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Trends in Southeast Asia

LIVING ON THE EDGE: BEING MALAY (AND BUGIS) IN THE RIAU ISLANDS

ANDREW M. CARRUTHERS

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE

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FOREWORD

The economic, political, strategic and cultural dynamism in Southeast Asia has gained added relevance in recent years with the spectacular rise of giant economies in East and South Asia. This has drawn greater attention to the region and to the enhanced role it now plays in international relations and global economics.

The sustained effort made by Southeast Asian nations since 1967 towards a peaceful and gradual integration of their economies has had indubitable success, and perhaps as a consequence of this, most of these countries are undergoing deep political and social changes domestically and are constructing innovative solutions to meet new international challenges. Big Power tensions continue to be played out in the neighbourhood despite the tradition of neutrality exercised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The **Trends in Southeast Asia** series acts as a platform for serious analyses by selected authors who are experts in their fields. It is aimed at encouraging policymakers and scholars to contemplate the diversity and dynamism of this exciting region.

THE EDITORS

Living on the Edge: Being Malay (and Bugis) in the Riau Islands

By Andrew M. Carruthers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In Indonesia's Riau Islands Province — a place envisioned as a distinctly "Malay Province" upon its legal formation in 2002 — ethnic Malays are the proud heirs and custodians of a rich legacy associated with a once-sprawling Malay empire that stretched across present-day transnational borders from Indonesia, to Singapore, to Malaysia.
- Malays of Bugis descent have long played a disproportionately central role in the history (and the historiography or "history-telling") of the region that now encompasses Indonesia's Riau Islands Province. While steadfastly "Malay", members of this community readily acknowledge that their ethnically Bugis roots maintain an enduring historical and ideological salience in their everyday lives.
- However, transregional economic trends and rapid sociodemographic shift shaped by ongoing migration flows have led to feelings of "marginalization" (*peminggiran*) among the islands' Malay-Bugis community.
- This has led them to claim that they are being gradually pushed to the literal and figurative "edges" of social life in the Riau Islands Province. Fears that a one-time ethnic "majority is becoming a minority" (*mayoritas menjadi minoritas*) have fuelled feelings of inter-ethnic resentment, and have shaped provincial government policies geared toward the "preservation" of Malay custom.
- While international focus continues to centre on Indonesia's Chinese-*pribumi* divide as diagnostic of Indonesian inter-ethnic and religious relations on edge, a grounded assessment of ethnicity in the Riau islands offers an alternative perspective on these important issues.

Living on the Edge: Being Malay (and Bugis) in the Riau Islands

By Andrew M. Carruthers[1]

EPIGRAPHS

Ayuhai segala anak cucunya,
hendaklah ingatkan datuk neneknya,
serta fikirkan fiil lakunya,
hendaklah ikut sebarang dapatnya.

Barangsiapa sungguh anak cucunya,
hendak ikut tingkah lakunya,
sama ada aib malunya,
atau pada teguh setianya.

Jika diperbuat demikian itu,
sahlah kamu anak cucunya tentu,

bolehlah disebut bangsa ratu,
di negeri Bugis keturunan datu.

Hear ye, all children and grandchildren,
you should remember your ancestors,
and think upon their behaviour,
you should trace back whatever they did.

Whoever is truly child or grandchild,
you should trace back their behaviour,
whether it be horrible and shameful,
or thoroughly firm and loyal.

If this should be done,
You will be true children and grandchildren indeed,
You may be called nobles,
in the land of the Bugis descended from kings.

— Raja Ali Haji, *Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis*, 1865.

Narekko sompe'ko,
aja' muahcaji ana'guru,
ancaji punggawako.

If you wander to a foreign land,
do not become a subordinate,
but become a leader.

— Bugis Proverb.

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[1] Andrew M. Carruthers is Associate Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. He thanks Francis E. Hutchinson, Barbara Watson Andaya and James T. Collins for their helpful comments and suggestions. Any and all errors are his own.

INTRODUCTION: "LIKE BLACK AND WHITE PARTS OF THE EYE"

In April 2008, and only six years following the legal formation and secession of Indonesia's Riau Islands Province (Provinsi Kepulauan Riau or KEPRI) from adjacent Riau Province, then Governor of Riau H.M. Rusli Zainal (2003–13) attended a meeting of the Kerukunan Keluarga Sulawesi Selatan (KKSS) or the "South Sulawesi Family Association" in Riau's provincial capital of Pekanbaru.[2] The South Sulawesi Family Association is one of Indonesia's largest and most active ethno-regional associations, with members hailing from or tracing their roots to South Sulawesi, an east Indonesian province widely known as the ancestral homeland of Indonesia's Bugis people.[3] Outnumbering that province's indigenous Makassarese, Mandar and Torajan peoples, South Sulawesi's Bugis people are historically renowned as much for their seafaring prowess as they are for the wanderlust that fuels their travels throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, and beyond in "search of good fortune" (Bugis: *massappa' dallé*).

The Riau Governor, a "Malay of Bugis ancestry" (Malay: *Melayu keturunan Bugis*), had been previously honoured by the ethno-regional association with the honorary "title" or *gelar* of *Daeng Magguna.* Roughly translatable to "he who is useful", the title bestowed upon the Riau Governor by the association featured the Bugis-Makassar honorific "Daeng", commonly given to Bugis-Makassar people of noble birth. *Daeng* is also a title whose meaning reverberates in the historical imaginary of Riau and Riau Islands Provinces, two places whose contemporary borders closely align with those of the once-sprawling

[2] *Nota Bene*: Riau Islands Province was legally declared Indonesia's thirty-second province by way of Law No. 25/2002, but did not begin formally operating as such until 2004.

[3] See Gerry van Klinken, "The Limits of Ethnic Clientelism in Indonesia", *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 42, no. 2 (2008): 35–65, for a case analysis of the KKSS as it relates to ethnic clientelism in Indonesia.

Malay Sultanate that stretched from what we today call Indonesia, through Singapore, to Malaysia. Among Riau Islanders and their neighbours in Riau Province, the noble honorific *Daeng* is iconically associated with five legendary Bugis brothers — Daeng Parani, Daeng Marewah, Daeng Menambun, Daeng Celak, and Daeng Kemasi — whose involvement in the region changed the course of history across the Malay world in the early eighteenth century.

Riau Governor H.M. Rusli Zainal (alias Daeng Magguna) used his April meeting with the South Sulawesi Family Association to thank them for their continuing support and involvement in Riau's everyday life, but also to ruminate on the ethno-historical linkages between the Bugis people and the region's indigenous, ethnically Malay community. "Both of these people since the beginning cannot be separated",[4] the Governor said. Continuing, he explained that "[t]he Malays and the Bugis are like the black and white parts of the eye, both are fused together and have worked together in various ways, and this has been the case since a long time ago."[5] The Governor's words tacitly gestured towards a conventionally understood history of Bugis-Malay kinship and collaborative exchange dating back almost 300 years to the arrival of the five Bugis brothers.

Six years after the Governor's meeting with Riau's South Sulawesi Family Association, and amidst a whirlwind of national political drama leading up to the impending 2014 Indonesian Presidential Election, former Vice-President of Indonesia and then Vice-Presidential candidate Jusuf Kalla found himself campaigning in Riau. During his campaign stop, Kalla — a Bugis hailing from South Sulawesi's Bone regency who, alongside his presidential running mate Joko Widodo would later win the hotly contested election — noted the enduring legacy of the region's *bahasa Melayu* or "Malay language" to the nation. "It is so great that

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[4] "Kedua kaum ini sejak dulu memang tidak bisa dipisahkan."

[5] "Orang Melayu dan Orang Bugis itu bagaikan mata hitam dan mata putih, keduanya saling menyatu dan bekerjasama dalam berbagai hal dan ini terjadi sudah sejak lama."; *Riau Post*, "Melayu-Bugis Bagai Mata Hitam dan Putih" [The Malay and Bugis as Black and White Parts of the Eye], 19 April 2008.

this nation chose the Malay language to be used … it means that our foundational language is Malay",[6] he said. Alluding to Raja Ali Haji (1808–73) — a Bugis-Malay aristocrat, historian and lexicographer who, from his home on Penyengat Island in today's Riau Islands Province developed the first monolingual Malay dictionary — the Vice-Presidential candidate spoke of the historical role played by the Bugis in codifying a standard Malay variety that would later be renamed *Bahasa Indonesia* by Indonesian proto-nationalists in the 1928 *Sumpah Pemudah* or "Youth Pledge": "As a Bugis person I'm also very proud because the structure of the Malay language was also built up from the Bugis",[7] Kalla noted. Then, echoing the aforementioned words of Riau Governor Rusli Zainal Daeng Magguna, the Vice-Presidential candidate "romanticized" the Bugis-Malay relationship, explaining, "So, between the Bugis and Malays, it's like the relationship between white and black parts of the eye. So that we're so romantic and cherish one another.".[8]

This article — the first in a series of Trends pieces centred on different ethnic collectivities and inter-ethnic dynamics in Indonesia's Riau Islands Province — examines the putative "inseparability" of Kepri's Bugis and Malay people.[9] Framed less obtusely, and drawing upon ethnographic field data collected in February and March 2017 alongside secondary source material, the article highlights one segment of Kepri society which has played a disproportionately central role in the governance, politics,

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[6] "Begitu hebatnya bangsa ini sampai memilih bahasa Melayu yang dipakai … berartinya bahasa dasar kita Melayu."

[7] "Sebagai orang Bugis juga saya bangga sekali karena struktur bahasa Melayu dibangun juga dari Bugis."

[8] "Jadi antara Bugis dan Melayu itu seperti antara mata putih dan hitam. Sehingga kita begitu romantis dan saling menghargai."; *Detik News*, "Temui Tokoh Adat Riau, JK: Hubungan Melayu dan Bugis itu Romantis" [Meeting Custodians of Riau Customs, JK: Malay-Bugis Relations are Romantic]. 7 June 2014 <http://news.detik.com/berita/2601969/temui-tokoh-adat-riau-jk-hubungan-melayu-dan-bugis-itu-romantis> (accessed 12 July 2017).

[9] Future Trends articles will potentially centre on Batak, Chinese, Javanese, and other ethnic communities in contemporary Riau Islands Province.

history, and historiography or "history-telling" in Riau Islands society: self-identified "Malays of Bugis descent" (*Melayu keturunan Bugis*).

Aims and Structure of the Article

This article's primary objective is to offer readers a broad overview of this particular segment of Riau Islands society, and to highlight how contemporary perceptions of a shared, Bugis-Malay history inflect contemporary life in Riau Islands Province. In turn, the article has a number of secondary objectives, listed below in order of their exposition.

1. To provide readers unfamiliar with anthropological or ethno-historical approaches to "Malayness" with a synopsis of how the concept has been defined or evaluated, and the ways in which the meaning of Malayness shifts across contemporary geopolitical borders.
2. To show how conceptions of Malayness and Malay ethno-history in the Riau Islands have been "authoritatively defined" (Shamsul 2001)[10] by Malays of Bugis ancestry and shape contemporary senses of belonging and outsidership.
3. To examine how perceptions of the past animate current provincial government policy priorities surrounding the *pelestarian* or "preservation" of *nilai-nilai budaya Melayu* or "Malay cultural values" in the multi-ethnic Riau Islands.
4. To explore how these government efforts may be read as a reflex or reaction to ongoing issues associated with the islands' rapid sociodemographic shift.
5. To examine how the effects of these shifts have led to feelings of *peminggiran* or "marginalization" among certain members of the islands' Malay, Bugis, and Malay/Bugis inhabitants, some of whom envision themselves as having been pushed to the figurative and literal *pinggiran* or "edge" of Riau Islands society.

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[10] A.B. Shamsul, "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 3 (2001): 355–66. See also Vivienne Wee, "Melayu: Hierarchies of Being in Riau", Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1985.

6. To examine how the islands' Bugis/Malays are positioning themselves vis-à-vis other *pribumi* (or "native" Indonesian) immigrants, whom they increasingly characterize as a marginalizing presence that is rapidly transforming everyday life in Riau Islands Province.
7. To bring these developments to bear on current issues in Indonesia surrounding inter-ethnic cleavages and conflict.

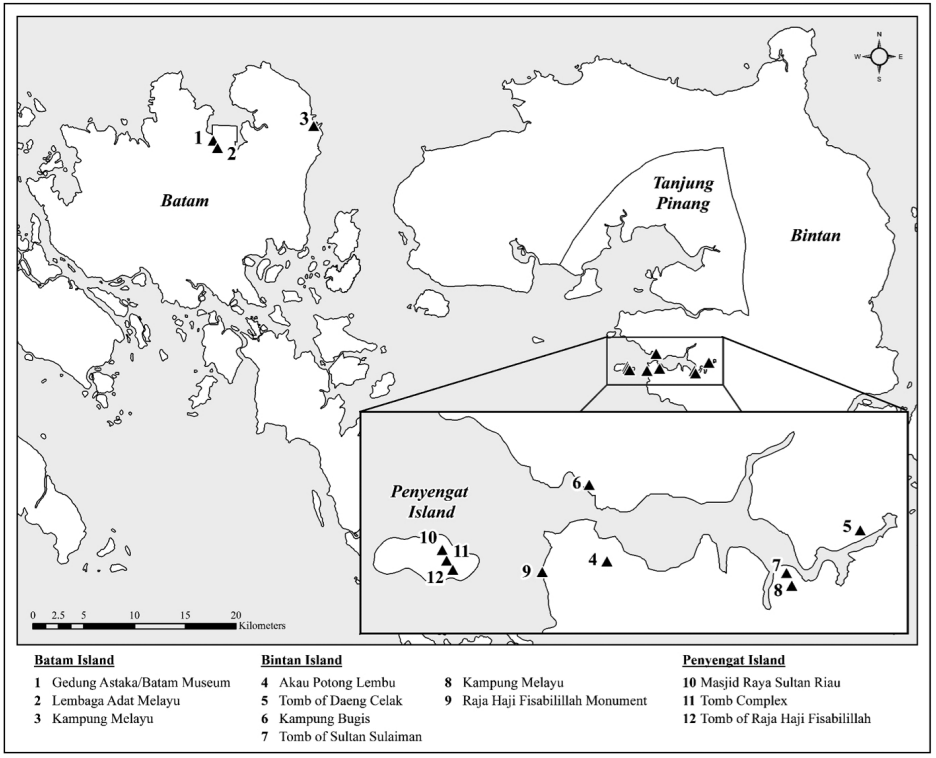
I explore these issues in three expository sections: (i) Authority-Defined Meanings of *Melayu* in the Riau Islands; (ii) The Politics of Ethno-Historical Commemoration and Demographic Shift; and (iii) Conclusion: Ethnicity on Edge. Throughout, frequent reference will be made to various sites in the Riau islands — sites relevant for the description of Bugis-Malay involvement in local history, or places where I conducted ethnographic fieldwork and interviews in February and March 2017. I suggest readers consult Figure 1, which lists various sites of interest in Batam, Tanjung Pinang in Bintan island, and Penyengat Island that will be referred to throughout the piece, and Figure 2, which illustrates the relative distribution of the Malay community throughout the island province.

AUTHORITY-DEFINED MEANINGS OF MELAYU IN THE RIAU ISLANDS

Some readers might assume that Malays are Malays are Malays. For those readers, a preliminary question regarding the topical scope of this paper might immediately present itself. Why the conceptual focus on Malays of Bugis extraction, rather than simply attending to Malay or *Melayu* proper as the predominant ethnic category in Riau Islands province — a place envisioned as a *Provinsi Melayu* or a distinctly "Malay Province" prior to its legal formation in 2002? Brief reference to the ethno-historical literature on Malayness will help clarify this issue.

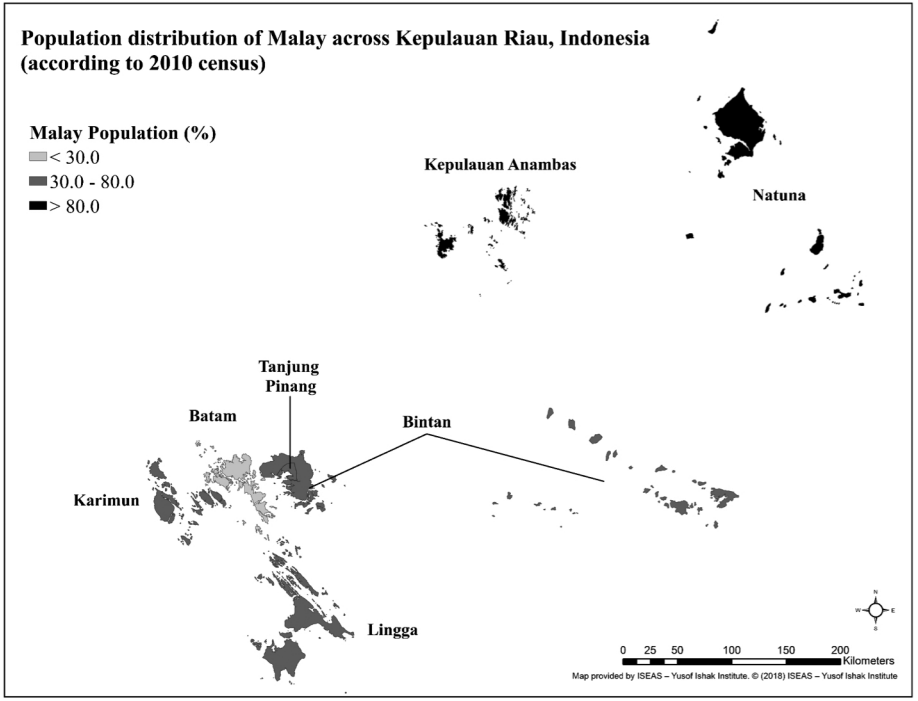
In his important 2001 article, "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered", Shamsul A.B. critiques ethnic theories of *Melayu* and "Malayness" that presuppose a kind of ethnic primordialism or

Figure 1: Map of Research Sites in Riau Islands Province



Source: Map Courtesy of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute GIS Project.

Figure 2: Relative Concentration of Malay Population across Kepri Province



Source: Map Courtesy of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute GIS Project.

essentialism — "the idea that ethnic traits are innate (essences) both in the individual and the 'ethnie' as a social group" (2001, p. 355).[11] In so doing, he takes to task those historians "in mainstream Malaysian historiography" who, he argues, have "wittingly or unwittingly" adopted ethnic theories of essentialism "in their effort to explain the formation of 'Malay-Malayness' as a social identity" (ibid.). Engaging in a genealogy of "Malayness", and inspired by approaches developed by anthropologist Bernard Cohn's (1996) *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*,[12] Shamsul argues that "the history of hotly debated concepts such as 'Malay identity' and 'Malayness' is largely based on an Orientalist-colonial construction as reflected in the history of Malaya and, later, Malaysia" (1996, p. 357). Shamsul examines British colonial "investigative modalities" (ibid, p. 357; c.f. Cohn 1996), namely, those techniques and technologies like the census that the British used to extend their authority and gather information about their colony. He argues that these colonial era practices — by which the British sought to authoritatively define the nature of ethnicity and belonging in the Malayan colony — came to shape and continue to shape understandings of Malay identity. He concludes his piece by discussing how the meaning of Malayness is constructed, meaning different things in different places among different people, and is shaped across space and time by a variety of authoritative discourses and configurations of power. This is worth quoting at length:

> Like most societal phenomena, identity formation takes place within two social realities at once: the "authority-defined" reality — the reality that is authoritatively defined by people who are part of the dominant power structure — and the "everyday-defined" reality experienced by people in their daily life. These two realities exist side by side at any given time. Although intricately

[11] Shamsul, "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History".

[12] Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

> linked and constantly shaping each other by way of contestation, they are certainly not identical: "everyday-defined" social reality is experienced whereas "authority-defined" social reality is primarily observed and interpreted, and possibly imposed. Both are mediated through the social position of those who interpret social reality and those who experience it. Woven into the ever tense relationship between these two social realities is social power (ibid, p. 365).

Shamsul focuses his attention on those "authority-defined" meanings of Melayu in colonial Malaya and contemporary Malaysia. Following suit, I examine here certain authority-defined and authority-defining notions and histories of Malayness in the Riau Islands. In the process, I choose to focus on one segment of Kepri's Malay society — Malays of Bugis descent (*Melayu keturunan Bugis*), who, while self-identifying as steadfastly "Malay", readily acknowledge the enduring importance of their non-Malay ethnically Bugis roots. This group's disproportionate level of influence (or authority) in ideologically arbitrating what it means to be "Malay" in the islands may be seen in a number of ways: in the widely circulating works of Malay literature or history produced by its members (e.g., Raja Ali Haji);[13] in the historical roles accorded to its members by the Riau Islands provincial government and the Indonesian state; in provincial government urban planning projects commemorating its more famous members; or in the incorporation of these figures' mausoleums into the state's tourism sector.[14]

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[13] Raja Ali Haji (1808–73), a Malay noble of Bugis descent, was a prolific writer whose historical work situated (and sought to justify) the Bugis role in Riau's Malay history. See Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad, Virginia Matheson Hooker and Barbara Watson Andaya, *The Precious Gift: Tuhfat Al-Nafis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[14] To be sure, and as I shall touch upon later, these authority-defined, Bugis-centric discourses of Malayness are by no means uncontested among Riau Islands Malays. See Nicholas J. Long, *Being Malay in Indonesia: Histories, Hopes and Citizenship in the Riau Archipelago* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013).

I will turn to these authority-defined discourses of Malayness momentarily, but first, and following Shamsul's (2001) example, I sketch a variety of ways in which Malayness is labile — its meaning shifting across contexts and geopolitical borders.

Labile Labels and Shifting Settings

Melayu means different things, to different people, across different contexts, and its various meanings have changed across shifting geopolitical and historical settings. By way of example, consider a segment of Malaysian national laureate Usman Awang's (1929–2001) well-known and oft-cited poem, *Melayu*:

Jawa itu Melayu, Bugis itu Melayu,	The Javanese are Malay, the Bugis are Malay
Banjar juga disebut Melayu,	The Banjarese are also called Malay
Minangkabau memang Melayu,	The Minangkabau are indeed Malay
Keturunan Aceh adalah Melayu,	The Acehnese are Malay
Jakun dan Sakai asli Melayu …	The Jakun and Sakai are original Malays …[15]

The Malaysian national laureate's poem was recited by recently ousted Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak during the 61st General Assembly of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in 2010 (and has been widely circulated since then). From a more critical angle of vision, it reflects the decidedly labile and enveloping nature of *Melayu* in the contemporary Malaysian context, one where "Malays" are constitutionally defined as Malay-speaking Muslims who are locally born

[15] Usman Awang's poem continues, noting "Arab dan Pakistani semua Melayu, Mamak dan Malbari serap ke Melayu, Malah mualaf bertakrif Melayu, setelah disunat anunya itu" [Arabs and Pakistanis are all Malay, the Mamak and Malbari have been absorbed into the Malays, even converts define themselves as Malay, if that 'thing' is circumcized]. For a lengthier analysis of the poem as it reflects notions of "Malayness", see Andrew M. Carruthers, "Specters of Affinity: Clandestine Movement and Commensurate Values in the Indonesia-Malaysia Borderlands", Doctoral Dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, 2016.

and habitually practise *Adat Melayu* or "Malay custom". Contemporary Malaysian (and, by extension, Singaporean) notions of Malayness, however, are inextricably linked to British colonial efforts to evaluate and enumerate ethnicity in colonial Malaya — a domain which, from the eighteenth century up to 1946, encompassed contemporary Singapore and peninsular Malaysia.

In "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia", Charles Hirschman (1987) examines how early British projects of census-taking — a key colonial investigative modality (Cohn 1996; Shamsul 2001) — came to shape contemporary notions of Malayness.[16] Drawing on historical census data, Hirschman explores how a British colonial typology of ethnic difference gradually narrowed, until only three racial categories — the three primary racial categories that continue to operate in contemporary Malaysia — remained: Malay, Chinese, and Indian. Initial British censuses conducted in 1871 and 1881 divided "Malays" from ethnic groups like "Bugis" or "Javanese" hailing from the Dutch East Indies. A subsequent census conducted in 1901 would — for pragmatic purposes — unify these different ethnic collectivities under the rubric of "Malays and other Natives of the Archipelago". Later censuses would continue this trend. A 1911 census would unify these groups under the label "Malays and Allied Races", a 1921 census under "The Malay Population", and the 1931 census deployed the ever-more general rubric of "Malaysians". The categorical and enumerative logic that underpinned the definition of what it means to be "Malay" continues to operate today both in Malaysia and Singapore, where Malay-speaking Muslims might generally self-identify as members of the so-called *bangsa Melayu* or "Malay race". And yet, if asked to identify their ethnic roots or affiliations, Malaysians and Singaporeans who — on the surface — self-identify as "Malay", might readily acknowledge or reveal their Javanese, Bugis, Minangkabau, Acehnese, or other roots, all of which are

[16] Charles Hirschman, "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census Classifications", *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 3 (1987): 555–82.

encompassed by the superordinate racial category of "Malayness" that coalesced, to some extent, because of colonial-era projects of census-taking.

In Indonesia, the story about *Melayu*'s meaning is starkly different. Returning once more to the example of Usman Awang's poem, consider a video uploaded to YouTube by an (ostensibly) Malaysian user of the video-sharing platform. Entitled, "Jawa, Bugis, Banjar, Minang, Aceh adalah MELAYU!!!" [The Javanese, Bugis, Banjar, Minang, Aceh are MALAY!] the video features former Prime Minister Najib Razak reciting the aforementioned verses from Usman Awang's poem at the 2010 61st UMNO General Assembly.[17] Comments on the video made by self-identified Indonesian YouTube users offer a window into Indonesian assumptions about Malaysian (and, by extension Singaporean) notions of Malayness. Consider a few examples:

1. YouTube user Adi Prasetiyo writes, "I'm Javanese not Malay."[18]
2. YouTube user A. Zulkifli Pasinringi comments, "BUGIS are not Malay."[19]
3. YouTube user Ridha Kcg notes, "The Minang people are not Malays."[20]
4. Tongue firmly in cheek, and tacitly critiquing the broadly inclusive notion of Malayness put forth in Usman Awang's poem and articulated by Najib, YouTube user Hj. Misai writes, "Mexicans are Malay, Hispanics are Malay, Latin Americans are Malay, people from the Czech Republic are Malay."[21]

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[17] [budakpoli], "Jawa, Bugis, Banjar, Minang, Aceh adalah MELAYU!!!" [The Javanese, Bugis, Banjar, Minang, Aceh are MALAY!]. [Video File], 25 December 2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgZvN5NaDCE>.

[18] "Aku jawa bukan melayu."

[19] "BUGIS bukan Melayu."

[20] "[O]rang minang bukan orang melayu".

[21] "[M]exican itu melayu, hispanic itu melayu, america latin itu melayu, czech republic itu melayu."

5. Identifying and explicating for his fellow commentators the contrast between Malaysian and Indonesian definitions of Malayness, YouTube user Ivan P writes a longer response: "Actually, this is about the different versions of each country. The Malaysian government version suggests that Malays are from all the islands in the archipelago and peninsular Malaya … including Javanese, Bugis, Dayak, and others. While in the Indonesian government version, the Malays are only from Sumatra and the Riau Islands, yeah."[22]

The last of these comments succinctly summarizes the different institutionally operating (or authority-defined) assumptions that distinguish Malaysian Malays from those in Indonesia. In Malaysia, a Malay is defined in Article 160 of the Constitution of Malaysia as: "a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom and — (a) was before Merdeka Day born in the Federation or in Singapore or born of parents one of whom was born in the Federation or in Singapore, or (b) is the issue of such a person."[23] And in Indonesia, while they are not constitutionally defined, *suku Melayu* or "ethnic Malays" are widely characterized as being indigenous to Riau and the Riau Islands.

These different ontologies or sets of assumptions about what it means to be "Malay" in Indonesia versus Malaysia[24] are thrown into stark

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[22] "[S]ebenarnya ini adalah tentang perbedaan versi dari masingnegara. Versi pemerintah malaysia, mengemukakan melayu itu adalah kapulauan yang ada di nusantara dan semenanjung malaya … termasuk juga jawa, bugis, dayak dan lain. Sedangkan versi pemerintah indonesia, melayu itu hanya di pulau sumatra dan kepulauan riau, ya."

[23] See "Malaysian Federal Constitution, Reprint, As at 1 November 2010", Article 160, Clause 2.

[24] Or Singapore, for that matter, with an historical eye to the city-state's inclusion in the Federal Territory of Malaysia prior to 1965. For a recent overview regarding the "expansive" nature of "Malay-ness" in Singapore with respect to the country's recent Presidential election, see Zakir Hussain, "Doubts about presidential hopefuls not being Malay enough are off track", *Straits Times*, 20 July 2017 <http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/doubts-about-presidential-hopefuls-not-being-malay-enough-are-off-track>.

relief in YouTube comments one through four. Over my seven years of extended ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Bugis homeland of South Sulawesi, I often encountered similar assumptions about what "Malay" means or who counts as "Malay" among my Bugis interlocutors. During one conversation with a Bugis friend hailing from the province's Bone regency, and with Usman Awang's poem and Malaysian notions of Malayness in the back of my mind, I asked him if he "considered himself Malay", anticipating the kind of reaction such a question would likely elicit. Laughing at the ignorance of such a misguided question, my friend quickly replied, "I'm Bugis! The Malays live in the Riau Islands."[25] All of the friends I asked replied in a similar manner. And yet, responses solicited from self-identified Bugis, Malay, or Malay-Bugis individuals living in the Riau Islands paint a different picture worthy of additional analysis.

The Malay-Bugis Nexus and Ethnic In- and Out-Groups

On 14 October 2017, then former (and now re-elected) Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad courted controversy due to comments he allegedly made at an opposition-led "anti-kleptocracy rally" in Selangor. Accounts of the rally allege that Mahathir took aim at then Prime Minister Najib — his erstwhile mentee turned political adversary whom he recently ousted — reportedly saying, "Maybe he can trace his ancestry to Bugis pirates. Somehow, he lost his way and came to Malaysia. Go home to Bugis [Sulawesi]!"[26] These alleged comments gestured towards Najib's well-documented ancestral roots in the Bugis homeland of South Sulawesi.[27] Mahathir's purported comments were widely panned in the Malaysian and Indonesian media, leading not only to a police report filed against him, but also to calls from Indonesia's Bugis Youth Assembly of Makassar, Indonesia (PPBMI) for him to

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[25] "Saya orang Bugis! Melayu itu tinggal di kepulauan Riau."

[26] "PAS man slams Dr M over remark on Najib's 'ancestry'", Malaysiakini, 16 October 2017 <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/398487>.

[27] See Carruthers, "Specters of Affinity".

apologize. In a prepared statement, PPBMI members allegedly reminded Dr Mahathir that "the Bugis was an ethnic group that had played an important role in the formation of the Malay government and Sultanate", and that "the insult had hurt the feelings of everyone of Bugis descent throughout the world, especially in Indonesia".[28] Mahathir's comments are useful for our purposes here, insofar as the reactions they elicited — reactions that foregrounded the "important role" played by the Bugis in the formation of the Malay sultanate — apply to our discussion of the meaning of Malayness in Riau Islands history.

Widespread notions about Bugis roles in the formation of the Malay sultanate may be read with an eye to anthropologist Nicholas Long's (2013) analysis of so-called "poisoned histories" in the Riau Islands.[29] In his book, *Being Malay in Indonesia* (2013) — whose title this ISEAS Trends echoes, albeit with a Bugis twist — Long draws attention to the contested, negotiated nature of historiography and historical description in the Riau Islands, arguing that Malays of Bugis descent are characterized by some Riau Island Malays as having wielded disproportionate control over the writing of "Malay history" (*sejarah Melayu*). Long draws particular and important attention to efforts to "redefine the focus of Malay history",[30] efforts that reflect a frustration among certain Riau Island Malays that "Malay history", as one of his interlocutors noted, is "much more Bugis than Malay".[31] Long connects these efforts to "anti-Bugis sentiment among the Malays of the Riau Archipelago".[32] and allegedly widespread notions of "Bugis colonialism" and definitions

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[28] "Dr M urged to apologise to Indonesian Bugis community over insult", Malay Mail Online, 20 October 2017 <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/dr-m-urged-to-apologise-to-indonesian-bugis-community-over-insult#TRBlYs15Vg6b9pzD.97>.

[29] Long, *Being Malay in Indonesia.*

[30] Ibid., p. 70.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 71.

of "Malayness" which hold that "Bugis identity" is "irreconcilable with Malay identity".[33]

Curiously, during the course of my fieldwork in Kepri I encountered no such statements regarding the irreconcilability of "Bugis" and "Malay" in a distinctly "Malay" province. Instead, and across conversations with a variety of Malay and Bugis-identifying Riau Islanders, I encountered just the opposite. I began this article by discussing how the relation between Malays and Bugis has been characterized as something "like the black and white parts of the eye", insofar as both groups "cannot be separated". During the course of my time in Kepri, this phrase recurred — almost as if read from a conventionally shared ethno-historical script — in interviews conducted with a cross-section of Kepri society, ranging from government servants from the Department of Culture and Tourism, to tour guides describing the history of Penyengat, to self-described "Bugis gangsters" hailing from South Sulawesi, to taxi drivers, to policemen. Self-identified "Pure Malays", "Malays of Bugis descent", "Bugis immigrants" from Sulawesi, and Bugis born in Riau Islands province all testified, in one way or another, to an alleged unity established between their peoples in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and its lasting importance in contemporary Kepri. These observed allegations of steadfast unity or affiliation do not necessarily conflict with Long's (2013) account of "poisoned histories". Indeed, they may be read diagnostically, serving as evidence of a distinctly (and authority-defining) Bugis reformulation or adjudication of "Malay history" in the Riau Islands, and of the ideological power such a history has on many Riau Islanders' (mis)rememberings of the past.[34] We might consider some examples of how such a history — however contested or distorted — inflects contemporary definitions of the boundaries between groups.

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[33] Ibid., p. 73.

[34] Notwithstanding Riau Islanders' allegations of unity and alliance between the Bugis and Malays, there exists a history of hostility between these groups. See Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor (1641–1728)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

One individual, a government servant associated with Batam's Institute for Malay Customs and a self-identified "pure Malay", explained that even before the five legendary Bugis brothers arrived in Riau in the 1700s, the Bugis were already present, and indeed, welcomed by the Malays because "they mixed with Malay society",[35] a practice that Bugis immigrants from Sulawesi continue to this day. "The process kept moving",[36] he told me. Another self-identifying "pure Malay" working as a guide in the mausoleums of Penyengat explained the contemporary closeness between Bugis and Malays by way of historical reference to the *Sumpah Setia Melayu Bugis* (Oath of Malay Bugis Loyalty), explaining, "The Malays married the Bugis, occasioning an oath of loyalty, that's why the Bugis and Malays are considered one, they cannot be separated."[37] A Malay of Bugis extraction descended from the legendary Bugis brothers used himself as an example of the lasting legacy of Bugis-Malay interaction and intermarriage in the Riau Islands, explaining to me at the Grand Mosque of the Sultan of Riau that "I am Malay-Bugis, that [connection] cannot be erased, and the Malay-Bugis promise cannot be forgotten."[38] An elderly man in Tanjung Pinang who, while born in Bintan, identifies as pure Bugis with no *darah Melayu* or "Malay blood", explained that "Bugis who migrate here, can become Malay" due to the historical closeness forged between the two over the course of centuries. "The Bugis are Malay and the Malays are Bugis,"[39] he told me, laughing.

In these various ways, while Malays of Bugis ancestry may self-identify as Malay, they readily acknowledge the special, historical importance of their Bugis roots. So too, self-identifying Bugis members of contemporary Kepri society — even those who may have migrated

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[35] "[K]arena membaur dengan masyarakat."

[36] "[P]roses itu bergerak terus."

[37] "Suku Melayu menikah dengan suku Bugis, dan terjadi sumpah setia, itu lah sebabnya Bugis dan Melayu dianggap satu, tak bisa dipisahkan."

[38] "Saya Melayu Bugis, itu tidak bisa dihilangkan, dan perjanjian antara Melayu Bugis tidak bisa dilupakan."

[39] "Bugis itu Melayu dan Melayu itu Bugis."

there from the Bugis homeland of South Sulawesi — acknowledge the ethno-historical commonality between themselves and their Malay counterparts. In this crucial respect, while Malays, Malays of Bugis ancestry, and Bugis members of contemporary Kepri society may acknowledge the definitional "edges" between "Bugis" and "Malay" qua ethnic categories — and here, think of the hyphens in the phrases "Melayu-Bugis", "Bugis-Melayu", or "Sumpah Setia Melayu-Bugis" as a kind of iconic representation of this "edge" — they are, to a certain extent, members of the same ethno-historically defined "in-group." The same cannot be said for other ethnic collectivities in Kepri's shifting demographic terrain.

While many members of Kepri's Malay majority might count the Bugis as honorary members of a shrinking in-group, the lines between themselves and other "non-Malay" members of the province are more starkly drawn. This is particularly true of Javanese, Batak, and Minang or Padang migrants who, in the words of a Malay taxi driver in Batam, do not have the right to "take control of [his] place of birth".[40] A government servant working in Batam offered a similar, but more delicately stated opinion, explaining that "The Bugis and Malays can't be separated, but the Javanese … that's a different case. As are the Minang. And the Batak are clearly different. That's the reality of the situation."[41]

Putative (or authority-defined) histories of arrival, interaction, and assimilation were often deployed by my informants as evidence for in- and outgroup status. "Why weren't Minang people welcomed [in the Malay empire]?", one historically minded Malay informant working in Batam rhetorically asked me. "Because Minang had their 'pride'",[42] he answered, adding that they "were unable to get power". "Furthermore", he added, "there's still an historical wound", alluding to a legacy of Minangkabau-led threats to the Sultanate in the eighteenth century. "Why weren't the Javanese welcomed into the Malay community?", he

[40] "[B]erkuasa ditempat tana lahir saya."

[41] "Orang Bugis dan Melayu nda' bisa dipisahkan, tapi Jawa … itu beda. Orang Minang beda. Orang Batak jelas beda. Realitasnya memang begitu."

[42] "[K]arena Minang sudah punya *pride*."

continued, answering "The Javanese never 'played around' in Malay sultanate territories. They have only recently come as labourers. And they were never given the space to become Malay. The Bugis were given the space."[43]

Referring to the ethnic Chinese community (a group whose members have long been approached as prototypical "others" by analysts), this informant continued his inter-ethnic exposition, noting that — unlike the Javanese or Batak, for example — "the Chinese have long played a role in the Riau Islands", noting their historically important role as *Kapitan Cina* and economic mediators for the Malay sultanate. In stark contrast to national-level anti-Chinese discourses — while tacitly counterpoising members of this community with those of the Minangkabau and other ethnic communities in the Riau Islands — he noted, "there has never been conflict between the Chinese and the Malays"[44] in the Riau Islands. Concluding his evaluation of in-group and out-groups in the Riau Islands, he returned to the position of the Bugis, and in so doing re-emphasized an imagined history of interaction, assimilation, and alliance building as evidence for Bugis in-group belonging: "The Bugis were welcomed"[45] into the Malay community, he said, explaining that "the reason is, first, the ones who came here already came in waves. Before the Daengs came here",[46] referring to the famous five Bugis brothers, "the Bugis were already here … they already mixed with Malay society. Automatically, they were proud to become Malay."[47]

These observations about in- and out-groups may once again be viewed with a critical eye toward authority-defined discourses about ethnic

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[43] "Jawa itu dia tidak bermain di wilayah-wilayah istana. Dia baru datang sebagai tenaga kerja. Mereka nda' pernah diberikan ruang untuk menjadi Melayu. Bugis dikasih ruang."

[44] "[B]elum pernah ada konflik antara Cina dengan Melayu."

[45] "Bugis ini diterima."

[46] "[A]lasannya ada, pertama, yang datang ke sini sudah bergelombang. Sebelum para Daeng datang ke sini."

[47] "Mereka sudah membaur dengan Masyarakat Melayu. Automatis, dia bangga jadi Melayu."

belonging and history in the Riau Islands. This issue aside, however, what does this authority-defined history — however "poisoned" (Long 2013), distorted, or contested — look like? In what follows, I offer an outline of a Bugis-centric history of Malay ethno-locality in the Riau Islands, one that illustrates a particular framing of Bugis and Malays of Bugis descent as an ascendant force in Riau Islands history. This is a rough, if not distorted history, necessarily truncated and missing alternative narratives or much of the empirical richness (or historiographic "objectivity") that readers are encouraged to pursue elsewhere.[48] And yet, I offer it here insofar as this was the history repeatedly recounted to me by a number of Riau Islanders — from officials working at the Institute of Malay Customs, to tour guides, to amateur historians — over the course of my fieldwork. I highlight the rough edges of this orally transmitted history (interlineated with relevant references to the historical literature), to ground a subsequent discussion of how historical consciousness or (mis)rememberings of the past may be viewed as having shaped a Malay ethno-nationalism that inflects the Riau Islands Province's sociocultural and political climate today.

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[48] In addition to important histories of the region (e.g., Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017)), readers might pursue the following: Barbara Watson Andaya, "Recreating a vision", in *Riau in Transition*, edited by C. Chou and W. Derks, *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 153, no. 4 (1997): 483–508; Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor (1641–1728)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Leonard Y. Andaya, "The Search for the 'Origins of Melayu'", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 3 (2001): 315–30; Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); Will Derks, "Malay Identity Work", in *Riau in Transition*, edited by C. Chou and W. Derks, *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 153, no. 4 (1997): 699–716; Carole Faucher, "Regional Autonomy, Malayness and Power Hierarchy in the Riau Archipelago", in *Regionalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia*, edited by M. Erb, P. Sulistiyanto and C. Faucher (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 125–40; Vivienne Wee, "Ethno-nationalism in process: Ethnicity, atavism and indigenism in Riau, Indonesia", *Pacific Island Review* 15, no. 4 (2004): 497–516.

A (Bugis-Centric) History of Malay Ethno-Locality

In 1699, the young ninth Sultan of the Johor-Pahang-Lingga Sultanate, Mahmud Shah II (1675–99), was assassinated in Johor by one of his admirals hailing from Bintan, due to his propensity towards impulsiveness and brutality. With no apparent heirs, the Sultan's *Bendahara* or Viceroy, Abdul Jalil IV assumed the throne with the nominal approval of Johor's royal court. Despite initial controversy surrounding the newly throned Sultan's alleged lack of "legitimate" royal roots, Abdul Jalil IV ruled for almost two decades, amidst his empire's ever-increasing instability. In 1718, Abdul Jalil IV was overthrown by an individual claiming to be the late Mahmud Shah II's posthumous heir, Raja Kecik. Emerging from Siak in present-day Riau Province, Raja Kecik's coup d'état was assisted by ethnically Minangkabau or "Minang" troops (a fact, we will later see, has not been forgotten by today's Riau Island Bugis-Malays). In response, Abdul Jalil IV's son, Raja Sulaiman, enlisted the help of five Bugis warrior-prince brothers — Daeng Parani, Daeng Marewah, Daeng Celak, Daeng Menambun, and Daeng Kamasi (recall the reference to these figures in this article's introduction). The ousted sultan's son promised the hand of his daughter, Tengku Tengah, to Daeng Parani in exchange for assistance in reconsolidating his family's power as custodians of the Malay world. Agreeing, the five brothers spearheaded a Bugis assault on Johor that drove Raja Kecik and his court to Riau. After additional skirmishes, Bugis forces effectively drove Raja Kecik from the expanse of the empire, and ousted Abdul Jalil IV's son Raja Sulaiman was installed as Sultan of Johor-Riau-Pahang-Lingga on the island of Bintan in 1722.

As per their arrangement, the new Sultan's daughter, Tengku Tengah, married Daeng Parani, whose brother Daeng Marewah was then named *Yang Dipertuan Muda* or "Viceroy" of Riau by Sultan Sulaiman, pragmatically transforming the Bugis from a peripheral, "outsider" presence in "domestic" royal Malay affairs to powerful political stakeholders in a Malay world stretching from present-day Indonesia, to Singapore, to Malaysia. This began a long process of intermarriage between Bugis "interlopers" and Malay royalty, and forged the *Sumpah Setia Melayu Bugis* or "Malay-Bugis Oath of Loyalty". This oath of

allegiance between the Bugis and Malays contained the following pledge: "If you are a friend of the Bugis, then you are a friend of the Malays, and if you are a friend of the Malays, then you are a friend of the Bugis" [Jikalau tuan kepada Bugis, tuanlah kepada Melayu, dan jikalau tuan kepada Melayu, tuanlah kepada Bugis].[49]

The agreement between the Bugis and Malays stipulated that only relatives of Riau's legendary Bugis brothers or their descendants could inhabit the role of the *Yang Dipertuan Muda* position. After Daeng Marewah — the first viceroy — died in 1728, his brother Daeng Celak took over as the second viceroy (1728–45), followed by Daeng Kamboja (1745–77), the son of Daeng Parani. After Daeng Kamboja's tenure, subsequent *Yang Dipertuan Muda* possessed *darah Melayu Bugis* or "Malay-Bugis blood" due to ongoing practices of intermarriage, and all lineal descendants of the five legendary Bugis brothers received (and continue to receive) the first name, "Raja".[50]

Amidst these ongoing "domestic" or internal developments — whereby the role and status of the Malay sultan became, as Barnard (2009) puts it, "increasingly irrelevant" (2009, p. 68) — a storm was brewing.[51] The Dutch presence in Melaka led to tensions between colonial interlopers and Bugis-Malay armadas renowned for their "military prowess" (Barnard 2009, p. 68) on land and at sea. *Yang Dipertuan Muda* II Daeng Celak's son, Raja Haji Fisabilillah ibni Daeng Celak, followed in his father's footsteps as the fourth *Yang Dipertuan* of the sultanate, serving

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[49] A pledge repeated, as we will see, by Vice-President Jusuf Kalla when he visited Kepri in November 2017. See "JK Ingatkan Sumpah Setia Melayu-Bugis" [JK Reminds about the Malay-Bugis Oath of Loyalty" <http://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2017/11/22/jk-ingatkan-sumpah-setia-melayu-bugis>.

[50] Multiple times during the course of my fieldwork I was reminded by men bearing the first name "Raja" (a couple of whom I encountered at the Institute of Malay Customs) that Raja is not a title or *gelar*, but a name or *nama*.

[51] Timothy P. Barnard, "The Hajj, Islam, and Power among the Bugis in Early Colonial Riau", in *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée,* edited by Eric Tagliacozzo (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), pp. 83–110.

from 1777 to 1784. While overseeing the restoration of the empire to its "former prominence" (Barnard 2009, p. 68), Raja Haji Fisabilillah began leading a series of raids attacking the Dutch presence over the course of 1783 to 1784, ultimately dying in battle in present-day Teluk Ketapang in Riau Province. This led to a brief period of uncertainty.[52]

However, Barnard, notes, "the nadir of Bugis rule in the Riau Archipelago ended around 1800, when Sultan Mahmud III invited Raja Ali back to Riau and reinstalled him as the Yang Dipertuan Muda" (Barnard 2009, p. 68). In a symbolic re-embodiment of the *Sumpah Setia Melayu Bugis,* the reinstalled *Yang Dipertuan Muda's* daughter, Engku Puteri Raja Hamidah, was married to the Malay sultan. The Sultan gifted his new wife and the family of Raja Haji Fisabilillah with Penyengat Island adjacent to Tanjung Pinang, effectively "split[ting]", Barnard (2009) notes, the "kingdom into two distinctive halves. The Bugis would rule Riau from Penyengat, while the Malay elite would rule Lingga from the island of the same name" (Barnard 2009, p. 68).

In the ensuing years, colonial control over the empire increased. The British created the state of Johor, whose first *Temenggong* or Chief Official (Daeng Ibrahim) was also of mixed Bugis-Malay descent.[53] In 1818, the Dutch signed a treaty with the kingdom's Bugis-Malays that gave Dutch ships freedom of movement in the area, and established Dutch control over the selection of future Sultans. Adding insult to injury, the subsequent 1824 Treaty of London between the British and

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[52] Barnard (2009) concisely describes the impact on Bugis power in and around Riau and Lingga: "The death of Raja Haji brought an end to much of the Bugis military presence in Riau. The decline in their martial prowess was further emphasized when the fifth Yang Dipertuan Muda, Raja Ali [ibni Daeng Kamboja], fled to Borneo in November 1784 to escape a Dutch military offensive against Riau. The role of Yang Dipertuan Muda fell into disuse for the next sixteen years due to the destruction of any legitimacy the Bugis may have had in a military sense" (Barnard 2009, p. 68).

[53] See Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore, 1784–1885* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007).

Dutch divided the geographical expanse of the Johor-Pahang-Riau-Lingga Sultanate between the two vying colonial powers. Singapore and Johor was ceded to the British, while Riau and Lingga was ceded to the Dutch. Almost 100 years later, the Dutch dissolution of Riau-Lingga's institutional infrastructure was complete, when in 1911 they deposed the Sultan of Riau-Lingga Abdulrahman Muazam Shah.[54]

One might assume that this rapid series of events radically transformed senses of belonging in a divided Malay empire. And yet, a sense of transregional ethno-nationalism would continue to incubate and endure well into the twentieth century. After Indonesia's proclamation of independence on 17 August 1945, a selection of agents who identified as descendants from Riau-Lingga sought to re-establish relations with the Dutch, such that they might lobby for the re-establishment of the sultanate over and against their incorporation into an Indonesian "nation".[55] On 11 December 1947, the *Straits Times* offered a synopsis of these affairs:

> The people of Rhio formed a committee called Jawatan Kuasa Penguros Rakyat Rhio (the Rhio People's Committee) consisting of 24 members with Raja Haji Abdullah bin Osmar as president … The Principal objectives of this committee were (1) the restoration of the Sultanate of Rhio-Lingga and (2) the establishment of a "Rhio Raad," or council of state … [I]f the N.E.I. [Netherlands East Indies] Government approved the restoration of the Sultanate, the person who should be elected as Sultan should be one of the lawful descendants of the last Sultan of Rhio-Lingga … The senior surviving lawful descendant of the late Sultan living in Singapore is Yang Amat Mulia Tengku Ibrahim bin Tengku Omar … a grandson of the late Sultan.[56]

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[54] Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, "Sultan of Rhio. Deposed by Dutch Government. Allegations of Hostility", 13 February 1911, p. 5.

[55] *Straits Times*, "The Singapore Heir to the Rhio Islands", 11 December 1947, p. 6.

[56] Ibid.

Aside from Raja Haji Abdullah's involvement in the movement for the Sultanate's re-establishment, another Malay of Bugis descent — Raja Muhammad Yunus — who held the military rank of Major and once engaged with Japanese forces during the interregnum was also involved in separatist efforts. A descendant of Raja Haji Fisabilillah, Raja Muhammad Yunus spearheaded a five-year military conflict between Riau royalist and Indonesian nationalist forces that, as Wee (2016) notes, has been "omitted in dominant versions of Indonesian historiography" (2016, p. 249).[57] Ongoing attempts to reassert Riau's independence from the Indonesian state ultimately failed when Riau was incorporated as a province in 1957, leading Raja Muhammad Yunus to flee to nearby Johor, where he was given sanctuary by the Sultan.[58]

Several decades later, and following the formation of the 1989 SIJORI growth triangle — a tripartite economic initiative that forged logistical and investment transactions between Indonesian Riau, Singapore, and Malaysian Johor (three places roughly corresponding to the once sprawling Johor-Riau-Lingga Sultanate sketched above) — Malay ethno-nationalism reared its head again, albeit in a new context of competing interests associated with Indonesian decentralization. Nicholas Long (2013) writes that "Riau Islanders' interest in regional autonomy was couched in terms of returning to a state of affairs they had once enjoyed but which had been cruelly and senselessly wrested from them" (Long 2013, p. 46).[59] "This sentiment", Long writes, had "hardened" in part because of the experienced effects of transregional economic development: "The growing disparity between the Riau Islands and Singapore, perceived to have been equals as recently as the 1970s, fostered resentment towards the political systems that were preventing the archipelago from developing at a similar pace" (Long 2013, p. 46).

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[57] Vivienne Wee, "The Significance of Riau in SIJORI", in *The SIJORI Cross-Border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics, and Culture*, edited by Francis E. Hutchinson and Terence Chong (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2016), pp. 241–66.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Long, *Being Malay in Indonesia*.

Long notes that — in contrast to "earlier efforts to break away from the newly independent Indonesia [that] had failed to garner popular support in either Insular or Mainland Riau" (see Long 2013) — regional sentiments taking aim at centralized rule became increasingly popular among Indonesian citizens living in what we today call Riau Islands Province (Long 2013, p. 47). This rising regionalism was inadvertently enabled by Suharto-era cultural policy, whereby the socio-culture of Indonesian provinces became distinctly defined with reference to particular ethnic groups. This New Order policy effectively reaffirmed everyday assumptions about "ethno-locality" — "a spatial scale where 'ethnicity' and 'locality' [or place] presume each other to such a degree that they become, in essence, a single concept" (Boellstorff (2005), p. 18; see Long 2013, p. 47). Informed and shaped by Dutch colonial-era administrative practices and Leiden school scholarship on *adat* or "custom", New Order ideologies of ethno-locality forged linkages between people and place, whereby ethnicities were defined by provincial regions and provincial regions by ethnicity: e.g., South Sulawesi with "Bugis" or "Bugis-Makassar", Bali with "Balinese", Riau with "Malay", and so on. Long suggests that "Malayness" became a principle idiom for regional political participation and contestation for Riau Islanders.

More covert forms of regional secessionist ideology became more overtly articulated following the fall of Suharto. In Pekanbaru in Riau Province, a *Riau Merdeka* or "Free Riau" movement called for the formation of an independent Federal Republic of Riau (Long 2013, p. 48). And yet, in the adjacent Riau Islands, similarly regional sentiments were developing, although they were taking aim not at Jakarta, but at "centralized" control in Riau's provincial capital of Pekanbaru. Long (2013) writes that "Led by the regent of the Riau Islands, Hoezrin Hood, a cross-party consensus grew that of the two power centres, Jakarta and Pekanbaru, it was the latter that was the more insidious" (2013, p. 48). Again, Riau Islanders' aversions to mainland Riau were articulated through an ethno-localized idiom of Malayness: "Pekanbaru was dominated by Minangkabau and Bataks and had long behaved in a "colonial" way towards the archipelagic heartlands, resulting in the complete marginalization of island populations, especially Malays" (ibid.). So too, the establishment of a new Riau Islands province would

allow the Islands to "better exploit its natural gas reserves, realise its strategic potential from being located near the border with Singapore, and improve its human resource base if it became an autonomous province and ensured that profits from its resources were directed towards archipelagic needs rather than welfare and development projects on the mainland" (ibid.).

Hood's efforts gained momentum with the support of the Islands' Bugis-Malay aristocrats — descendants of the five brothers and the *Yang Dipertuan Mudas* — whose involvement, my informants told me, was crucial for Hood's efforts. Long (2013) describes how Hood convinced this segment of Island society by appealing to the accomplishment of their ancestors, contraposing these with the current state of affairs in which Malays found themselves, "trapped in coastal villages, living on the brink of poverty in the world they had once considered to be their oyster" (2013, p. 50). Hood lobbied the central government for the formation of Riau Islands province, and in 2002 then President Megawati Sukarnoputri agreed.[60] In 2004, Riau Islands began formally operating as a province.

Markers of Malayness

Today, signs of the ethno-localized Malayness that so centrally figured in calls for the new province continue to circulate widely in the Riau Islands. These signs or markers of Malayness are, at the same time, deeply imbued with a transregional sense or perception of Malay history, reflecting certain conceptions of the past, while shaping the ways history lives on in the present. These signs are, of course, explicitly displayed during exemplary *upacara adat Melayu* or "traditional Malay ceremonies", when male participants assemble wearing the traditional *baju Melayu* (Figure 3). And yet, signs or markers of Malayness are

[60] Although, and as Long notes (2013, p. 51), this may have been a strategic decision on the President's part to derail the "Free Riau" movement that was gaining momentum on the mainland.

Figure 3: Showing Signs of Malayness at the Institute of Malay Customs

Source: Photograph by the author.

also readily evinced in more banal, everyday interactions. Consider, for example, the mediating role of language in everyday life.

During the course of my fieldwork, multiple Malay informants of Bugis descent identified the language they spoke not as Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), but Malay (Bahasa Melayu), a language, they told me, descended from courtly Malay spoken by their ancestors in the Riau-Lingga-Johor sultanate, and one later codified by Raja Ali Haji — that Bugis-Malay aristocrat who, from his home on Penyengat Island, developed the first monolingual Malay dictionary (recall Vice-President Jusuf Kalla's comments noted in the introduction). Interestingly, the Malay variety spoken by Riau Islanders is also an object of attention among their "co-ethnic" relatives living in the contemporary Malaysian state of Johor, who view it as an emblem of transregional and cross-

border Malayness. Upon learning of my forthcoming travels to Kepri in February 2017, one informant from Johor suggested that the language spoken there figures as a kind of *warisan* or "legacy" from a Malay sultanate that cut across contemporary transnational lines of difference. Another put it more simply still, excitedly telling me that I would "hear the original Malay language there!".[61]

It is beyond the scope and aims of this paper to sociolinguistically situate this ideologically "pure" Malay variant and its speakers within broader debates surrounding Riau Malay and other Malay varieties across the Malay-speaking world. What matters most to our conversation here, rather, is its ideological salience as a kind of ethno-linguistic code, one shared within the Riau Islands' Malay community, that distinguishes true "Malays" from outsiders who speak the "national" language of Indonesian. Allow me briefly, however, to identify one of its more iconic features — one that distinguishes it from the national language, and brings it (and its speakers) into alignment with their imagined, co-ethnic "Malays" living elsewhere in the Malay world: schwa [ə] in word-final position. In the Malay variety spoken by my Malay informants of Bugis descent, standard Indonesian words *saya* ("I"), *kita* (first-person plural inclusive "we"), *apa* ("what"), or any word featuring the final letter "-a" would not be pronounced as it would in standard Indonesian. Rather, in this variety, /a/ transforms to /ə/. This sound is salient enough as an in-group identity marker that, from text-messages to graffiti in the Riau Islands, the final letter -a in words like "kita" or "apa" is frequently orthographically rendered as "-e" to capture the "uh" sound of the schwa. By way of example, consider a graffiti image on a wall directly outside the ferry terminal that shuttles travellers back and forth between Tanjung Pinang and nearby Penyengat Island — a frequent destination for local and transnational Malay tourists and pilgrims (Figure 4). The painted image features an anthropomorphic *gonggong* or edible sea snail (itself a kind of icon in Kepri society), announcing "Tanjung Pinang Kampong Kite!" Note how the -a ordinarily occurring in Indonesian first-person plural

[61] "Dengar bahasa Melayu yang asli."

Figure 4: A Sign of Exclusionary Inclusion? "Tanjung Pinang Kampong Kite!" [Tanjung Pinang is Our Home!]

Source: Photograph by the author.

inclusive *kita* or "we" is replaced with -e, and consider the ideological importance of this replacement, insofar as it serves as a marker of in-group Malay identity in the (inclusive yet simultaneously exclusionary) declaration that "Tanjung Pinang Kampung *Kite*!" [Tanjung Pinang is *Our* Home!].

Aside from Malay language, we might also consider the names of its speakers as salient markers of a certain kind of Malayness in contemporary Kepri society. Recall the special role played by and afforded to those descendants of the five Bugis brothers. Recall, too, how descendants of

these five brothers — decidedly Bugis figures who intermarried with the Malay royal line — received the first name *Raja*, several of whom would go on to serve as *Yang Dipertuan Muda* or "Viceroys" of the Malay sultanate.[62] Today, the name *Raja* continues to serve as an easily identifiable marker of those Malay-Bugis men and women of noble birth, some of whom staff provincial government positions.

During my fieldwork, I met one such Raja based in Batam's Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata or Department of Culture and Tourism, housed in the island's Lembaga Adat Melayu or Institute of Malay Customs Nong Isa Building. One of Raja's previous charges was to join government efforts to commemorate and promote other signs of Malayness in Kepri. He was part of a "naming team" that was tasked by former Batam Mayor Ahmad Dahlan (2006–16) — a part-time Malay historian whose administration worked to promote the history of Batam and the greater Riau Islands Province — to develop a list of "names of Malay-Bugis figures" (Malay: *nama-nama tokoh Melayu Bugis*). These figures' perceived (or authority-*defined*) influence in Riau Islands' history was to be commemorated in the form of street and building names.

I turn to examples of political acts of government-sponsored commemoration in the next section, explaining how these are part of a broader government mission, and are seen to a certain extent as a reflex of ongoing processes of transregional migration and demographic shift.

THE POLITICS OF ETHNO-HISTORICAL COMMEMORATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

Visions and Missions of the Kepri Government (2016–21)

In advance of the 2016 year, Kepri's regional government released a draft report of its Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah (RPJMD), or "Regional Medium-Term Development Plan", a plan that articulates

[62] See footnote 50.

the *visi* ("vision"), *misi* ("mission"), and programmes projected over a five-year period. Projected from 2016 to 2021, the Kepri RPJMD report detailed a number of visions, missions, and programmes that may be glossed over as broadly centring on:

- improving the quality of infrastructure, education, and health and health care;
- developing a maritime, tourist, and agricultural economy conducive to investment;
- strengthening small businesses and large-scale industries; and
- developing a clean, accountable and disciplined government system with a higher work ethic for government servants.

With respect to these goals, Kepri's RPJMD might not be that different from those of other regional governments. However, and relevant for our discussion here, one of its articulated goals readily distinguishes Kepri's RPJMD from those of other provinces elsewhere in Indonesia. This particular programme and vision is: "To develop a society life that is religious, democratic, just, orderly, harmonious and safe under the umbrella of Malay culture."[63] This particular programme is geared towards the "Embodiment of Kepri Province as the Mother of the Malay Land".[64]

This broader *misi* or "mission" of developing a society under "the umbrella of Malay culture" is accompanied by a *tujuan* or "goal", namely:

> Preserve the values and art of Malay culture in order to realize a Riau Islands society with personality and noble character.[65]

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[63] "Mengembangkan perikehidupan masyarakat yang agamis, demokratis, berkeadilah, tertib, rukun dan aman di bawa payung budaya Melayu", in *RPJMD Provinsi Kepulauan Riau* [RPJMD for Riau Islands Province] 2016–2021, Chapter VII, p. 1.

[64] "Perwujudan provinsi Kepri sebagai Bunda Tanah Melayu."

[65] "Melestarikan nilai-nilai dan Seni Budaya Melayu guna Mewujudkan Masyarakat Kepulauan Riau yang berkepribadian dan Berakhlak Mulia."

This goal is accompanied by an additional "target" or *sasaran*:

> Increase the preservation of Malay cultural values and arts as part of the cultural richness of the region.[66]

The enunciated "strategy" to reach these goals is to:

> Empower Malay figures and institutions in Kepri Province to preserve cultural values in the lives of the people.[67]

The "policies" or *kebijakan* that will be undertaken aspire towards:

> The increased understanding and practice of Malay cultural values, cultural promotion, fostering of local arts and traditions, the preservation of objects, sites, and cultural heritage areas (tangible), and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.[68]

Finally, these goals, targets, strategies, and policies have the *fokus misi* or "mission focus" of:

> The embodiment of Kepri Province as the Mother of the Malay Land.[69]

In what follows, I evaluate how these visions, missions, and goals are playing out on the ground, and I highlight some of Kepri's important

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[66] "Meningkatnya kelestarian nilai-nilai dan seni budaya Melayu sebagai kekayaan budaya daerah."

[67] "Memberdayakan tokoh-tokoh dan lembaga-lembaga adat Melayu di Provinsi Kepri untuk melestarikan nilai-nilai budaya dalam kehidupan masyarakat."

[68] "Peningkatan pemahaman dan pengamalan nilai-nilai budaya Melayu, promosi budaya, pembinaan kesenian dan tradisi lokal, pelestarian Benda, Situs, dan Kawasan Cagar Budaya (*tangible*), dan pelestarian warisan budaya tak benda (*intangible*)."

[69] "Perwujudan provinsi Kepri sebagai Bunda Tanah Melayu."

Malay sites and cultural heritage areas which double as *obyek wisata* or "tourist objects". Then, and turning to demographic data, I consider how intensifying government interest in these visions, missions and goals may be read as a kind of reflex or response to issues of ongoing demographic shift.

Street Names, Monuments, Mausoleums and Museums

In Batam, the drive from the international ferry terminal to Kepri's Lembaga Adat Melayu, or the Institute of Malay Customs, is a short one. Disembarking travellers headed to the Lembaga Adat Melayu from Batam Centre International Terminal need only turn left on Daeng Kamboja Street, turn right on Raja Isa Street, and — after passing by the Engku Putri Street intersection — will have reached the institute, housed in a three-story structure known as the Nong Isa Building. These street names and others in the vicinity of the Institute of Malay Customs — names like Raja H. Fisabilillah, Raja Husin or Raja M. Tahir — elicit ostensibly little attention from tourists arriving from nearby Singapore, whose immediate goal is often to find "cheap sex, food and shopping" (Chong 2016, p. 310).[70] And why would such tourists care about the names of the streets they traverse while on holiday? Street names are, after all, just street names: "quintessentially mundane and seemingly obvious" (Azaryahu 1996, p. 311).[71]

However, and as geographer Maoz Azaryahu (1994) puts it, "The use of street names for commemorative purposes is instrumental in transforming the urban environment into a virtual political setting" (ibid., p. 311). In Batam, this is certainly true of those streets named after local Bugis and Malay/Bugis historical figures like Daeng Kambodja, Raja Isa,

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[70] Terence Chong, "Imaginary Frontiers and Deferred Masculinity: Singapore Working-Class Men in Batam", in *The SIJORI Cross-Border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics, and Culture*, edited by Francis E. Hutchinson and Terence Chong (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2016), pp. 310–28.

[71] Maoz Azaryahu, "The Power of Commemorative Street Names", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 3 (1996): 311–30.

Engku Putri and so on — names which reflect the enduring and everyday ideological salience of the Bugis influence on *sejarah Melayu* or "Malay history" in contemporary political life in the Riau Islands. Indeed, "'Historical' street names", Azaryahu (1996) notes, "are a distinctive *lieux de memoire* of modernity. From the perspective of those in charge of moulding the symbolic infrastructure of society, the main merit of commemorative street names is that they introduce an authorized version of history into ordinary settings of everyday life" (ibid., p. 312).

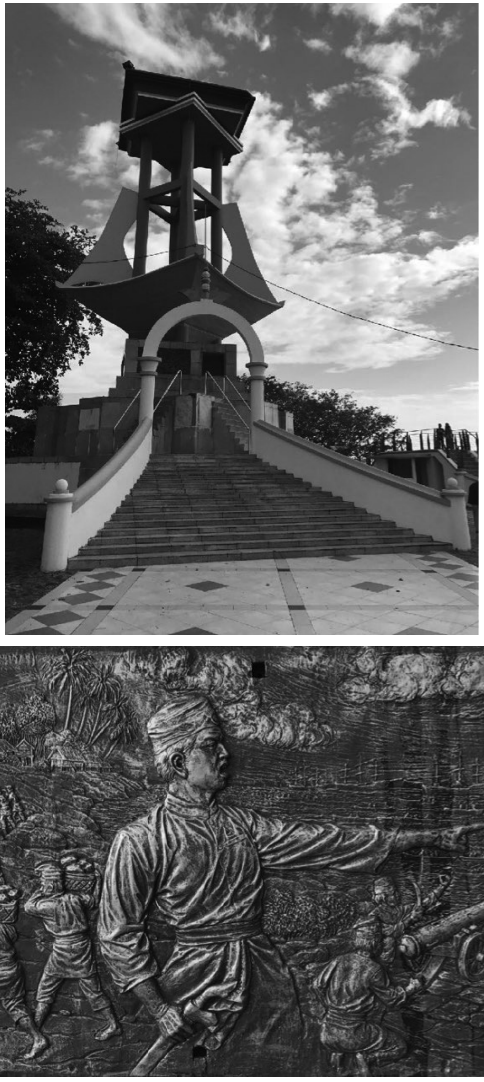
In Batam, the commemorative naming of these streets after Bugis figures and Malays of Bugis extraction — people like Daeng Kambodja, Raja Isa, Engku Putri and so on — reflects an authorized or authority-defined version of "Malay history" as it is understood in the contemporary Riau Islands. The commemorative naming of these streets highlights the Batam and Kepri government's political mission in action, as it seeks to authorize a certain ethno-historical vision and infuse that vision into settings of everyday life.

The commemoration of these historical figures — ones detailed in the foregoing section — is not limited to street names, of course, but is also performed in other kinds of projects. Consider Raja Haji Fisabilillah International Airport in Tanjung Pinang. Originally named Kijang Airport, the name change ceremoniously occurred in 2008, and was officiated by Provincial Governor Ismeth Abdullah, Deputy Governor H.M. Sani and Indonesian Transportation Minister Jusman Syafii Djamal. Raja Haji Fisabilillah — declared an Indonesian *pahlawan nasional* by Suharto's government in 1997 — is not only commemorated on street signs or airports. After his declaration as a national hero, then-*Bupati* of Riau Islands regency Abdul Manan Saiman (1990–2000) constructed the Raja Haji Fisabilillah monument. Depicting images of Raja Haji's battles against the Dutch, the monument continues to attract tourists and local people today (Figure 5).

Other "sights and cultural heritage areas"[72] also double as *obyek wisata* (tourist objects) or *destinasi religi* (religious destinations), especially the

[72] "Situs dan Kawasan Cagar Budaya."

Figure 5: Raja Haji Fisabilillah Monument, Tanjung Pinang. Top image: The monument proper; Bottom image: depiction of Raja Haji at battle.



Source: Photographs by the author.

mausoleums of those Bugis and Bugis-descended aristocrats so legendary within Riau Islands history. Attracting transregional and local tourists and pilgrims, the mausoleums on Bintan island include the tombs of Malay Sultan Sulaiman, and two of the Bugis brothers — Daeng Celak and Daeng Marewah (Figure 6). On Penyengat Island, tourists may visit the tombs of Raja Hamidah Engku Puteri, Raja Ahmad, Raja Ali Haji, Raja Abdullah, Raja Aisyah, and Raja Haji Fisabilillah (Figure 7). Penyengat Island — itself branded as a location of "historical heritage" — is a tourist destination in its own right, where visitors can visit the Grand Mosque of the Sultan of Riau, among other sites (Figure 8).

Government-driven revitalization efforts do not only centre on the creation of monuments or the preservation of historical, cultural, or religious sites such as these.[73] They also focus on disseminating "new" kinds of knowledge about "old" things. Consider a meeting that occurred over the course of two days at the Institute of Malay Customs, when an international cohort of Malay anthropologists, historians and cultural critics gathered at the Nong Isa building from 29 through 30 March 2017. The purpose of their meeting was clearly stipulated in the formal invitation that each received from the Batam government's Department of Culture and Tourism:

> We may inform you that the Batam City Government has built a display gallery for the museum at the MTQ National Level pavilion that has been donated to the Batam City Government. Batam's Department of Culture and Tourism, via Preservation of Heritage, History, and Museum activities, will hold a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to finalize the concept and materials of the museum. The FGD on Achieving the Full Potential of Museum Materials and Concepts aims to get input and suggestions from

[73] Francis E. Hutchinson, *Rowing Against the Tide? Batam's Economic Fortunes in Today's Indonesia*, Trends in Southeast Asia, no. 8/2017 (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017), pp. 1–37.

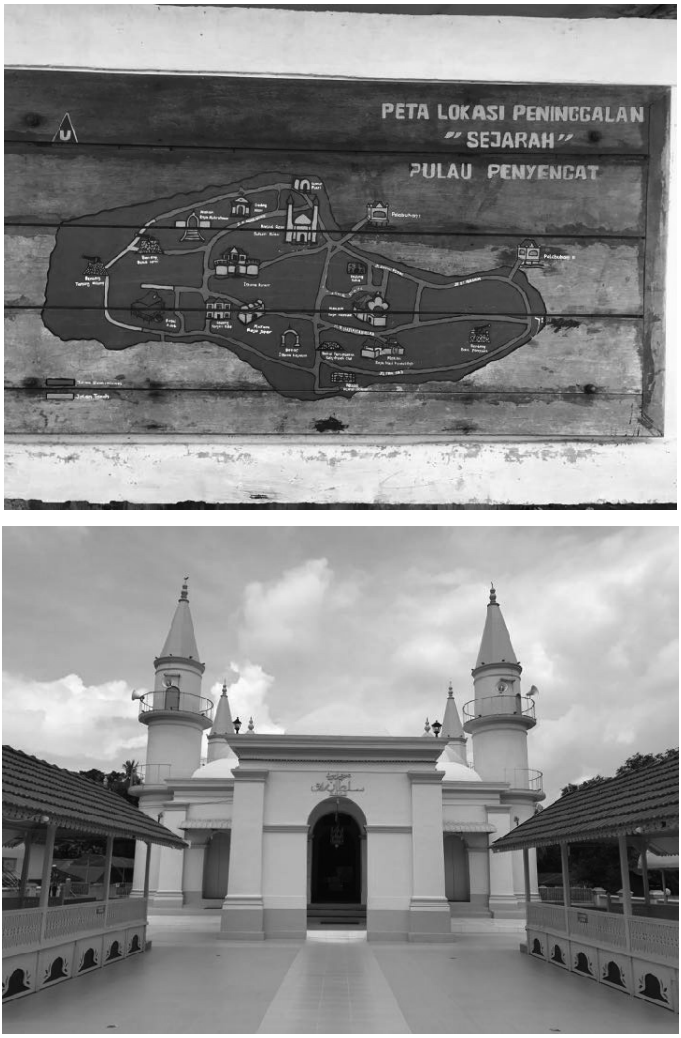
Figure 6: Tomb of Daeng Celak, Second Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau.

Source: Photograph by the author.

Figure 7: Penyengat Tombs. Top image: Tomb complex including Enku Puteri and Raja Ali Haji; Bottom image: Tomb of Raja Haji Fisabilillah.

Source: Photographs by the author.

Figure 8: Penyengat's Historical Heritage. Top image: Location Map of Penyengat Island's Historical Heritage; Bottom image: Grand Mosque of the Sultan of Riau.



Source: Photographs by the author.

FGD participants, so that the museum concept and materials that have already been arranged may be made more perfect.[74]

Participants assembled at the Institute of Malay Customs Nong Isa building. Reflecting another kind of commemoration, the three-story building is named after Raja Isa (alias Nong Isa), a Malay/Bugis aristocrat, great-grandson of Daeng Parani, and representative of the Riau-Lingga sultanate credited with pioneering Batam's governance and development in the mid-nineteenth century. The building — currently under renovation, or so I was told — not only houses the Institute for Malay Customs, but is also home to Batam's Department of Culture and Tourism, reflecting the close and mutualistic relationship between two entities jointly working towards the advancement of Malay cultural values (Figure 9).

After exchanging greetings over coffee, participants travelled to the nearby Gedung Astaka Musabaqah Tilawatil Quran Nasional XXV (Musabaqah Tilawatil Quran XXV National Pavilion), which was completed in 2014 and inaugurated by then Governor of the Riau Islands, H. Muhammad Sani, in advance of the twenty-fifth Musabaqah Tilawatil Quran — a national Islamic festival that took place in Batam in June of that year (Figure 10). Participants then entered the multi-purpose building, whose halls were newly outfitted with a series of empty museum display galleries that periodized Riau Islands history and highlighted the enduring value of Malayness in contemporary Riau Islands society. Focus

[74] "Dapat kami informasikan bahwa Pemerintah Kota Batam telah membangun display gallery untuk museum di purna astaka MTQ Tingkat Nasional yang telah dihibahkan kepada Pemerintah Kota Batam. Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Kota Batam melalui kegiatan Pelestarian Cagar Budaya, Sejarah dan Permuseuman, akan mengadakan *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) guna mematangkan konsep dan materi museum tersebut. Adapun FGD Pematangan Konsep dan Materi Museum bertujuan untuk mendapatkan masukan dan saran para peserta FGD, sehingga konsep dan materi museum yang telah dususun dapat lebih sempurna."; Pebrialin, SE, M. Si., "FGD Pematangan Materi Museum Kota Batam" [Focus Group on Achieving the Full Potential of Batam City Museum Materials], Letter to the Author, 23 March 2017, MS. N.p.

Figure 9: Nong Isa Building, Institute of Malay Customs, Batam.

Group Discussion participants moved through the series of galleries in sequence: (1) Riau-Lingga Period,[75] (2) Dutch Period,[76] (3) Japanese Period,[77] (4) Independence Period,[78] (5) The Formation of Riau Islands Province,[79] (6) The Batam Economy,[80] (7) Malay Treasures,[81] (8) The

[75] Masa Riau-Lingga.

[76] Masa Belanda.

[77] Masa Jepang.

[78] Masa Kemerdekaan.

[79] Kepulauan Riau.

[80] Ekonomi Kota Batam.

[81] Hasannah Melayu.

Figure 10: MTQ XXV National Pavilion and Museum Tour.

History of the Pavilion and the Implementation of the National MTQ.[82] Focus group participants were led past the empty display cases by an official from Batam's Department of Culture and Tourism, who pointed to empty displays, suggesting what content or "material" might fill them,

[82] Sejarah Astaka dan Pelaksanaan MTQ Nasional.

and soliciting feedback and constructive critiques in the process. “The floor layout needs improvement”, noted one participant. “What icon or symbol might best represent Batam? A gonggong?”, asked another, referring to the ubiquitous sea snail popularly consumed throughout the Riau Islands. “We should have a life-size replica of a traditional Malay house, we can place it outside adjacent to the museum”, suggested one participant. “What about language? Will there be any materials on Malay language and literature?”, inquired another, noting the Riau Islands’ special role in the development of “pure” Malay language and literature. Government officials recorded these and other observations, and before heading back to the Institute of Malay Customs for an extended discussion, participants assembled on the pavilion steps for a commemorative group photo.

I attended the museum tour and ensuing Focus Group Discussion as a participant observer, accompanied by a Malay friend and Batam native. Sometime after the tour, I took the opportunity to ask my companion what he thought of the focus group and the proposed museum. “For me, their intention is just to remind the people of Batam”,[83] he said, “so they just know about the history of Batam from the beginning”.[84] And yet, he had his reservations. “But it’s a bit late”,[85] he said. “Right? Malay culture and customs have already been marginalized at this point of time … Because Batam already has many other ethnic groups coming in”,[86] he added. His comments echoed an earlier comment made by a mutual and ethnically Bugis friend, one that explicitly referred to ongoing dynamics of perceived *peminggiran* or “marginalization” in macro-sociological terms. “It’s called a majority becoming a minority”,[87] he told me, as we sat in Tanjung Pinang’s *Akau Potong Lembu* night market, surrounded by

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[83] “Kalau saya itu hanya niat ingin mengingatkan sama warga Batam saja, bang.”

[84] “Supaya tahu tentang sejarah Batam dari awal.”

[85] “Tapi terlambat juga.”

[86] “Budaya adat Melayu udah terpinggir pada saat ini … karena Batam udah ada banyak suku-suku lain yang masuk.”

[87] “Itu namanya mayoritas menjadi minoritas.”

ethnically Minang, Javanese, and Chinese vendors. "Before, all of these vendors were Bugis and Malay",[88] he told me, gesturing around us.

Epocholist formulations such as these regarding the imagined end of a Malay majority in Kepri must, however, be objectively evaluated with respect to the demographic data at hand.

Demographic Dynamics and Uncertain Majorities

The available demographic data suggests that, while notions of "majorities becoming minorities" may seem overstated or dramatic, Kepri's Malay community is indeed declining in population. The opening of the Riau islands to transnational logistical and investment linkages associated with the formation of the SIJORI growth triangle led to the development of new formal sector jobs in Batam. These developments brought demographic changes in their wake, eliciting large scale migration flows from throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Badan Pusat Statistik or Statistics Indonesia data shows that from 2000 to 2015, the total population of the Riau Islands grew by nearly 400 per cent, from over the course of fifteen years from around 500,000 to 1.9 million. In Batam specifically, these shifts were particularly dramatic, with a 1990 population of 100,000 people in 1990 expanding by twelve times to 1.2 million in 2015. Hutchinson (2017) has usefully charted these dynamics (see Figure 11).[89]

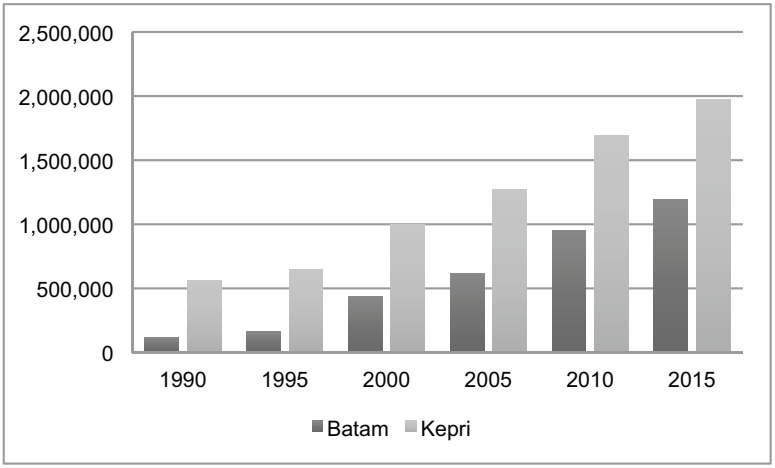
These shifting dynamics have, as my respondents alluded to in the previous section, had a marked impact on the islands' ethnic composition. In 2000, the Malay population was 354,853, constituting 35.59 per cent of a total population of 997,075.[90] The Javanese community was a distant second, with a population of 2,221,756, constituting 22.24 per cent of the

[88] "Dulu, semua orang ini Bugis Melayu."

[89] Hutchinson, *Rowing Against the Tide*.

[90] Aris Ananta, "Changing Ethnic Composition and Potential Violent Conflict in Riau Archipelago, Indonesia: An Early Warning Signal", *Population Review* 45, no. 1 (2016): 48–68.

Figure 11: Total Population in Batam and Kepri, 1990–2015.



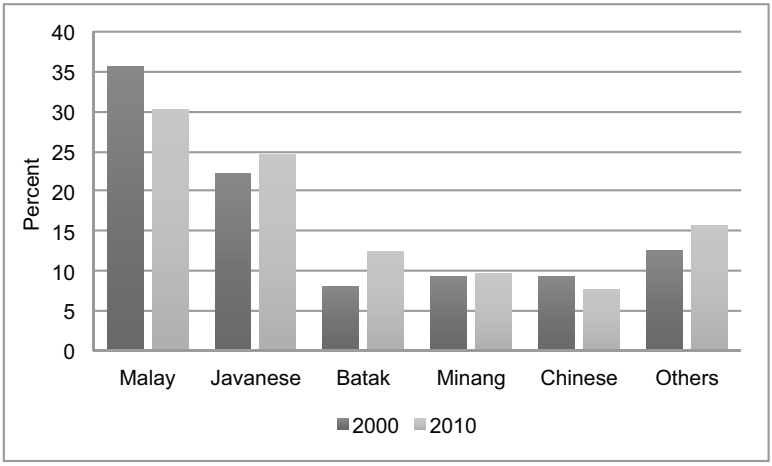
Source: Hutchinson (2017, p. 19) drawing from BPS Data.

total population. Only ten years later, census data show that although they still outnumbered the islands' other ethnic groups, the Malay community had shrunk by 5.3 per cent. The 2010 Malay population numbered 505,391 people, or 30.23 per cent of a total population of 1,671,891. In contrast, the province's Javanese community grew, expanding to 410,428 in number, or 24.55 per cent of the islands' total population.[91] The Riau Islands' shifting ethnic composition is laid out in Figure 12. Although a 2030 population projection is unavailable for Riau Islands province, Ananta (2016) notes that — assuming these trends continue — the Javanese may very well overtake the islands' Malay community by 2030.

These population trends lend a certain degree of ballast not only to Malay/Bugis folk-assumptions about ethno-demographic shift, but also their senses of being spatially *dipinggirkan* or "edged out" of the putative

[91] Ibid., p. 61.

Figure 12: Shifting Ethnic Populations in Kepri, 2000 and 2010.



Source: Hutchinson (2017, p. 20).

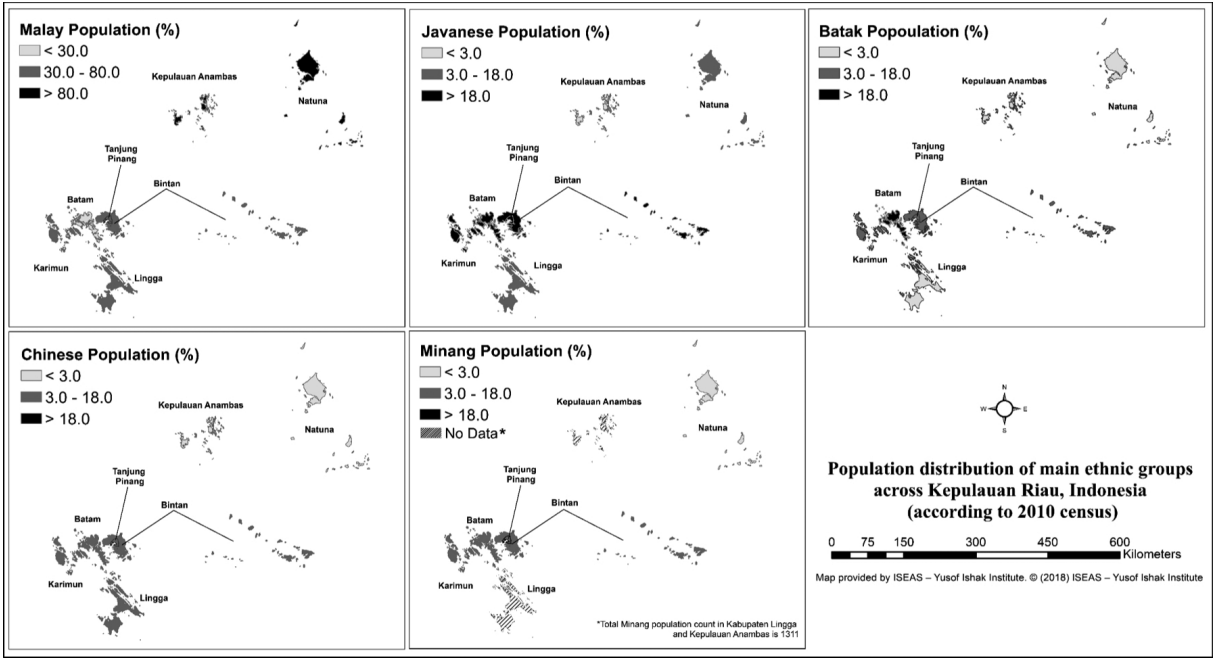
centres of economic life in Kepri, such as Batam. As one disgruntled member of Batam's Malay community told me, "If you want to find the original Malays or original Malay places here in Batam, all that's left are the memories … The original Malays have left for the Islands … the peripheral people are the Malays."[92] Statements such as these may be viewed with an eye to the relative spatial distribution of the province's Malays vis-à-vis other ethnic groups (see Figure 13).

Ongoing processes of such spatial and ethno-demographic *peminggiran* or marginalization may, as Ananta (2006, p. 60) crucially notes, serve as "an early warning signal" of potential ethnic conflict.[93]

[92] "Kalau mau cari orang asli Melayu dan tempat asli orang Melayu Batam ini, udah tinggal kenangan aja … penduduk aslinya udah pergi ke pulau-pulau … orang pinggiran itu Melayu asli lagi."

[93] Ananta, "Changing Ethnic Composition and Potential Violent Conflict".

Figure 13: Relative Population Distribution of Major Ethnic Groups across Kepri.



Source: Map courtesy of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute GIS Project.

Here, Ananta draws upon the history of religious conflict in Maluku province as a precedent for forecasting this potential in the Riau Islands. Maluku once had equivalent numbers of Christians and Muslims, but this changed after the 1970s when an influx of Muslim migrants threw this into flux, effectively tipping the scale on behalf of the province's Muslim community and sparking inter-religious conflict in 1999. Turning to the Riau islands, Ananta notes that an "inflow of migrants, mostly from other provinces, was the main source of population growth in the historically Malay-Muslim province" (ibid., p. 59), effectively transforming the *tanah Melayu* or "Malay land" into a multi-ethnic and religious province of non-Malay interlopers. Recall that one of the reasons the province's Malays chose to secede from their mainland Riau counterparts was due to issues they had with other ethnic collectivities — Batak and Minangkabau— who were perceived as having a countervailing effect on Malay socio-economic and political supremacy in Riau.[94] Amidst increasing senses of ethno-demographic marginalization that shape Malay senses of being pushed to literal and figurative edge of life in Kepri, these developments may, as Ananta (2006) notes, be read as a harbinger of potential conflict.

These developments may also shed light on the Kepri government's prioritization of policies intended to strengthen the islands' ethno-cultural institutions, rather than focusing on formal sector motors of the provincial economy (see *RPJMD for Riau Islands Province 2016–2021*; Hutchinson 2017). That is to say, they help explain the emphasis placed on the aforementioned government-driven efforts to "preserve" and "protect" the province's *nilai-nilai budaya Melayu* ("Malay cultural values") and Malay historical heritage sites like those described above. Such efforts may be interpreted as the attempts of an unstable or uncertain majority to recentre themselves as the ethnic and cultural overlords of the Riau Islands, and to "remind" or *meningatkan* (as my informant above noted) Kepri's ethnic "others" that they are living beneath an "umbrella of Malay culture".[95]

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[94] Faucher, "Regional autonomy, Malayness and Power Hierarchy".

[95] *Payung budaya Melayu*.

CONCLUSION: ETHNICITY ON EDGE

In October 2017, in Kepri's adjacent province of Riau, a Chinese Mooncake Festival was subject to formal protest by Riau's Institute of Malay Customs.[96] Governor of Riau Arsyadjuliandi 'Andi' Rachman had attended the event, and had allegedly spoken in support of the traditions of Pekanbaru's Chinese community. In a letter addressed to the Governor, the Institute of Malay Customs reminded the governor of the province's Riau 2020 Vision to "make Riau a centre of Malay Culture",[97] to position Riau as "The Homeland of Malay [sic]", and to "build Riau on the basis of Malay culture".[98] These "visions" for Riau as a "Malay centre" bear a striking family resemblance to those of Riau Islands province, and as such, we might view Riau's Mooncake Festival protest with an eye to ongoing ethnic dynamics in the adjacent Riau Islands.

After Indonesia's Ahok saga — something that captivated the attention of Indonesian and international audiences alike[99] — this event might be taken as evidence in an (ongoing) argument that Chinese Indonesians are prototypical others, or people who fundamentally do not "belong" in contemporary Indonesian society. Readers of this article, however, might already have a sense that this assumption does not fully capture the nature of inter-ethnic cleavages in the Riau Islands. In Kepri, the division is not rhetorically cast as *pribumi* versus *Tionghoa* or "Native" versus "Chinese", but as Malays (and their Bugis interlocutors) versus the unwanted interlopers (*pribumi* and Chinese alike) whom Malays

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[96] "Tradisi Kue Bulan di Pekanbaru Diprotes Lembaga Adat Melayu, Kenapa?", *Detiknews,* 12 October 2017 <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3680897/tradisi-kue-bulan-di-pekanbaru-diprotes-lembaga-adat-melayu-kenapa?utm_source=facebook>.

[97] "Visi Riau 2020 yang menjadikan Riau sebagai pusat budaya Melayu."

[98] "Membangun Riau berbasis kebudayaan Melayu."

[99] For a review of the saga, see Charlotte Setijadi, "Ahok's Downfall and the Rise of Islamist Populism in Indonesia", *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 38/2017, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, 8 June 2017, pp. 1–9.

(or Bugis-Malays) perceive as having pushed them to the literal and figurative edges of society.

This article has troped on the idea of the "edge" — an English gloss for the Indonesian/Malay item *pinggiran* — in a number of different ways. Riau Islands Province, once an exemplary centre of the Riau-Lingga-Johor-Pahang Sultanate and Malay world, now lies on the geographical *edges* of a sprawling archipelagic nation state and the trilateral SIJORI "growth triangle". The Bugis — once dwelling on the *edges* of the Malay empire in their homeland of what we today call South Sulawesi province — asserted themselves militarily and socio-politically in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries in the Riau sultanate, situating themselves in the literal and figurative *centre* of the Malay world. Over time, the definitional *edges* of what it meant to be Bugis and Malay in the Riau Islands became ideologically blurred. Amidst increasing colonial intervention — especially following the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824 — Riau's Malay royals and the Malay/Bugis viceroys found their dominion divided and themselves pushed to the political and administrative *edges* of life in a once powerful Malay empire. In turn, and following Indonesian independence, these same groups found themselves at the *edge* of a nascent nation-state to which they felt they did not belong. And almost sixty years later, these same groups supported the formation of a distinctly Malay Riau Islands province due to enduring concerns about being *edged out* of sociocultural, political, and economic life in a Riau province that had its administrative centre in mainland Pekanbaru.

In March 2017, and communicating with a self-identified member of Batam's indigenous Malay community, after passing by billboards advertising various "persatuan" or "associations" for non-Chinese *pribumi* outsiders in Batam, the notion of "edginess" recurred once more. As we passed by the proposed museum put together by the island's Institute of Malay Customs, I asked my driver about recent efforts by the Kepri government to "preserve" Malay culture. "Malay culture and customs have already been marginalized [or *edged out*] today",[100]

[100] "Budaya adat Melayu udah terpinggir saat ini bang."

he stated, using a grammatical derivation of the Malay item *pinggir*, or "edge". "But we as Malay people would agree if the programme [to revitalize Kepri's Malay heritage] becomes reality."[101] When I asked if his notion of "Malay people" included the Bugis, he responded by saying "Yeah … including the original Batam people",[102] where "original Batam people" are understood as those who lived there prior to the arrival of *pendatang* or "newcomers".[103]

When asked about issues of ethno-demographic shift in Kepri, one informant working at Batam's Department of Culture and Tourism simply told me *di mana bumi dipijak di situ langit dijunjung*. This oft-repeated phrase loosely translates to "wherever one goes, one must observe local custom", and may be idiomatically glossed in English with "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." In other words, when you find yourself in a foreign land, take your cues from those who are authoritatively defined as belonging to that land.

When he visited Kepri once again in November 2017, three years after declaring that the relationship between the Bugis and the Malays is "like the relationship between white and black parts of the eye", Vice-President Jusuf Kalla did as the Bugis-Malays do. Joining Indonesia's Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Asman Abnur, Governor of Kepri Nurdin Basirun, Regent of Lingga Alias Wello, Head of Kepri's Institute for Malay Customs Abdul Razak, and Head of Kepri's South Sulawesi Family Association Daeng M. Yatir, Vice-President Kalla read from a historically authoritative text, one that came to define and continues to define the parameters of a certain authoritative in-group in Riau Islands society: the Malay-Bugis Oath of Loyalty.[104]

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[101] "Kita sebagai orang Melayu merasa setuju kalau programnya jadi bang."

[102] "Termasuk orang asli batam."

[103] Where "newcomers" could also, ironically, and depending on one's temporal frame of reference, refer to those "original" Bugis migrants so heralded in authority-defined Kepri histories.

[104] *Tribun News*, "JK Ingatkan Sumpah Setia Melayu-Bugis" [JK Reminds about the Malay-Bugis Oath of Loyalty", 27 November 2017 <http://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2017/11/22/jk-ingatkan-sumpah-setia-melayu-bugis>.

Accompanied by the foregoing individuals, Vice-President Kalla recited the following:

> *Jikalau tuan kepada Bugis, tuanlah kepada Melayu, dan jikalau tuan kepada Melayu, tuanlah kepada Bugis.*
>
> If you are a friend of the Bugis, then you are a friend of the Malays, and if you are a friend of the Malays, then you are a friend of the Bugis.

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