

To Reveal Arabic Names for Javanese People

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Tradition in naming one's child in Indonesia has experienced dynamic changes from time to time.

"In the past century, names of persons have developed along with the times," said Askuri, doctoral student at Inter-Religious Studies of UGM Graduate School, on Tuesday on campus.

Defending his dissertation related to politics of naming in islamisation in Indonesia, Askuri mentioned that such developments also happened in Javanese tradition. Formerly, the names of Javanese people were very simple which consisted of only one word. But now the names have been more complex and longer, more meaningful and have lingual variations.

Askuri said the growth of Arabic names was rapid in the naming tradition in Java. Arabic names have been used by the Javanese, but in the past 30 years, Arabic names have been more standardised in line with transliteration of Arabic-Indonesian. Some other Arabic names seem more modern with the use of English spelling.

"The growth of Arabic names has been rapid since end of the 20th century and it can represent the



change of Islamic community in Indonesia,” the researcher of religion comparison said.

Before mid- 20th century, only a few of Javanese parents paid attention to the meaning of the names for the future of their children. This was due to the limited literacy of the parents. Generally, the santri (student) community that have patron-client with their ulema would come to them and ask them to give a meaningful name to their child.

Askuri said the Arabic names use had become an Islamic register. Arabic names become a linguistic code that represents the change in the new generation of Muslims who turn to be parents.

“There have been changes in the Arabic names in Java by the end of the 20th century, one of those is the growth of purified Arabic names that reflect the growth of Quranic literacy among parents,” he said.

The unprecedented emergence of Arabic names in Arabic names in Java, said Askuri, also indicated the spread of naming sources. These no longer depend on traditional authorities such as the ulema, but also magazines, books, newspapers, and the internet.

“This showed the spirit of the era when religious traditional authorities were more competitive with new media that are introduced by new Muslim intellectuals who are based on the pesantren or industrial power that is not based on religion,” he said.

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