems of institutional authority. (4) The naming of a child reflects a social choice, variously guided by personal preferences and larger social, cultural, and institutional constraints. Richard W. Bulliet, writing of the history of first names in Turkey, argues that “one of the few predictable opportunities for the exercise of free will that comes the way of most human beings is the bestowal of names upon their children.”⁴⁷ Indeed, in most contemporary state societies, one has a considerable amount of legal freedom in naming a child, although there are limits even in highly liberal states.⁴⁸ (5) In Java, anyway, names can be an indicator of the parents’ state of mind. In Java, when one asks parents what they think about when they select a name for their child, they will often say that they are seeking a *jeneng apik* (good name) for their child. What this process of seeking a good name means obviously varies from family to family, but, in general, it means that the parents are seeking a name that will “fit” with the child, and not be too “heavy” on him or her. Children who are often sick or having problems in school are sometimes diagnosed as

⁴¹ Noorhaidi Hasan, “Islamist Party, Electoral Politics, and Da’wah Mobilization among Youth: The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, 1 (2012): 17–47.

⁴² Slackman, “Fashion and Faith Meet, on Foreheads of the Pious.”

⁴³ Richard D. Alford, *Naming and Identity: A Cross-Cultural Study of Personal Naming Practices* (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1988).

⁴⁴ Marc Joseph Ventresca, “When States Count: Institutional and Political Dynamics in Modern Census Establishment, 1800–1993” (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 1995).

⁴⁵ James C. Scott, John Tehranian, and Jeremy Mathias, “The Production of Legal Identities Proper to States: The Case of the Permanent Family Surname,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, 1 (2002): 4–44.

⁴⁶ Stanley Lieberman, *Matter of Taste: How Names, Fashions, and Culture Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁴⁷ Richard W. Bulliet, “First Names and Political Changes in Modern Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9, 4 (1978): 489.

⁴⁸ Reuters, “Swedish Parents Told to Quit Silly Name Game,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, May 16, 1996.

having *kabotan jeneng*, or “a heavy name” (*abot* = heavy). Several famous people—including Nurcolish Majid and Sukarno—were diagnosed with this condition before they received their current names. What counts as a fit, also, depends on the parents’ aspirations. If they are planning to raise a pious child, then they choose a pious name that will “fit” with that child. In Java, a pious name is nearly always an Arabic name, a *nama Arab*.

The Anthropology of Javanese Names

Not much work has been done by Western scholars on Javanese names. One of the most comprehensive surveys and analyses was done by the Dutch linguist E. M. Uhlenbeck.⁴⁹ He carried out a systematic structural analysis, in which he classified Javanese names into two cross-cutting categories, gender and class. Javanese is a language with an elaborate system of politeness registers, recognizing fine-grained differences in class in distinct speech registers,⁵⁰ so it is not surprising that it might differentiate class differences in naming. Most Javanese names fall into male (often ending in *-o*) and female (often ending in *-i*) categories. Both categories have varieties that indicate class: female names that end in *-em* or *-en* are often associated with low class status, while corresponding male names are those ending in *-an*, *-in*, and *-un*.⁵¹ Further, Uhlenbeck classifies names along a third dimension: age. Here he mentions *nama alit* (child name) and *nama sepuh* (mature name)—however, this distinction only applies to males.

Uhlenbeck had little to say about the role of Arabic in Javanese. Although at the time of the article’s publication in the 1970s, between 20 and 40 percent of Javanese-speaking people bore names of Arabic origin (see Figures 1, 2, and 3), his focus was on names of Javanese and Sanskrit origin. In general, he did not dwell on contemporary historical processes that might be affecting the system. While he mentions that the distinction between child and adult names is relatively “unusual at present,” he does not analyze why this might be so (e.g., the new government requirement that each citizen must have a birth certificate; an ID number, or NIK (*Nomor Induk Kependudukan*); and an ID card, thus making a name change difficult). Another notable contemporary trend is the avoidance of names with negative or low-class connotations. For example, *nama paraben* (“nicknames,” which at one time were common) tended to refer to negative, embarrassing events or features in a person’s past.⁵² A Javanese scholar, Riyadi,⁵³ suggests that one important change in Javanese naming practices is that contemporary Javanese “seek to choose a name for their children that has good, positive, and modern [associations].” In the past, he suggests,

⁴⁹ E. M. Uhlenbeck, “Systematic Features of Javanese Personal Names,” in *For East is East: Liber Amicorum Wojciech Skalmowski*, ed. Tatjana Soldatjenkova and Emmanuel Waegemans (New York: International Linguistics Association, 1971).

⁵⁰ J. J. Errington, *Structure and Style in Javanese: A Semiotic View of Linguistic Etiquette* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

⁵¹ Uhlenbeck, “Systematic Features of Javanese Personal Names,” 339.

⁵² Djatmika, “Pemberian Nama Panggilan Dalam Masyarakat Jawa” [Bestowal of Nicknames in Javanese Society], unpublished manuscript, KIMLI, 2011.

⁵³ S. Riyadi, “Nama Diri Etnik Jawa Dan Fungsinya Dalam Masyarakat” [Javanese Personal Names and their Function in Society], unpublished manuscript, Balai Bahasa Yogyakarta, n.d.

names sometimes harbored negative connotations, as a way of warding off evil spirits, sickness, and misfortune.

One of the main ways in which Javanese classify names can be characterized as broadly civilizational. In this perspective, names are classified in terms of their perceived linguistic and cultural “origin.” Within Indonesia, several layers or strata of civilization are thought to be in evidence—Javanese/Sanskrit, Arabic/Islamic, and Western/Dutch.⁵⁴ Most Javanese have a sense of Sanskritized names as being somehow old Javanese or even just “Javanese.” Arabic and Arabic-sounding names fall under a category of *nama Arab*. A number of these names may, in fact, not be Arabic; many are Persian, but are considered *nama Arab*, or *jeneng Arab*. A key point here is that Arabic names, for Javanese, are by definition associated with Islam. Unlike with Western naming practices, Javanese would not take on an Arab name for purely secular reasons. Although the particular form of an Arabic name may be selected by Muslim parents for aesthetic reasons (e.g., “I liked the sound of the name,” many parents replied in response to questions about why they chose a name), the choice of an Arabic versus non-Arabic name was guided by the influence of Islam. For most Javanese, there is no such thing as a “secular Arabic name.” The bestowal and use of an Arabic name is always associated with Islam, and frequently with piety. Indonesian Christians very rarely—if ever—adopt Arabic names.

In contrast, adopting a Western name is not always associated with Christianity. Of the many Western names (*nama Barat*) in circulation in Java, only a small percentage directly originate from the period of Dutch colonialism; most are more generally western European and loosely Anglophone in origin. The Western names bestowed are nearly always first names (e.g., Jimmy, Joni, Alissa, Linda); it is exceedingly rare to find a young person of Indonesian parentage with a name that would be considered a last name (patronym) in western Europe or North America (e.g. Smith, Jones, Johnson, Black). The bestowal of Western-style first name followed by the use of surname may sometimes signal one’s identity as Chinese Javanese. In contemporary Indonesia, expressing one’s Chinese identity through use of a Chinese-sounding name is increasingly open, and even a form of resistance toward “discriminatory Indonesian state assimilation policies and as a form of boundary-marking for ethnic Chinese, who make up less than 4 percent of the Indonesian population.”⁵⁵ For parents, the bestowal of a Western name may also be associated with “cosmopolitan educational and socioeconomic aspirations.”⁵⁶ The adoption of a patronymic (often Western) surname—now increasingly common among the Chinese—harks back to Dutch colonial policy dating to 1925. In that year,

The Dutch East Indies adopted names that were passed on from one generation to the next (*turun-temurun*), called “family names” (*nama kaum* or *nama pamili*). These names were for (1) any civil servant who made more than 100 Dutch

⁵⁴ See, for example, Bernardus Andreas Gregorius Vroklage, “Die Sozialen Verhältnisse Indonesiens: Eine Kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung Aschendorff,” *Anthropos*, 4, 1 (1936).

⁵⁵ Benjamin Bailey and Sunny Lie, “The Politics of Names among Chinese Indonesians in Java,” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 23, 1 (2003): 21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

florins a month; (2) anyone who officially claimed aristocratic title; (3) any Indonesians who had adopted the Christian faith.⁵⁷

Patronymics continue to be rare, even after the law forbidding the use of Chinese family names⁵⁸ was lifted in 1999 following the fall of Suharto. Many Chinese felt they had already incorporated their Chinese surnames into their new Javanese names (e.g., “Tan” became “Sutanto”)—and thus there was no need to revert to the original Chinese word. It is not clear, however, whether such names have continued to be transmitted along family lines.

Traditionally, an important context for choosing names was the *sowan*, or “visit.” Upon learning of a pregnancy and impending birth, parents and perhaps grandparents would pay a visit to a respected elder in the village for the purpose of selecting a *jeneng apik*, “good name.” They would approach a *modin* (lit. “*muezzin*,” the crier who calls Muslims to prayer), *kyai* (teacher or Islamic leader), or even the *takmir* (mosque director) and ask for advice on choosing a name. If the parents went to that elder’s place for advice, they typically would bring a small in-kind gift such as sugar, rice, or coffee. But if they invite the expert to their home, a *salawat* (a “blessing”) of money should be offered. One reason for such consultations was that very few Javanese are fluent in speaking, reading, or writing Arabic, so they often needed help if they sought an Arabic name. The advisor, drawing on his (or her) ability to read Arabic, would provide a possible name (or names) from the reading of texts, and would provide an exegesis of the meaning. For parents with limited resources, and perhaps unable (or unwilling) to provide even a small gift for such services, relying on family members or even their own counsel was a strong second option, sometimes leading to the choice of rather idiosyncratic or contextually specific names. Names based on days of the week, peculiar physical traits, or days in the Javanese calendar were once quite common, but are now infrequently chosen for the reasons mentioned above. One of the major changes occurring in name selection in contemporary Java is the widespread availability of baby-name books in stores and on the internet. Most Javanese can find a name they like by simply consulting a website. This may help explain the reports of the recent “complexity” of Javanese names.⁵⁹

Mixed Methods

To examine the changing role of Arabic names in Java, we combined ethnographic observations and interviews with quantitative analysis of data collected from three selected regencies (*kabupaten*) in Central, North, and East Java. The names were collected from the Office of Population (*Kantor Kependudukan*) in the three regencies, which graciously supplied us with Excel spreadsheets containing names of everyone living in the regency—adults, juveniles, and children—all linked to birthdates, gender, education level, parents’ names, and other valuable information, amounting to

⁵⁷ RDS Hadiwidjana, “Nama-Nama Indonesia,” *Jogjaakarta Gondomanan*, Spring 1968: 156.

⁵⁸ https://id.wikisource.org/wiki/Keputusan_Presidium_Kabinet_Nomor_127_Tahun_1966, accessed April 9, 2017.

⁵⁹ Rusman and Evi Mariani, “Long Difficult Names for Kids is the New Trend in Indonesia,” *The Jakarta Post*, September 9, 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/09/19/long-difficult-names-children-new-trend.html>, accessed April 9, 2017.

somewhat more than one million names for each regency, or a total of approximately 3.7 million names. The three regencies (*kabupaten*) correspond roughly to the three main areas of the former Dutch colony: (1) *Mataraman* (the realm of Mataram; referred to by the Dutch as *Het Vorstenland*—the sovereign courtly regency); (2) *Pasisir* (north coastal regency); and the (3) *Oosthoek* (the eastern frontier; also known as Pentalungan).⁶⁰ Bantul is a regency on the southern border of the courtly city of Yogyakarta, with deep ties to a centuries old Javanese aristocracy still viewed by many as custodians of an authentic Javanese culture.⁶¹ Lamongan, located on the north coast of Java (*Pasisir*), where the Solo river meets the Java sea, has a long history of ties with Middle Eastern proselytizers, merchants, and opponents of central state authority.⁶² Lumajang, in the mountainous eastern end of the island, has received a variety of migrants from the northern island of Madura, and has been a refuge for isolated sects of Hinduized syncretic groups.⁶³

To analyze these large datasets, we enlisted the help of a software engineer, Arjint Aspin. Aspin drew on a dataset obtained in 2011 from the subdistrict of Mantrijeron that had been coded by hand into the categories of Javanese, Western, and Arabic. Using the data from that previous study, he was able to design a program that would gradually teach itself (with the input of a team of researchers), over the course of repeated applications to the data, to code almost the entire dataset. In the end, we were able to classify and code all but approximately 7 percent of the data into these categories: Javanese/Sanskrit, Arabic/Islamic, Western/Dutch, and various hybrid combinations of those categories. The remaining names did not fit easily into any cultural category (e.g., “Tektonika”).

To code the names, we drew on a folk taxonomy that Javanese themselves readily use in day-to-day interaction: what are the different kinds of Javanese names? (*Apa sing macem-macem jeneng Jawa?*) The name types correspond roughly to the civilizational categories mentioned above. Most adult Javanese can identify whether a name is—for example—of Javanese, Arabic, Chinese, or Western provenance (often including Sanskrit origin names as “Javanese”). We did not specifically differentiate Javanese and Sanskrit names because our interlocutors did not do so. Some longer Javanese names have loosely patronymic connotations. After extensive discussion with a research team of university students we also developed a scheme for classifying Arabic names into pure (*murni*) and mixed, hybrid (also *hybrid* in Arabic). Since Arabic was the only language among the three main language categories for which our Javanese interlocutors felt there was a strict purist ideology, we chose to define an “Arabic hybrid name” as one in which an Arabic name was mixed with *any other kind of name* (e.g., “Muhammad Suharto”). Javanese names also were considered to have hybrid types, but only if they were combined with Indonesian (e.g., “Melati Widodo”) or Western name types (e.g., “Cindy Suprpto”). “Indonesian” names were considered to be hybrid if they mixed Indonesian-language names with Western and other non-

⁶⁰ Heather Sutherland, “Notes on Java’s Regent Families: Part I,” *Indonesia* 16 (1973): 113–47.

⁶¹ Mark Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Monographs for the Association for Asian Studies, No. 45, 1989).

⁶² Nur Syam, *Islam Pesisir* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Aksara, 2005).

⁶³ Robert W. Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

Indonesian, non-Arabic names. Super-hybrid names were those that mixed all varieties of names—Western, Javanese, Arabic—together (e.g., "Jonny Achmad Soegijopranoto"). Such names are typically relatively long—consisting of at least two and often three or four parts—and are indicative of a trend toward long names among Javanese, discussed below.

Trending: Arabic Names over Pure Javanese Name

One of the most striking trends in the data is the growing popularity of bestowing Arabic names on Javanese children. In all three regencies, the tendency to choose Arabic names is on the rise, but the change is more striking in Central Java and East Java than in Lamongan, where the primary growth has been in hybrid (Arabic plus other) names. The rising popularity of Arabic names applies to all infants, although it is greatest for male children. The growth began at different points in time in different regions. Bantul shows a marked change around the time of the emergence of the *dakwa* movement on college campuses in the late 1980s and early 1990s—not surprisingly, given its proximity to Yogyakarta, a noted university town. The other notable trend in all three regencies is that the growth of Arabic names comes at the expense of Javanese names.

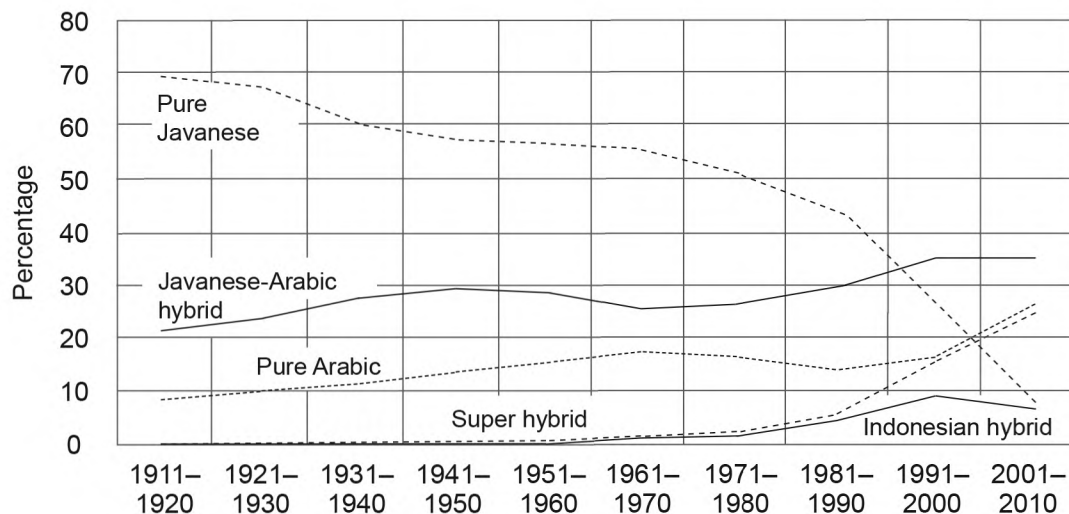


Figure 1. Changes in Name Types in Bantul Regency

In the courtly, historically Javanist area of Bantul, in the “interior” south-central part of the island, there were far fewer pure Arabic, or even Javanese–Arabic hybrid names until the mid 1980s (Figure 1). By the 1990s, however, about half of the children born have at least one Arabic name. During this same period—the 1990s—the number of children who have “pure” Javanese names—i.e., a name not mixed with either a Western or Arabic name—has dramatically declined, and by 2000, such names are a distinct minority.

Along the north coast, there is a relatively steady level, between 35 and 45 percent, of choosing “pure” Arabic names for more than a century, and, indeed, up to the present (Figure 2). Where there is dramatic growth is in the level of hybridity. By the 1990s, the combined percentage of pure plus hybrid Arabic names represented a clear majority. By the 2000s, they were far and away the dominant name types, with the use of pure Javanese names declining precipitously and representing a small fraction of the overall set of names (less than 10 percent).

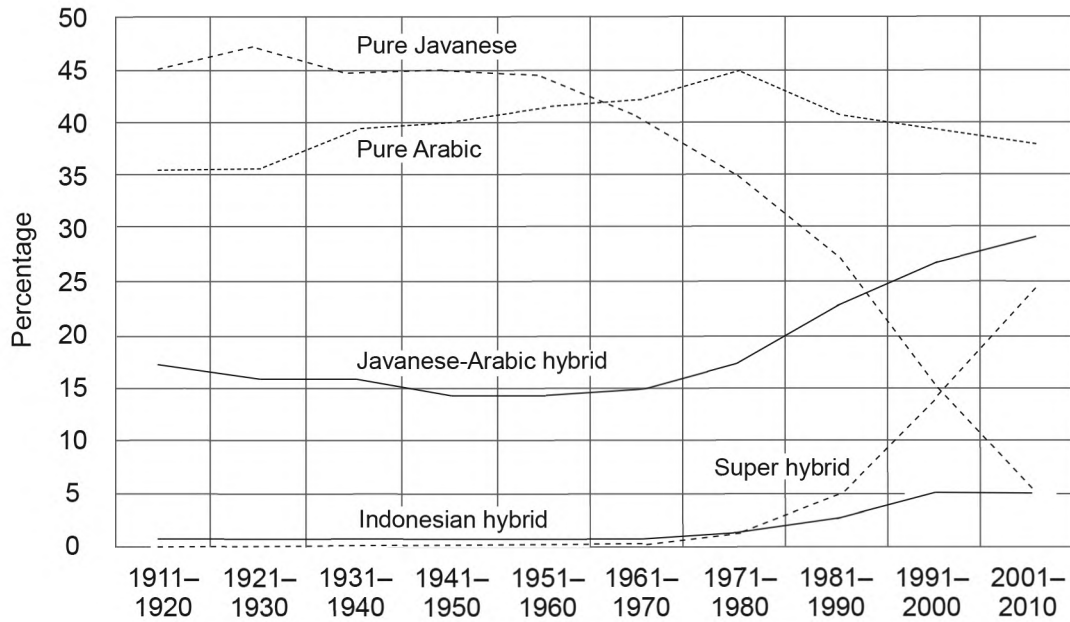


Figure 2. Changes in Name Types in Lamongan Regency

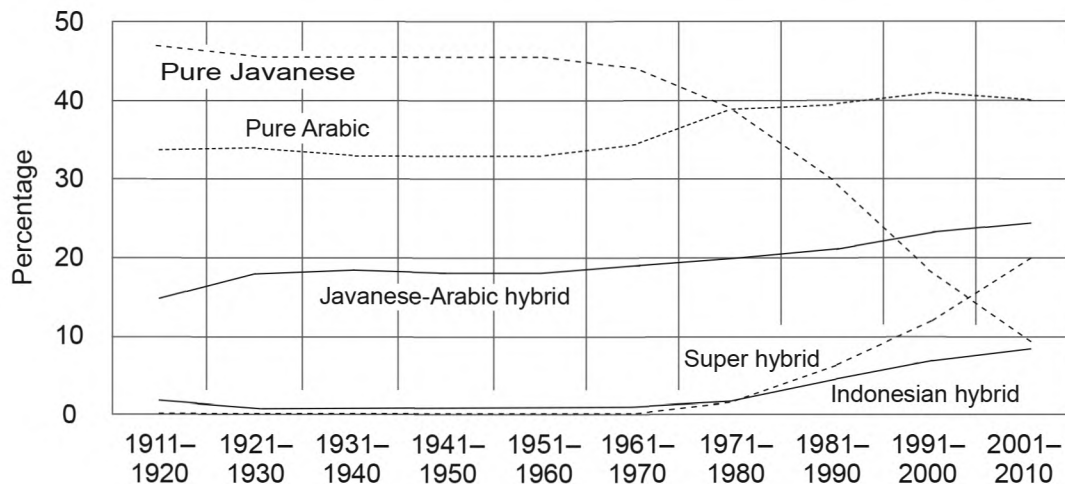


Figure 3. Changes in Name Types in Lumajang Regency

In the eastern frontier of Javanese culture in Lumajang (Figure 3), there is a remarkably similar picture to that in Lamongan, on the north coast. The number of

pure Arabic names has remained high through much of the period; hybridity increases and Javanese drops in the 1970s, perhaps due to the association in Lamongan of Javanese names with the syncretic varieties of Islam known as *abanganism*. Lumajang was also influenced by its proximity to Madura. As Lumajang was an area less densely populated during the early part of the century, the Dutch recruited Madurese from the heavily Muslim north coast in the 1920s and 1930s to develop it agriculturally and thus generate tax revenue for the colonial regime.

Class-marked Names on the Decline

Another particularly striking trend in Javanese naming patterns is the dramatic decline of class-marked names. As noted by several scholars,⁶⁴ Javanese names have a variety of ways of indicating social class. Names with certain suffixes (e.g., *-em*, *-am*, *-om*), names of the days of the week, names of plants and animals, and names with negative connotations are associated with low class status. As Figure 4 clearly shows, such names were most notably popular in the courtly regency of *Bantul*, but became markedly less popular after Indonesian independence and the end of Dutch support for a class system that many Indonesians perceived as feudal and oppressive. From the 1960s to the 1990s, the bestowal of such names on Javanese children dropped from over 40 thousand in Bantul (for example) to nearly zero.

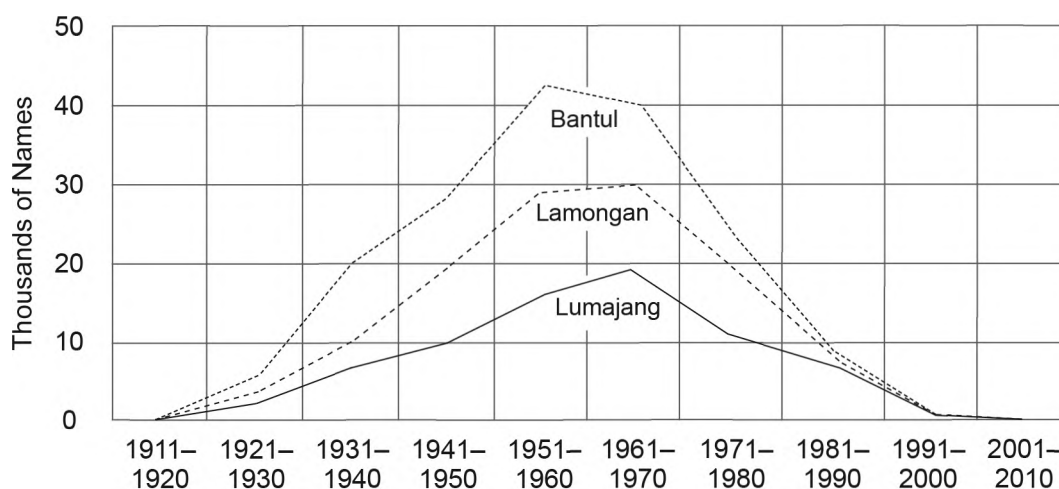


Figure 4. Changes in Class-marked Naming Practices in Three Regencies

Another factor that likely contributed to the decline of choosing class-marked names was mass education. After independence, literacy, once the purview of elites, rapidly became more common and a sense of class mobility began to develop.

⁶⁴ For further reading on Javanese names and social class, see Jean-Marc de Grave, “Naming as a Dynamic Process,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 39, 113 (2011): 69–88. See also Hadiwidjana, *Nama-Nama Indonesia*; and Uhlenbeck, “Systematic Features of Javanese Personal Names.”

The Breakup of Name Concentration and the Rise of Volatility

In Java, naming practices have followed a pattern described by Stanley Lieberman for western Europe and the United States, albeit lagging behind by about fifty years:

If we look at fashion trends for names in [the USA and western Europe], a fairly common pattern emerges. The leading names given to children are little changed until the late-nineteenth century or early twentieth century. Until the twentieth century, moreover, fashion for girls' names is no more pronounced than it is for boys. Yet in the twentieth century we see both a growing fashion dimension in the naming of children manifested in the acceleration in the replacement of names, and a markedly greater level of fashion turnover for girls' names.⁶⁵

One way of getting at this pattern for Java was to calculate the top twenty names in each regency for each five-year period, and then examine the rate of change. In the regency of *Bantul*, for example, we find that the overall percentage of the people who bear names in the top twenty begins to decline in the 1950s and further declines steadily thereafter. Conversely, the number of people who bear unique names (i.e., names not shared with anyone else in the regency's dataset) begins to rise at about the same time, and continues until the present. This situation is fairly typical in the entire study region. Not only is there a breakup of name concentration, and an increasing tendency toward individuation of names, there is an increased volatility and turnover among those names that qualify as being in the top twenty in any given year.

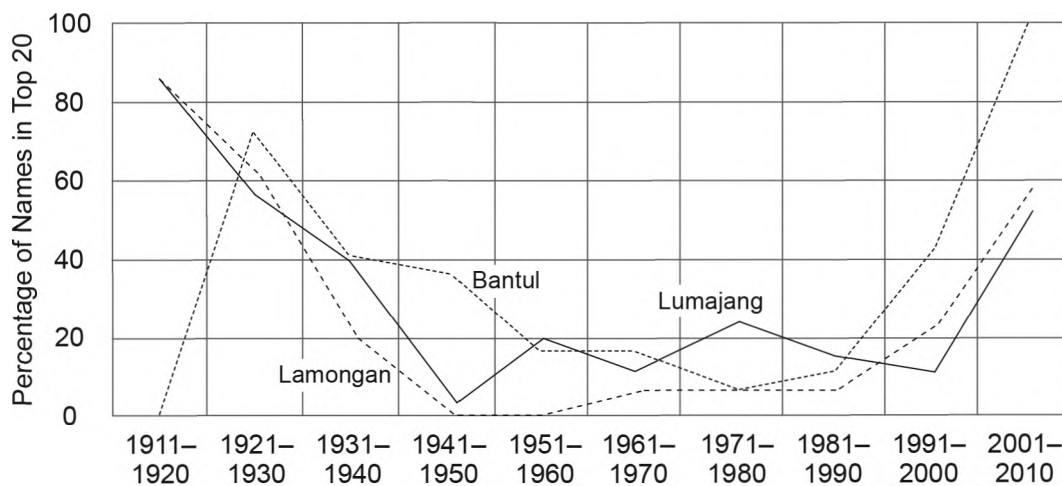


Figure 5. Volatility of Naming Males in Three Regencies

In all three regencies, male-name choices exhibit a responsiveness to changes in trends regarding naming practices (Figure 5). The regencies are somewhat conservative after the war and especially during the period of Suharto's New Order, but toward the end of that period the turnover of dominant names becomes increasingly rapid, suggesting a heightened responsiveness to naming trends, especially in the Bantul area.

⁶⁵ Lieberman, *Matter of Taste: How Names, Fashions, and Culture Change*, 36.

For females (Figure 6), the contrast is between Bantul, on the one hand, and the Lamongan and Lumajang areas on the other. In all three areas, chosen female names exhibit less variety than male names over time; indeed, Lumajang and Lamongan exhibit a relatively flat trend line, well below that for boys (Figure 5). Beginning in the mid 1990s, however, Bantul demonstrates remarkable change and turnover in the top twenty names for girls that continues to the present at a rate comparable to the boys.

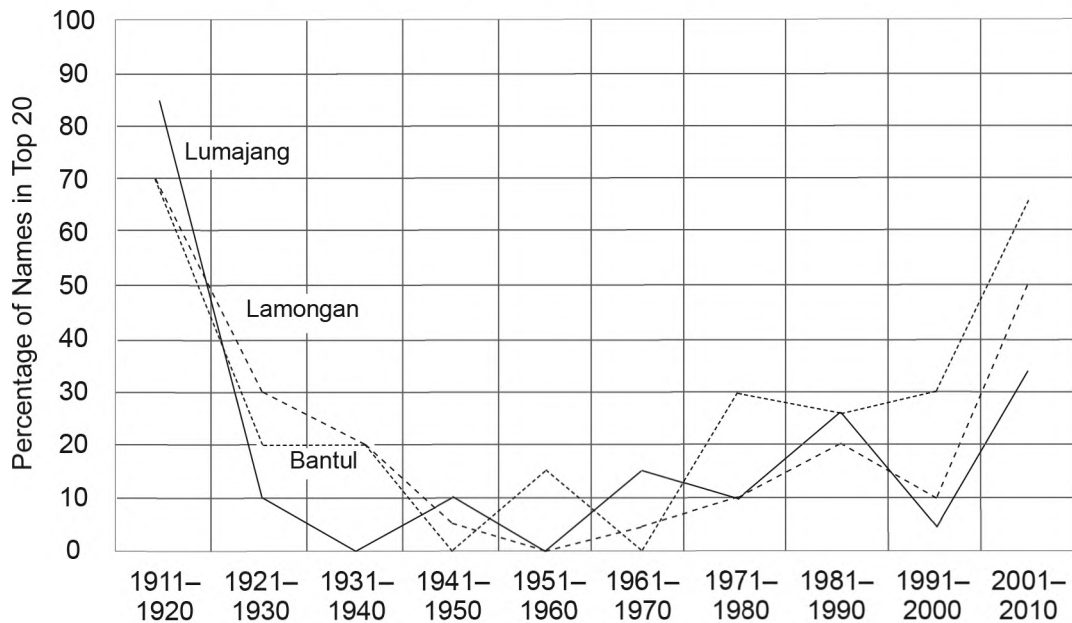


Figure 6. Volatility of Naming Females in Three Regencies

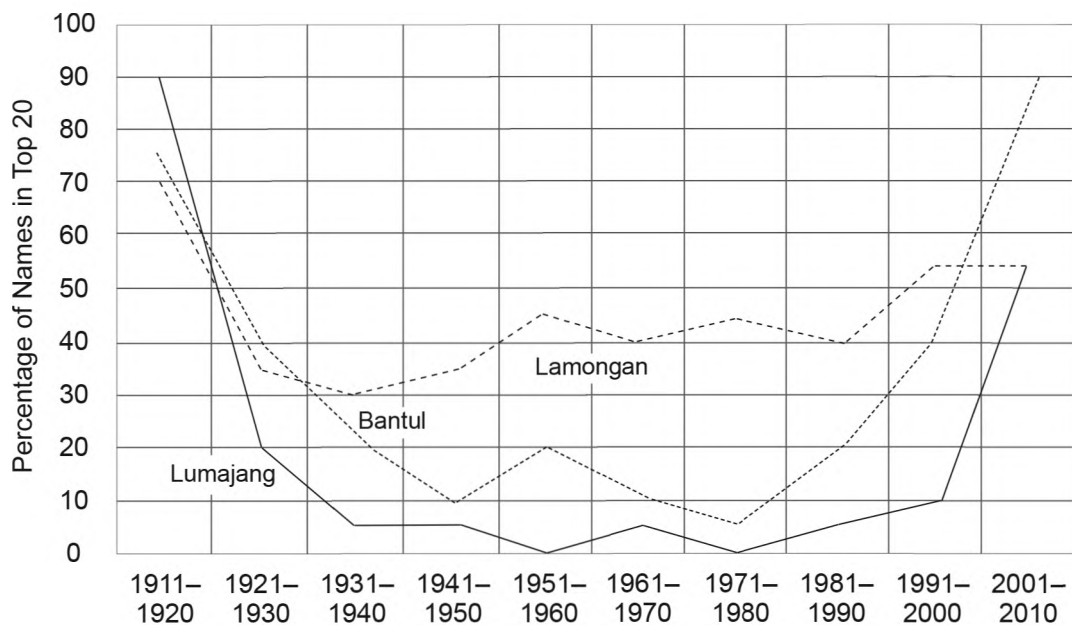


Figure 7. Volatility of Naming Males and Females in Three Regencies

Increasing Standardization

Even as there is increasing variety with regard to name selection, the inscription of those names is being standardized and made uniform and invariant. As Javanese have become more educated over the last several decades, they have also become familiar with standard forms of transliterating Arabic, including the use of doubled consonants and digraphs (two different consonants to represent a single foreign sound). For example, while there was once wide variation in the ways in which the name *Muhammad* was spelled, this is no longer the case. Since Javanese does not have phonemic doubled consonants, when such forms do appear in print, they are nearly always used to represent such a sound in a foreign language, such as Arabic. When doubled consonants do appear, it is often a sign that someone has paid close attention to the norms of spelling in a foreign language, often Arabic. Changes in such patterns of spelling would be consistent with rising levels of education.

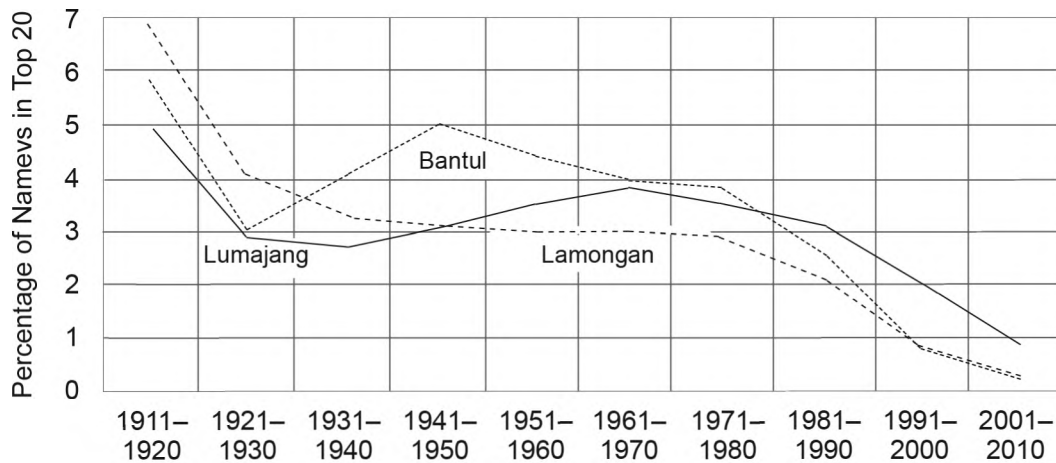


Figure 8. Concentration of Names in Three Regencies

Increasing Name Length

Another marked trend in the name data is that of increasing name length. There have been recent anecdotal reports on this,⁶⁶ and our empirical investigation bears it out. The clichéd statement—often prefacing the introduction of an Indonesian person in English-language journalistic parlance—“he, like many Indonesians, only has one name”—is not only mostly inaccurate for the present, it is a thing of the past, at least for Java. The following charts show data from the three regencies that indicate that the number of children with only one name has dramatically declined in the last thirty years. While children with only one official name made up the majority of individuals in the Javanese regencies under study until about the mid 1970s, the numbers began to decline at that point. Today, the number of babies receiving only one name is nearly

⁶⁶ Rusman and Evi Mariani, “Long Difficult Names for Kids is the New Trend in Indonesia,” *The Jakarta Post*, September 9, 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/09/19/long-difficult-names-children-new-trend.html>, accessed April 9, 2017.

zero. How much of this is a result of bureaucratic and reporting requirements for birth certificates, school registration, and national identity cards is unknown.

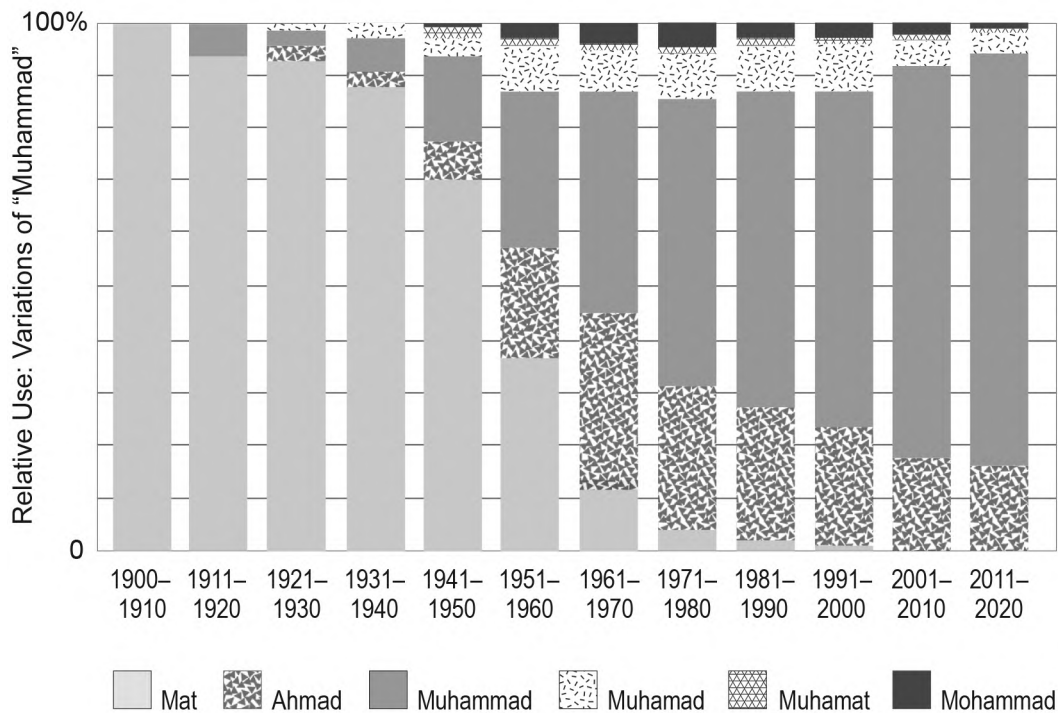


Figure 9. Relative Use of Various Spellings of "Muhammad" in Bantul

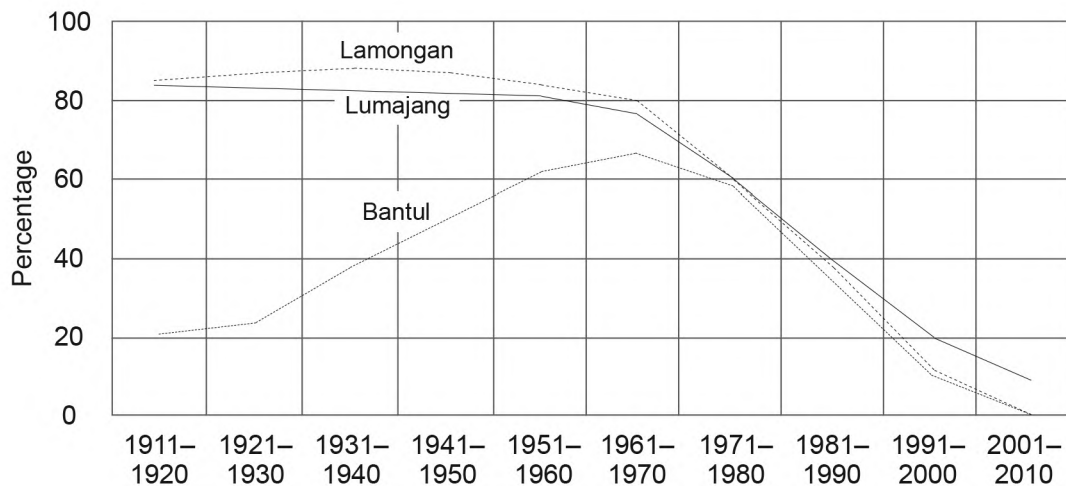


Figure 10. Frequency of One-part Names in Three Regencies

As the number of individuals in the population with one-part names declines sharply, there is, of course, a consequent rise in longer names. As one-part names

declined during the 1970s, two-part names rose from the 1970s until the 1990s (Figure 11), at which point three-part names began to be more common (Figure 12). While the names for more than half the individuals who said they were born in the 1920s consist of just one part, by the 1980s the average name length is two parts, and by 2005—twenty-five years later—the mean name length in Lamongan is three parts.

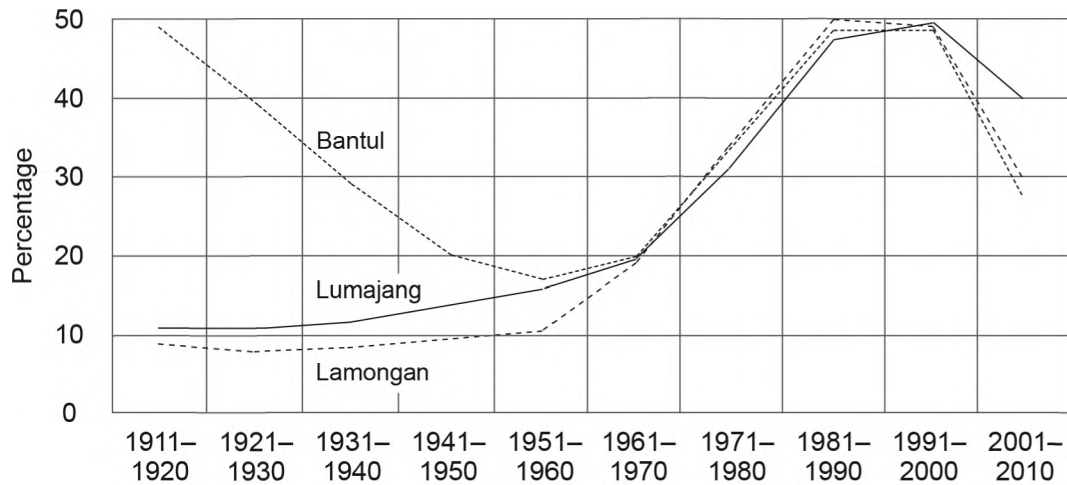


Figure 11. Frequency of Two-part Names in Three Regencies

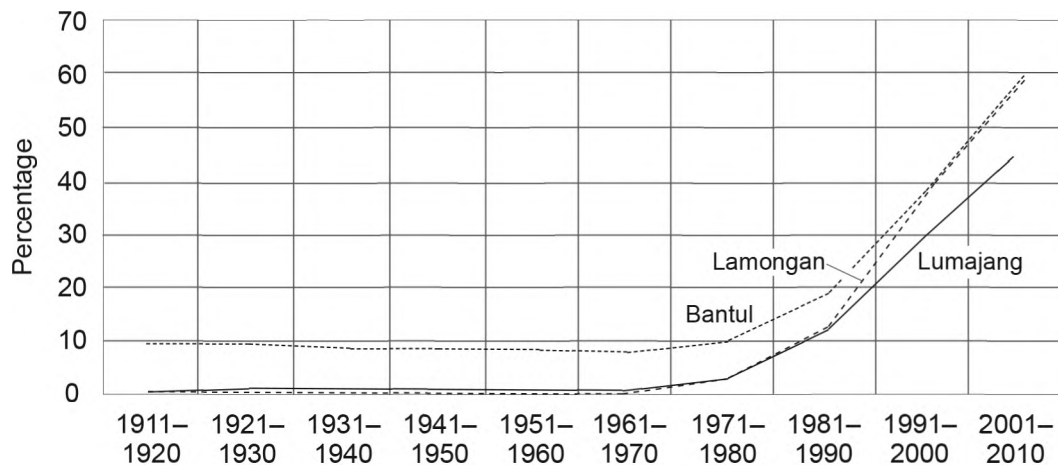


Figure 12. Frequency of Three-part Names in Three Regencies

Name Length as a Resource for Hybrid, Unique Names

Although Javanese names are becoming longer, more Arabized, and more standardized in their spelling relative to years prior to the 1960s, they are not becoming more homogeneous or similar to one another, or even consistent in terms of name type. Perhaps the single most striking trend in the name data so far is the exuberant trend toward hybridity and innovation in the naming of children. To

capture this innovation in chart form (see Figures 7 and 8), we identified for each regency the names that were the “top twenty most popular” for each decade for both males and females. Then we calculated the relative degree of volatility (versus stability or continuity) of each name’s top-twenty status between decades. A low number indicates a high degree of stability and low turnover (also known as low volatility, meaning that the name stayed in the top twenty for many years). While the numbers available for the earliest decades of the twentieth century (1910–20s) are so small that they are probably not reliable, in the 1930s and ’40s it becomes clear that turnover is fairly low. By the late decades of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century, however, turnover of popular names is quite rapid, particularly in Lumajang and Bantul, indicating that naming trends are changing quickly.

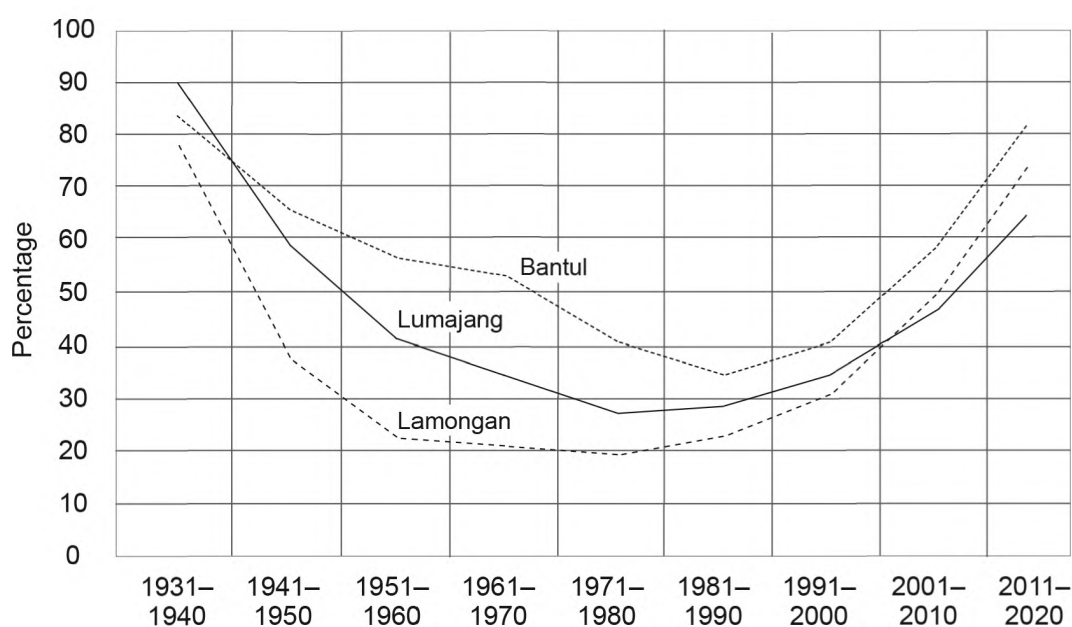


Figure 13. Unique Names by Regency

At the same time, the uniqueness of names given to individuals is rising dramatically; the number of individuals who share exactly the same name has dropped. As names lengthen, all regencies exhibit a marked trend toward bestowing unique names on children. A way of representing this unique-name trend is to examine the extent to which Javanese in these regencies share common names. As can be seen in Figure 13, at roughly the same time that name length increases, the uniqueness of names increases, and the extent of “sharedness” or concentration of names (Figure 8), declines.

In the context of the common belief that Java has become more normative and universalizing, it is striking that if one turns one’s attention to language data, specifically naming data, a rather different picture emerges. Not only do we find that there is an embrace of plural varieties of name types, but hybrid forms of Arabic are the fastest growing name type.

Looking at all three regencies, it is clear that while bestowing a pure Arabic name on a child is a practice that has been growing rapidly in the once-predominantly Javanist, courtly area of Bantul, the bestowal of pure Arabic names is also growing—albeit more slowly—in Lumajang and Lamongan. The truly striking feature of the naming data, however, is the way in which they reveal that in all three areas the fastest growing name types are hybrid names. Hybridity is not evenly distributed across the population, however. Girls are somewhat more likely to receive hybrid names than boys, perhaps because males are seen as bearers of an Islamic tradition and thus associated with an ideology of purity.

Discussion

As the largest ethnic group in the world's largest Muslim country, the Javanese are important, in simple demographic terms, for the ways in which their practices can provide clues about trends in the region. While many observers have focused on headscarves and other visual signs of growing religiosity in the area,⁶⁷ naming practices offer an underutilized but readily available, ethnographically stable, and culturally and religiously significant indicator of what many Javanese consider an indicator of piety. The way in which naming practices change—particularly the dramatically increasing role of Arabic names in three selected but key regencies—is important because of the cultural association of the parents' name selection with an *amanat* (mandate), or *wasiat* (wish or will) of the parents for the child. The use of an Arabic name is an indication that the parents desire to link their wishes for the future of their child with Islam. Inasmuch as these changes are happening on a large scale, across a region, they may be taken as a way of representing Islamization in the sense described by Ricklefs: "a process of deepening commitment to standards of normative Islamic belief, practice, and religious identity."⁶⁸

Islamization is not a purely religious and spiritual process; it also interacts with political, social, and economic processes as well. The changes we have described above give testimony to these influences. When the timing of noticeable increases or declines in naming patterns coincides with major political upheavals in Indonesian history (e.g., 1920–30s high colonialism, 1945 Indonesian independence, the 1965 massacre of communists, the 1980s Islamic *dakwa* revival, the 1990s collapse of the Suharto New Order), it creates a conspicuous correlation if not necessarily a causation scenario.

The marked and rapid decline in class-marked names in the years after Indonesian independence (Figure 4) occurs in all three regencies so closely after Indonesian independence that it is hard not to associate that trend with the withdrawal of the Dutch support for what was widely perceived as a feudal system that kept elite Javanese in power and who, in turn, demanded control and dominion over the poor

⁶⁷ See Brenner, "Testing the Veracity of Self-reported Religious Practice in the Muslim World"; and Smith-Hefner, "Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," 389–420.

⁶⁸ Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java*, 516. For further discussion of Islamization as a commitment to Islamic beliefs, see Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure*, 25–27.

and lowest classes.⁶⁹ While many sought refuge with the elites during World War II, the abolition of this repressive colonial system after the war was widely perceived as an opportunity to embrace a shared destiny on the basis of relative equality. Particularly for members of the lowest classes, the Indonesian revolution was perceived as an opportunity to *maju* (progress) and develop a better life. Breaking out of the system of class-marked names would be consistent with that interpretation.

The hostilities toward communists in the period after 1965 may also have had an effect on naming patterns. As many scholars have noted, Java's lower classes were fiercely politicized in the run-up to the 1965 massacres.⁷⁰ After Suharto sidelined President Sukarno and established an authoritarian regime based on the elimination of the communist "threat," anyone suspected of being associated or implicated (*terlibat*) with communism in any way—including anyone adopting an atheistic, or nonstandard, non-normative approach to Islam—was considered a potential danger to national security. In such a climate of repression and fear, parents wishing to provide a life of opportunity for their children would likely seek to avoid names that harbored connotations of lower-class sympathies or non-normative forms of Islam. In this environment, Arabic names were a safe bet, and, indeed, in the 1970s, the percentage of pure Arabic and Arabic hybrid names began to rise.

By the 1990s, the Suharto regime began to lose control over Muslim politics in Indonesia.⁷¹ A new generation of young parents, who had experienced the weekly mandatory three hours of religious education in public elementary schools since 1967,⁷² began to find expression for their increasingly pious identities through the bestowal of Muslim names on their children. Furthermore, on college campuses in Java in the 1980s an important movement—*Kampus Dakwa* ("spreading Islam on campus")—had begun that sought to de-privatize the role of Islam in Indonesian life, and young Javanese parents were encouraged in weekly Friday sermons by newly emboldened *imams* and Muslim activists to express this identity through the use of Arabic names for their children.⁷³

Heryanto has argued the role of international Islam (including international terror), combined with the increasing integration of the Indonesian economy in the global consumer economy,⁷⁴ and the weakening and decentralization of the Indonesian state,⁷⁵ had created the conditions for the emergence of hybrid identities in the 2000s.⁷⁶ These identities draw on sources from religion, the consumer economy, screen culture, and even K-Pop music. Heryanto, however, resists reducing the development of Indonesian identities to either religion or commodity.

⁶⁹ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1972).

⁷⁰ Hefner, *Civil Islam*.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Smith-Hefner, "Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," 395.

⁷³ Mathias Diederich, "A Closer Look at Dakwah and Politics in Indonesia: The Partai Keadilan, Some Insights into Its History and an Analysis of its Programs and Statutes," *Archipel* 64, 1 (2002): 101–15.

⁷⁴ Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure*.

⁷⁵ Nordholt, "Renegotiating Boundaries."

⁷⁶ Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure*, 70–71.

Greg Fealy has explored what he calls the “commodification of Islam” in Indonesia.⁷⁷ He notes in this spiritual marketplace:

products [i.e. types of spiritual services] are sold to clients rather than imposed on them. Personal choice rather than institutional or cultural loyalties or norms drives this market ... This leads to volatility in religious consumption as believers tire of old commodities and seek out new trends.⁷⁸

According to Fealy, this pattern of religious commodification and consumption can be explained due to:

... modernization, urbanization, and globalization. Since the 1970s, Indonesia has undergone dramatic socio-economic change. The *Soeharto* regime opened the country up to large inflows of foreign investment ... With national economic growth rates throughout the 1970s and 1980s of more than 7 percent per annum ... Ever larger numbers of people from rural areas were drawn to big cities ... This often brought with it not just the benefits of greater prosperity and material wealth, but also the stresses of competitive professional life, high-density urban living, and diverse cultural interactions ... Globalization ... heightened the flow of information and the movement of people and ideas, speeding the pace of change and the influence of new cultural forms ... This has had a profound effect on identity formation and consumption patterns in urban areas.⁷⁹

Consistent with the changes Fealy describes, our data show the increasing volatility of name choices among parents in all three regencies of Java. To us, the pace of turnover of the top twenty names does, indeed, seem to indicate a consumer-like, marketplace approach to names, guided less by “traditional” norms of customary practice than by trends and fashion choices.⁸⁰ However, in Java, the name volatility seems to be highest in the Bantul regency, the poorest of the three provinces in terms of market resources. In contrast to the situation in the United States and Europe, girls’ names in all three regencies are somewhat *less* volatile than boys’ names in terms of popularity, with the possible exception of Bantul in recent years.

The tendency toward name lengthening clearly correlates with the growth of individuating names and the breakup of name concentration. Lieberman’s data clearly show this occurring in western Europe and North America toward the end of the nineteenth century.⁸¹ Something similar to this begins to occur in most of Java toward the end of Suharto’s New Order. Striking levels of name concentration occur during the post-war era of nationalism and during the New Order’s efforts to create national unity and a functioning bureaucratic nation state.⁸²

⁷⁷ Gregory Fealy, “Consuming Islam: Commodified Religion and Aspirational Pietism in Contemporary Indonesia,” in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Gregory Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008): 27–28.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Lieberman, *Matter of Taste*, 31–68.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² McVey, “The *Beamtenstaat* in Indonesia.”

What sets the Javanese data apart from anything occurring in western Europe or North America is the striking degree of hybridity. In all three regencies, hybrid forms of Arabic names have overtaken pure Arabic names by a substantial margin by the year 2000. This is true for males and female names. The trend materializes in Bantul by the early 1950s, but begins in earnest in Lamongan and Lumajang by the 1970s. The names are exuberantly hybrid constructions. For example, in today's Java, a name such as "Jonny Achmad Budianto" (Western plus Arab plus Javanese) would not be considered eccentric, strange, or rare—rather, it fits in with a globalizing hybrid identity that is increasingly the norm.

It is tempting to explain such hybridizing trends as an effect of the fragmentation of identities that accompanies the unsettling changes associated with economic globalization. According to David Harvey, for one, in a world of increasingly rapid flows of information, money, and commodities, across ever wider and more diverse borders and boundaries, our identities are themselves becoming increasingly fragmented, partial, and unstable.⁸³ Navigating these unstable worlds requires that we ourselves, along with our children, adopt flexible forms of identity in a fast-moving and unstable world. Consistent with this argument is that of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, in which linguistic and cultural capital (including names) is organized in a way that is entirely coherent and continuous with the flows of economic capital.⁸⁴

However, we think reducing the hybridity in naming practices to economic globalization is too simple. In contrast to Bourdieu's view, which holds that a linguistic market is organized like any other market,⁸⁵ we believe this is only true if the word "market" is understood so broadly that it basically means any kind of meaningful exchange. As Lieberman points out, names are not capital in the same way that money is; within certain cultural categories, people often choose names on the grounds of language-specific criteria, such as their sounds, the ways they "go together" in a string of words, and overall euphony.⁸⁶ Mahmoud Khalifa, for example, argues that, from a Muslim standpoint, hybridization, as a cultural, linguistic, and ontological process imagined to arise from economic globalization, is an ideological (versus a market) construct that Muslims should be wary of, as it not only smacks of a divisive, postcolonial "divide and conquer" strategy, but is inconsistent with an Islamic search for "oneness" of identity.⁸⁷ Finally, in the Indonesian case, an explanation of the recent trends of hybridization in terms of post-WWII economic globalization would seem to overlook the country's long history of hybridization, that is, Indonesia's location at the crossroads between India and China, and its historical

⁸³ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.

⁸⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁸⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges," *Social Science Information* 16, 6 (1977): 645–68.

⁸⁶ Lieberman, *Matter of Taste*, 1–20.

⁸⁷ See Mahmoud Khalifa, *Muslim Women Write Back: Hybridity Islam and the Quest for Identity* (Cairo: Cairo University Press, 2011), 1–2; and Carool Kersten, "Islam, Cultural Hybridity, and Cosmopolitanism: New Museum Intellectuals on Globalization," *Journal of International and Global Studies* 1, 1 (2009): 89–114.

role as an important stop on the European and Middle Eastern spice trade.⁸⁸ Maier, analyzing the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* Malay historical narratives of the early nineteenth century, describes the ways in which Bugis, Javanese, and Malayu identities mixed in the straits of Melaka, despite the best efforts of the Dutch to identify them and keep them separate.⁸⁹ Analyzing the same region, Andaya examines how fluid and malleable ethnic identities were in the region.⁹⁰

Stuart Hall reminded us many years ago that cultural identities ...

... come from somewhere, have histories. But far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous “play” of history, culture, and power. [They are] unstable points of identification or suture ... Not an essence but a positioning.⁹¹

In Java, names are a verbal resource for the invocation of identities in a changing world. To equate the increasing use of Arabic names with either “Arabization of Indonesia,” on the one hand, or the increasing hybridization of names with economic globalization on the other, would be an oversimplification of Indonesia’s long and complex history of contact, engagement, and synthesis with the outside world. In our interviews with parents of children with hybrid names, we were frequently told that their bestowal of a variety of name types reflected a wish to provide their children with the flexibility to act in a complex world. To paraphrase Stuart Hall, the selection of names reflects not an endorsement of an (ethnic) essence, but a resource for “positioning.”⁹²

⁸⁸ Denys Lombard, *Le Carrefour Javanais: Essai D’Histoire Globale*, series *Civilisations et Sociétés* 79 (Paris: Editions de l’Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1990).

⁸⁹ Maier, “We are Playing Relatives,” 674.

⁹⁰ Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*.

⁹¹ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990): 225.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 230.

