

Ethnic Labels and Identity among Kadazans in Penampang,
Sabah (Malaysian Borneo)

Trixie M. Tangit

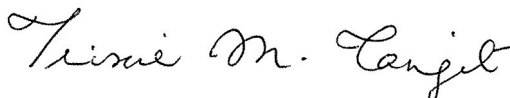


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Declaration

I, *Trixie Marjorie Tangit*, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences, the Australian National University, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This thesis has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institutions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trixie M. Tangit". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'M'. Below the signature is a horizontal dotted line.

Trixie Marjorie Tangit

For Wendell and Kimo
in love and gratitude

Abstract

This thesis explores what it means to be Kadazan today by studying the interplay between the Kadazans' ethnic fluidity and their formal ethnic labels. The Kadazans, who come from Sabah, Malaysia, on the northern end of Borneo, are typically classified as non-Muslim indigenes. They are among Sabah's most culturally mixed groups and their use of a plethora of ethnic labels testifies to this. Yet, the Kadazans' lack of a definitive label has been criticised as endangering identity (Reid, 1997). To understand how ethnic labels and identity work among Kadazans, I explore their relationships with Malay, Dusun and Chinese groups as well as with Kadazandusun, their current official ethnic group. The thesis shows that Kadazans have a range of possible forms of identification open to them. For some the label 'Sino-Kadazan' is important in that it establishes a mixed Kadazan-Chinese identity that they find attractive. Others assert the importance of the 'Kadazandusun' label, especially in the public/political sphere. Some prefer the 'Dusun' or even 'Malay' labels. Following Chua (2007), I argue that Kadazans are constantly faced with the choice of fixing their identities in line with certain labels or criteria, or of keeping their identity fluid. I also show that these choices are always made in the context of the constraints imposed by both increasing Malayisation and the rigid ethnic identification rules of the Malaysian state. The case of the Kadazans illustrates clearly that a distinction always needs to be made between formal ethnic structures and the often more flexible forms of identification found on the ground.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|--|---------|
| Advisory Council of Native Affairs | ACNA |
| Amanah Sabah Bumiputera | ASB |
| Barisan Nasional | BN |
| British North Borneo Chartered Company | BNBCC |
| Eastern Sabah Security Command | ESSCOM |
| Eastern Sabah Security Zone | ESSZONE |
| Inter-Governmental Committee | IGC |
| Social visit pass (with work rights) | IMM13 |
| Internal Security Act | ISA |
| Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam | JPA |
| Kadazan Society Sabah | KSS |
| Kadazandusun | KD |
| KadazandusunMurut | KDM |
| Kadazan Cultural Association | KCA |
| Kadazandusun Cultural Association | KDCA |
| Kadazandusun Language Foundation | KLF |
| Malaysian Identity Card | IC |
| Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah (Sabah Islamic Affairs) | MUIS |
| National Registration Department | NRD |
| Native Title | NT |
| North Borneo Chartered Company | NBCC |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Orang Kaya Kaya | OKK |
| Parti Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah | BERJAYA |
| Parti Bersatu Sabah | PBS |
| Parti Demokratik Sabah | PDS |
| Pendatang Tanpa Izin (illegal immigrant(s)) | PTI |
| Royal Commission of Inquiry | RCI |
| Sabah Indian Association | SIA |
| Sabah Sarawak Keluar Malaysia | SSKM |
| Sabah Chinese Association | SCA |
| Sabah Progressive Party | SAPP |
| Solidariti Rakyat NGO Pro Sabah | SORAK |
| Sabah Sino Kadazan Dusun Murut Association | SSKA |
| Sino-Native KDM Association | PPSBS |
| Solidariti Tanahairku | STAR |
| Sijil Anak Negeri (Sabah Native Certificate) | SAN |
| Tuan Yang Terutama | TYT |
| United Malay National Organization | UMNO |
| United Nations | UN |
| United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | UNHCR |
| United National Kadazan Organisation | UNKO |
| United Pasok Kadazan Organisation | UPKO |
| United Sabah Dusun Association | USDA |
| United Sabah Bajau Organisation | USBO |
| United Sabah National Organisation | USNO |

Preface

In 2005, at my MA Linguistics thesis defense at which I presented on how the Kadazandusun language came to be, an audience member remained puzzled and questioned me as to why the Kadazan and Dusun groups, with separate histories and traditions, would want to combine their languages and ethnic labels. This question stayed with me well after my defense and eventually led me to this PhD thesis in which I explore the nature of Kadazandusun ethnicity from an anthropological angle, and create an ethnography focussing on the interplay between ethnic labels and identity.

I was born and raised in Sabah and, like many other Sabahans of mixed identity, ethnicity is important to me. Coming from a Kadazan and Chinese background, I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s alongside Sabahan friends from differing cultural and religious groups.

As products of Sabah's extensive intermarriages, my friends and I shared more cultural similarities than differences, and all fitted neatly into Sabah's kaleidoscope of identities.

We felt little need to interrogate our own ethnic labels and to discuss their fluidity or fixity, as I do in this thesis. Yet, I have observed, over time, that more and more Sabahans are asking questions about where they belong, in which group and category, and hence, which ethnic label best suits them.

Today, the Sabahan population has grown exponentially since Independence (1963), and the topic of illegal immigrants is rife. Fears that newcomers are usurping locals' resources and identities are commonplace. The situation is complex: while native-born Sabahans may desire belonging and recognition, many also revel in their ethnic fluidity. Yet, as the ethnic situation becomes increasingly complex, ethnicity, as many Sabahans are finding, may need more conscious formulating and formalising in order for a group to retain influence in the broader public arena.

For many Kadazans, the dilemma of which ethnic label to use sits at the core of political and economic survival: as part of the traditionally pagan and largely non-Muslim indigenous population in Sabah, Kadazan identities appear diffuse and ambiguous when compared with those of the dominant Muslim groups. This situation has forced Kadazan and other indigenous leaders to come up with a reindigenisation plan to formulate a clear and concrete ethnic identity. Their hope is that through the creation of a definitive shared ethnic label, forty predominantly non-Muslim indigenous groups will achieve cohesion, and so greater influence, in the public domain.

However, the production of such an 'artificial' label and entity clearly has repercussions for how Kadazans and members of other Sabahan indigenous groups see themselves. The purpose of this thesis therefore is to survey the use of ethnic labels among the Kadazans to understand how Kadazan ethnicity works in the present.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful for the help and guidance of the following individuals and institutions, for without them, I would not have been able to complete this thesis. To my thesis committee, I would like to thank Dr. Patrick Guinness, the late Prof. Nicholas Tapp and my thesis supervisor, Dr. Christine Helliwell for their advice, suggestions and guidance. Special thanks to Christine for her kindness, patience and support: I struggled to finish the writing through illness but Christine's constant encouragement kept me going. Christine, thank you for your supervision all these years: I could not have done this without you.

To all my informants who go unnamed here: thank you—*kotobuadan*—for your contribution to my thesis. I will continue to cherish your sharing on your ethnic identities and your openness to exploring the topic of ethnic belonging with me.

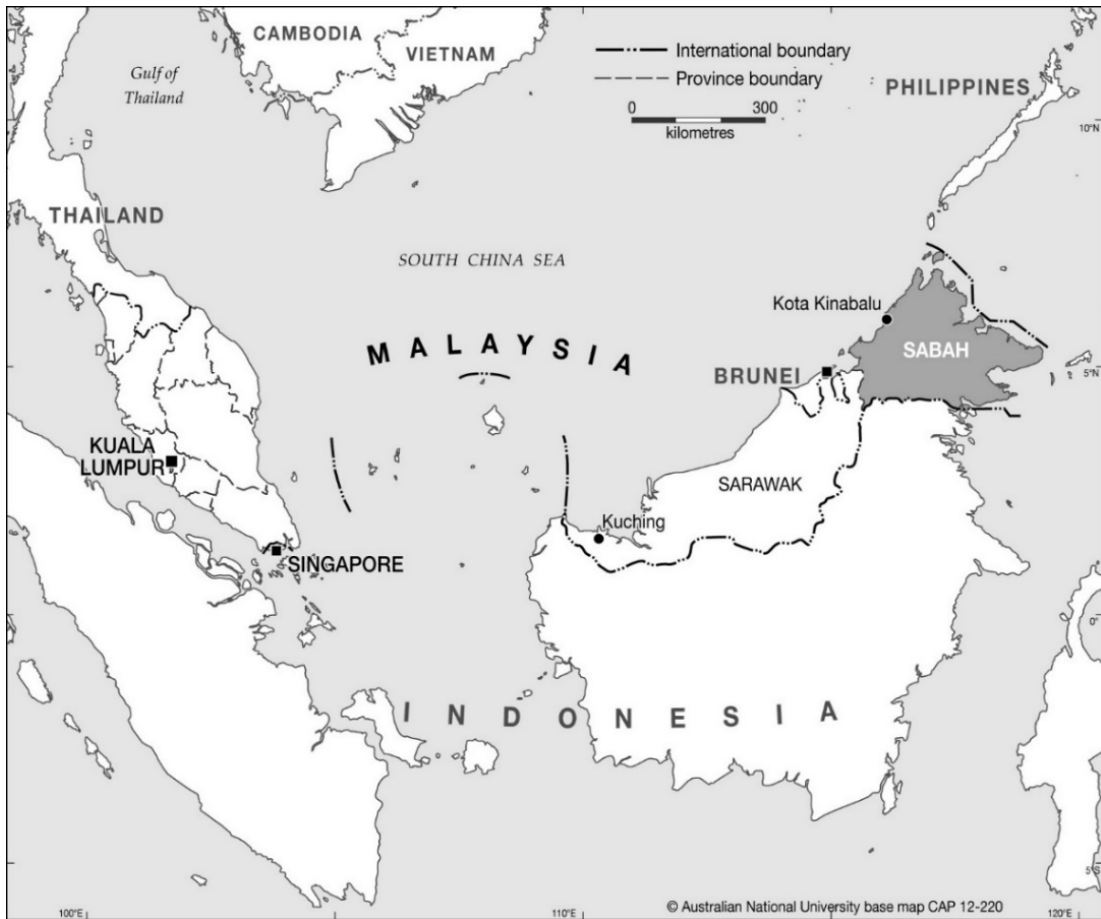
I acknowledge and record my thanks and appreciation to: The Australian National University for the ANU Merit Scholarship and Fee Remission Scholarships (2010~2017) and the Vice-Chancellor's office for travel grants to present at conferences in the U.S.A. and the Philippines in 2013 and 2017 respectively. I thank two people, who want to go unnamed, for a generous stipend sponsorship in year 2009-2010 prior to my ANU scholarship, and for help with thesis editing fees. I thank Diana Glazebrook for her kind assistance and advice with editing. I also thank Kay Dancey, CartoGIS Services Manager at ANU for her kind help with the geographical maps in the thesis.

My PhD journey would not have been complete without the generous time, support and friendship of my cohort here at ANU and my close friends near and far. To be fair, I will not give names and will instead trust that you know who you are. A big thanks to all, especially for prayers and concern regarding my health.

Finally, I thank my families—my husband’s and mine—for all their generous support, both financially and emotionally, during this PhD journey. To parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins: a big thank you. A special thanks to Flory and Michael for reading the final draft of this thesis and for their feedback. Special thanks also to Noureen and Vera for their help when I needed it the most. Last but not least, to Wendell, and son, Kimo, who have stuck by me throughout these PhD years while I attempted to finish this Kadazan identity puzzle. Wendell, a litany of thanks for your unconditional love and patience; Kimo, I hope you enjoy reading your mum’s thesis as much as you have all those anthropological books in my office. Lastly, *kotobuadan* to Kinoingan God—thank you for the strength to keep on going.

I acknowledge any shortcomings in the thesis as my own.

God bless all of you.



Map 1: Sabah, Malaysia on the island of Borneo

Chapter 1: Introduction

When Malaysia comes to mind, most people think of three major ethnic groups—Malay, Chinese and Indian—as representing the Malaysian population. In Sabah and Sarawak, the two Malaysian states on the island of Borneo, there is a diverse range of groups, which include the three groups aforementioned, foreign groups, and a myriad of indigenous groups with Bornean roots and from the wider Malaysian-Philippine-Indonesian archipelago. While all these groups are categorised by the Malaysian government as being officially either *Bumiputera* (Native) or non-*Bumiputera* (non-Native), many Sabahans do not easily fit the Bumiputera scope because of extensive intermarriage among them but instead deploy mixed identities based on differing groups and categories, testifying to their ethnic fluidity. The Kadazans, the case study in this thesis, are an exemplar in this regard, and yet one wonders which label, and hence which group and category they adhere to, in what context, and why.

The main purpose of this thesis is to provide an ethnography that illustrates the Kadazans' relationship to their ethnic labels, particularly in the area of ethnic choice. In this thesis, I focus on the Kadazans' engagement with the three major groups in Sabah—Muslim (including Malay), Chinese and Dusun. I argue that Kadazans are primarily sinicising (becoming Chinese) and indigenising at the same time—leading to the use of differing labels among them, namely the Sino-Kadazan and Kadazandusun labels. This chapter begins with a discussion on challenges in the categorisation and description of fluid ethnic identities. This is followed by an overview on the ethnic situations in Malaysia and in Sabah; and an overview of the Kadazans' ethnic situation. I then discuss the fieldwork that I had undertaken and end the chapter with the overall structure of the thesis.

Challenges facing categorisation and description of fluid ethnic identities

Ethnicity, in the general sense, refers to a state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition (Oxford Dictionary).¹ Ruane and Todd (2004: 217) argue that ethnicity is in fact a thin category and that a multiplicity of peoples may fill this category with beliefs of common biological descent and blood belonging, or with religious or linguistic content, or with a set of cultural values or political ideas. Ethnicity is further not 'a pre-given, unchanging attribute of human populations, spontaneously arising among groups, sharing culture and origins in isolation' (Sillander & Alexander, 2016: 95). Yet, ethnographers often feel drawn to compare similarities and differences of people in order to delineate where group boundaries lie.

One of the key concerns in this thesis is to understand how groups determine their ethnic categories given the fluid ethnic identities of their members. Barth (1988: 14) had said that while cultural differences are important, the features taken into consideration in the formation of a group boundary are only those that the actors regard as significant. As such, it cannot be assumed that there is a simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and difference. This can be seen in the island of Borneo, when King (1993) said:

Given the processes both socio-cultural fission and fusion have taken place in Borneo, it would be a grave mistake to examine one Dyak group in isolation from others. What is more, we can only establish approximate ethnic categories and groupings in Borneo, because boundaries are invariably blurred, and social, political and economic relations do not correlate with particular ethnic identities.

(King 1993: 38)

¹ See Oxford Dictionary – <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/ethnicity>.

The question arises as to whether it is truly possible to categorise fluid identities. Seligman and Weller (2011) argue that notation or categorisation can never fully resolve ambiguity given that by attempting to conquer ambiguity, this creates ever more categories and rules that produces new ambiguities. Following Leach (1970), I further argue that determining ethnic categories is inherently problematic, as practitioners will discern just as many similarities as there are differences. Leach first discovered this problem in categorisation in his study of Highland Burma groups in the 1950s, where he found that the Sema Nagas and the Angama Nagas were not actually independent of each other—these groups changed their ethnic representation according to the economic and political shifts surrounding them. Leach said, ‘It is futile to attempt to record all the stereotyped ethnographic variations for they are almost numberless. The assiduous ethnographer can find just as many different “tribes” as he cares to look for’ (1970: 291). Thus, the exercise of contrasting groups may produce listings of these ‘groups’ but there could be no certainty that a neat categorisation of the groups at hand would ever materialise.

Given the above, it is perhaps more important for the purpose of this thesis to consider the kinds of phenomena that allow ethnic fluidity to manifest. One demonstrates ‘ethnic switching’, that is, the tendency of individuals to move between groups, either oscillating over time or remain unilateral. Leach, for instance, found that the Kachins of the Kachin Hills in Burma oscillated between *gumlao* (a democratic model of political organisation) and *Shan* (an ‘autocracy’) with the majority of Kachins at any one time being located somewhere in between, termed *gumsa* (1954: 9) While economic influences predicted Kachins becoming *Shan*, the switching was also motivated by the individual’s desire to acquire prestige for him/herself and his/her family. Kachin individuals thus switch back and forth from *gumlao* to *Shan* over generations.

In another example, traditionally pagan or non-Muslim groups in Borneo *masuk melayu* (become Malay), a local phenomenon of becoming a member of the Malay group via conversion to Islam, where in the case of the Ngadju Dayaks, the switching process is unidirectional and irreversible (Miles, 1976: 142). According to Miles (1976: 147), Ngadju Dayaks in the Upper Mentaya plains in southern Borneo (Kalimantan) become Bandjarese Malays because the latter are open to outsiders and accept the former as full members of Bandjarese Malay society when they embrace Islam and conform to their ethnic values.

Another pattern supporting ethnic fluidity shows how the bond between members becomes crucial in the overall membership. By way of example, the Sama Dilaut from the eastern coast of Sabah, a group that is part of the wider Sama-Bajau grouping in the Malaysian-Philippine-Indonesian archipelago, is characterised by their gregarious, open-aggregated community (Sather, 2011: 245). Goodwill is expressed through verbal courtesies and exchanges of acknowledgements, pledges of support and promissory vows, and food sharing, particularly of fish. Sama Dilaut groups in the Philippine regions are similarly ethnically fluid and prefer to have an open-aggregated ethnic community that is characterised by fellowship and harmony among like members (Macdonald, 2011).

Macdonald's study of kinship and fellowship of the Palawan in the Philippines shows that the constant is not the group at all, but the desire for community (2011: 137). Macdonald argues that groups like the Sama Dilaut do not operate as basic societies owing to a lack of principles to do with debt and reciprocity or authority and ranking. Instead, such groups create loose arrangements of their own, for example, by substituting 'fellowship' for 'group' to account for the openness and aggregation in their

types of communities. These 'groups' or 'fellowships' operate based on precepts such as felicity and 'gregarious relatedness' when they seek to foster successful and continued interaction (2011: 35).

Yet, state-defined categories can hugely influence ethnic identity and its fluidity. In Gros's (2004) account of the political names of the Dulong or Drung in China, the Drung were elevated to Dulong as a national category under the *minzu shibie* or Nationalities Identification Project. For the Drung people, their ethnic identification as 'Dulong' made 'common sense' because of the reference to the valley they inhabit, sense of autochthony, and pride of finding a place of their own. Gros said that all of these factors contributed to the legitimisation of the Dulong category, as the Drung's status as a full-fledged *minzu* (nationality) reinforced their local identity and boosted their faith in the development and improvement of their social conditions. The Drung's response to state categorisation, argues Gros, is 'a kind of contractual acceptance, hinged on the state's promise of better integration and improved access to wealth' (2004: 292).

In recent studies on Bornean communities, the influence of official categories shows how a certain criteria or ethnic label can cause identities to lose or maintain fluidity. In the example of the Bidayuh in Sarawak, in the western part of Borneo, Chua (2007: 266) found that Malays, who influence the Malaysian category and infuse it with concepts of Malayness, are recognised by the Bidayuh as the dominant group in control of the *dunia moden* (modern world). The Bidayuh view themselves as 'fixed' by Malay leaders on the lower rungs of the ethnic ladder: some *masuk Melayu*, as it is the only official mechanism of flux available to Bidayuhs who wish to rise from their disadvantageous position in the Malaysian ethnic hierarchy.

However, Chua (2007) claims that the Bidayuh are able to avert complete transformation into a Malay identity by remaining Bidayuh in *bangsa* (ethnicity) (the official identity in their Malaysian Identity Cards), as *bangsa* is permanent and inalienable. A girl of Malay-Bidayuh parentage, according to Chua, would take off her *tudung* (head scarf worn by Muslims for propriety) when she returned for traditional festivals in the Bidayuh village, and put it on again when she left. Chua further claims that it was now easier for Muslim Bidayuh to live in Bidayuh villages, because villagers accepted that they could follow aspects of the Bidayuh 'lifestyle' (apart from eating pork) while being Kirieng (Bidayuh term for Malay) and Muslim in their own homes.

Similarly, Sillander (2004) found that the Dayak-Malay dichotomy is the result of colonial attempts to localise and separate the two groups. The association of Dayak with primitiveness, ignorance and savagery in popular discourse among government officials and urban Indonesians in Borneo and beyond, which has for a long time made many Dayaks ashamed of their ancestry and disinclined to identify as Dayak, has led to some Dayaks becoming Muslim or Christian in order to escape this stigma. Sillander notes that one factor that has promoted the process of *masuk Melayu* in Southeast Borneo is the superior status accorded to Malay over Dayak languages as a result of its resemblance to the national language (Indonesian). During the Indonesian New Order regime (1965-1998), adopting the national language as their first language became fashionable among Dayaks who wanted to be seen as *maju* (progressive).

However, Sillander claims that although the advantages of becoming Malay often outweighed those of remaining Dayak in the past, it was no longer the case. The trend to retain Dayak identity has increased and significant numbers of Dayaks who are Muslim have not given up their Dayak identity. One of the primary reasons contributing

to this involves land rights through the existence of special laws giving special tenure to societies that follow *masyarakat adat* (customary law). As such, the stereotypical portrayal of Dayaks and Malays distorts a complex and fluid ethnographic reality in which the border lines between cultures, languages and ethnicities often do not coincide with or add up to a consistent pattern (Sillander, 2004: 44).²

Another Bornean case shows how mixed identities maintain fluidity when they become—or un-become—Dayak. Oesterheld (2016: 144) found that children of mixed parentage in Samarinda, East Kalimantan have cultivated various modes of adaptation to the expectations of Dayak indigenism, for instance, in the strategic use of essentialised *suku*. According to Oesterheld, due to the lack of a significant dominant culture in the hybrid social structure of urban and sub-urban Samarinda (East Kalimantan), children of mixed parentage often maintain indeterminate *suku* identities and are sometimes regarded as Dayak Gado-Gado (‘vegetable salad Dayaks’).

Oesterheld compares two cases: in the first, informants self-identified as ‘Dayak’ but their ‘will to belong’, to become and to be a ‘Dayak’, were not matched by others’ perceptions. Lack of acceptance occurred not because of mixed ancestry but rather because the strong Catholic identity of the informants clashed with traditional ritual obligations. In the second case, informants faced dilemmas of belonging and consequently developed an unfulfilled ‘wish to belong’ as Dayak. These informants embraced Catholicism and perceived their primary markers as being Indonesian and Orang Samarinda (Samarindan) at the expense of their Chinese and Benuaq ancestry.

² Note that a ‘Malay’/ ‘Dayak’ dichotomy has never gained any real foothold in Sabah. I point this out in Chapter 3 when I discuss how Muslim Kadazans appropriate the term ‘Muslim’ to denote Malayness instead of using ‘Malay’ as a permanent ethnic label.

Oesterheld claims that as *suku* become a fixed term of reference in Kalimantan and an important vehicle for cultural and political revitalisation, the fixed character of *suku* identities in turn challenge children of mixed parentage to create their own ‘identity legends’ and situate themselves in the ethnicised ‘collage’ of urban social structure. These mixed-ancestry individuals have a strong urge to fit into an already established *suku* category, in order to validate ‘what they are’ (Oesterheld, 2016: 153).

The patterns of ethnic categorisation and description discussed above are also seen in the case of the Kadazans in Sabah. While the Kadazans’ lack of a permanent ethnic label owing to their ongoing reconstruction of ethnic labels is viewed as endangering identity (Reid, 1997), we will see that some Kadazans are now seeking to fix their identity labels, such as in the case of the Sino-Kadazans, while other mixed-identity Kadazans manipulate the use of various ethnic labels that loan certain desired identities.

Overview: The Bumiputera ethnic situation in Malaysia and in Sabah

Malaysia, a country of over 30 million people, is located in the South China Sea and is represented by a confederation of states on the Malaysian Peninsula and the states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo. In 1957, the Federated States of Malaya⁷ became independent of British colonisation and in 1963 amalgamated with Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore, which had also come under British colonisation. Like many countries in the region, Malaysia’s ethnic composition is diverse. It comprises three major ethnic groups—Malay, Chinese and Indian—with Malay, the Bumiputera (Native) group, being the largest at 65 per cent of the national population (Malaysian

Department of Statistics, 2010). Minor populations of Orang Asli (Aboriginal People) are also found among the Peninsular Malaysian population.³

In Sabah and Sarawak, the ethnic composition is more complex given the plethora of indigenous groups originating in Borneo itself and from the nearby Philippine and Indonesian islands, and other parts of Asia, and other countries. Inter-marriage has further given rise to new Malaysian groups, such as the Baba-Nyonya group, which is derived from inter-marriage between Malays and Chinese on the Malaysian Peninsula. In Sabah, Kadazans, the focus of this thesis, also identify in many different ways owing to their extensive inter-marriages with the Malay, Chinese and Dusun groups, among others.

Today, the plethora of groups with various cultural and religious backgrounds has created a distinctive multicultural society in Malaysia, and the phenomenon of inter-ethnic or mixed-ethnic marriages occurs throughout Malaysia. According to Pue and Sulaiman (2013: 270), one of the main challenges faced by inter-ethnic couples is the registration of their newborns. As the state expects Malaysians to identify with one single ethnic identity, the arguably more accurate mixed-identity ethnic label, such as Peranakan, Malay-Thai, Chindians are not recognised at the official level. Pue and Sulaiman (2013: 274) found that many progeny of inter-ethnic marriages face identity crises whereby they do not feel like they belong, whether phenotypically or culturally, to the particular ethnic category being prescribed as their official identity.

³ The number of Orang Asli population in Peninsular Malaysia is 147,412 people (0.5% of the entire population in Peninsular Malaysia) as of the year 2008. See Malaysia Department of Statistics, *Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia: Population and Housing Census of Malaysia* (2008).

The subject of ethnic identification in Malaysia is always shadowed by the use of 'Bumiputera' as a controversial tool for ethnic classification and social organisation by the Malaysian government. The term Bumiputera means an indigenous person of Malaysia and first came into existence when the British colonial government in the then Malaya divided groups by race⁴: the Malays and aboriginal groups were classified as 'Bumiputera' in the Malay language (literal translation: 'prince of the earth') and the term 'non-Bumiputera' was used to refer to immigrant groups: the Chinese and Indians. After 1963, Malaysian authorities adopted the term 'Bumiputera' to refer to Malays, aboriginal groups in the Malay Peninsula as well as indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak. Today, the term 'Bumiputera' denotes their formal indigenous status and 'Bumiputera' is used widely in government literature and in censuses. As indicated in the following paragraphs, 'Bumiputera' as a term has come to be further legalised through the invention of policies and rights, which serve only the so-called Bumiputera groups.

Bumiputera is a controversial label among Malaysians because the government continues to deploy the colonial race construct to advance 'Natives' over other groups. The Malaysian Constitution guarantees a 'quota of entry' for Bumiputera to civil service jobs, public scholarships and education. In Malaysia's 1971 New Economic Policy (NEP) and subsequent economic policies, a wealth distribution quota system determined that the share of economic wealth be increased to 30% for Bumiputeras, 40 per cent for Other Malaysians and 30 per cent for Foreigners (Funston, 2001: 168). The Malaysian government also created a national ideology, the Rukunegara (National Principles), which indemnifies 'the Malays and other Natives' against future challenges

⁴ Note that the British colonial government used 'race' to delineate primarily indigenous from non-indigenous populations. The British colonial rulers in Sabah also tended to distinguish between pagan and Muslim indigenes (see Singh 2000: 6-9). In the Malay Peninsula, according to Hirschman (1986: 348), 'race' as an ideology and a political-economic framework resulted in the Malays' lack of participation in wage earning and entrepreneurship.

to Native rights (Means, 1991: 12). Further, the Sedition Ordinance was amended to protect Bumiputera rights by making it illegal to question, 'any matter, right, status, position, privilege, sovereignty or prerogative' of the Bumiputera (Means, 1991: 14).

As a direct result of Bumiputera-friendly policies, the socio-economic status of Bumiputeras has vastly improved. Bumiputera participation in business increased from 13 per cent to 28 per cent over a 20-year period in the 1980s and 1990s (Milne & Mauzy 1999: 62) while participation in the professions increased five-fold between 1991 and 2000 (Funston, 2001: 193). Poverty among Bumiputeras reduced dramatically from 64.8 per cent in 1970 to 8.3 per cent in 2004 based on the Malaysian GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Meanwhile, 80 per cent of all government jobs are typically held by Bumiputera individuals with Bumiputera entrepreneurs receiving training and credit assistance such as permits and licenses to start small-scale businesses (Milne & Mauzy 1999:56). Bumiputera students are also entitled to attend public secondary schools and universities such as the Junior Science College (established in 1966), Fully-residential Schools (established in 1970) and (Universiti) Institute Teknologi MARA. These institutions were established exclusively for Bumiputera children.

Studies also show that while Bumiputera access to resources is seen as privileged, Bumiputera wealth is being shared to a certain extent with non-Bumiputeras. For instance, non-Bumiputeras typically seek access to the Bumiputera 'wealth quota' by creating business partnerships with Bumiputera. Some non-Bumiputeras set up 'sleeping partner' businesses with Bumiputera groups whereby a Bumiputera and a non-Bumiputera businessman team up, with the former identifying as proprietor for official purposes. It is the non-Bumiputera partner who fully operates the business, while the Bumiputera is a 'sleeping partner' whose only task is to apply for the necessary license to

start the business, a license which is gained more easily 'because s/he is a Malay' (Milne & Mauzy 1999: 53). These covert Malay-Chinese business partnerships are labelled 'Ali-Baba' arrangements and are not easy to identify. They are seen by some as a disincentive for Bumiputeras to gain vital business experience for themselves (Means, 1991: 313).

However, opponents have called on the Malaysian government to revamp or scrap the Bumiputera system because of the rise of Bumiputera wealth. In 2006, a government-commissioned corporate equity study by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI), an independent Malaysian think tank, showed that Bumiputeras held shares worth 45 per cent of the Malaysian stock market,⁵ while the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange showed Bumiputera share ownership to be 36.7 per cent in 1996 (Funston, 2001). Some Malay leaders on the Malaysian Peninsula have opposed ensuing calls to revamp Bumiputera policies while some Malay leaders argue that Malays are being pressured into giving up their sovereign rights as indigenes. However, others argue that although certain Bumiputera groups may still need government assistance, Bumiputera policies on the whole must be restructured to reflect the current economy.

Opponents also want the Bumiputera system to be abolished because of the belief that the preference for Bumiputera belonging is undermining Malaysian social cohesion. While the government's overt focus on improving the livelihoods of Bumiputeras, relative to other groups, is strongly opposed by non-Bumiputeras for limiting their socio-economic potential, it is also opposed because the application of the wealth distribution quota has resulted in Bumiputeras being given preference and priority over non-Bumiputeras across many areas. From a non-Bumiputera point of view, the Bumiputera system has not only limited their socio-economic potential but also

⁵ See "ASLI Admits Report Did Not Reflect The True Picture On Equity", 2006.

fractured their sense of belonging to Malaysia. Non-Bumiputeras feel slighted by Bumiputera policies that minimise their basic rights as citizens even as they experience prejudice from mainstream society. References to non-Bumiputera by some Bumiputeras as ‘migrants’ and in some pro-Malay speeches as *penumpang* (‘hitchiker’), in the Malay language, are used to reinforce the secondary position of non-Bumiputeras from the Malay viewpoint (Daniels, 2004: 227-8). The term ‘second-class citizens’ has also surfaced to describe the place of non-Bumiputera in Malaysian society.

In Sabah, Bumiputera total more than 60 per cent of the population (total: 3.2 million) owing to the predominance of indigenous groups. In the colonial period, Sabah’s indigenous groups were recognised as ‘Sabah Native’ and the Sabah government continues to maintain this status, as it is related to Native Title (Native land), which can only be held by Sabah Natives. The Malaysian government has recognised Sabah Natives as Bumiputera, and Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputeras are categorised as ‘Bumiputera Malay’ and ‘Bumiputera Other’ in the census.

However, full recognition of mixed Sabah Natives, who are descendants of Natives and Chinese, does not exist at the federal level even though they are recognised as ‘Sabah Native’ and issued with a Sijil Anak Negeri (SAN) (Certificate of Native) since the colonial period. The differing treatment of Sino-Natives federally has meant that Sino-Natives may only have access to Bumiputera programs at the local level. To ensure that the authorities concerned recognise Sino-Natives as belonging to the indigenous group and not the Chinese one, many Sino-Natives such as the Sino-Kadazans are willing to abandon their Chinese surnames and their identity as ‘Chinese’. These individuals, as described later in the thesis, prefer to be ‘Kadazan’ and to use their Kadazan names.

Exacerbating the problems for Sino-Natives are migrants and illegal immigrants (Pendatang Tanpa Izin or 'PTI') who were found to be in possession of SANs, among other documents, enabling false identity as Sabah Natives and therefore as Bumiputera. The Sabah government terminated the SAN provision in the 1980s leaving Sino-Natives thereafter without a means to prove their Sabah Native status. The large presence of PTIs in Sabah has further impacted the ethnic labels and identity of Sabahans, as PTIs share many physical and cultural similarities to local Sabahans. PTIs are able to blend into Sabahan society easily given that the name, ethnic group and/or religion of the individual are the only details required by the authorities before access is given to Bumiputera economic incentives and programs. Based on the 2010 Sabah census, PTIs, who are largely believed to come from the Philippines and Indonesia, now make up close to 30 per cent of all Sabahans (see Table 1 in the following chapter).

PTIs further impact the security and economy of Sabah as well as its sovereignty. Prior to British rule, Sabah was under the influence of the Sultan of Sulu in the 18th century and now the revived Suluk kingdom is seeking a claim on Sabah. Native-born Sabahans fear that Suluk nationalists are among the scores of Suluk PTIs in Sabah. However, the Sabahan economy is heavily dependent on foreign labour, including PTI labour.

Stakeholders in the palm oil and infrastructure industries in Sabah protest the call to expatriate PTIs fearing that the Sabahan economy would collapse. Sabah is the largest producer of palm oil in Malaysia to date at 33 per cent of the nation's palm oil export; after Indonesia, Malaysia is the world's second largest exporter of palm oil at 40.9 per cent of total world production.⁶

⁶ See Sabah Palm Oil Industry (POIC) website for statistics – <http://www.poic.com.my>.

Meanwhile, PTIs are heavily implicated in the politics between Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputeras. Given that many PTIs are Muslims from the Islamic regions in the Philippines and Indonesia, they are believed to vote, albeit illegally, to aid Muslim Bumiputera leaders and groups in winning state elections. This is a great concern for non-Muslim Bumiputeras, especially Kadazandusuns whose leaders are represented in the state government. The current Sabahan government now faces growing opposition from local Sabahan groups and political parties owing to Sabah's precarious sovereignty and PTI situation. On the rise are various pro-sovereignty movements, which seek the annexation of Sabah from Malaysia. Overall the political situation in Sabah is seen as weak and lacking in autonomy due to the Sabah government's pro-federal stance, which supports the leadership of Peninsula Malays.

The Kadazans' ethnic situation

The Kadazans are one of the most politically active groups in Sabah and the subject matter of ethnic identity, especially between Kadazans and Dusuns, is linked to their political activism. Prior to Independence, Kadazans and Dusuns had attempted nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s but failed to position themselves as 'the definitive people' of Sabah (Roff, 1969; Reid, 2011). Reid (2011: 187) states that Kadazans and Dusuns are a 'lateforming ethnics' due to Sabah's entry to the Malaysian confederation at a point in time when the Malay nation-state had already begun developing. As a result, they 'remain outside and in tension with the Malay ethno-nationalism, which has a central place in Malaysia's state nationalist project' (Reid, 2011: 187).

Recent studies on the Kadazans show that their identities on the ground continue to be politically active and dynamic. Barlocco (2014) highlights how Kadazans identify themselves and their practices as Kadazan, Malaysian, Sabahan and *kampung* (village) at different times and under different circumstances (Barlocco, 2014: 141). For example, Kadazans use their identity as Sabahans to distinguish themselves from the people from Semenanjung Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia), and when they discuss the issue of illegal immigration. Kadazan and Dusun identities are further explored in their engagement of tourist spaces where they identify as being Sabahan and Bornean (Gingging, 2012).

While the studies above are concerned mainly with the political identity of the Kadazandusuns as minorities, what is missing in the literature on the Kadazans today is how Kadazans relate to their identity through the plethora of ethnic labels given to them owing to intermarriage, change of religion, desire for a business identity, or a political identity, among other reasons. For instance, Kadazans have intermarried extensively with the Chinese group in the past, as such, some Kadazans are categorised as Non-Bumiputeras. Similarly, some Kadazans do convert to Islam and yet, it is unclear as to how this conversion impacts upon their ethnic identity, that is, whether Muslim Kadazans seek to reidentify as Malay, remain Kadazan, or switch between the Malay and Kadazan labels. Further, with Sino-Kadazan (descendants of Chinese-Kadazan unions) sentiment on the rise, it has yet to be properly studied whether Sino-Kadazans then now choose to identify as Sino-Kadazan.

The current literature on the Kadazans points mainly to how Kadazan identity conflates with Dusun identity. However, the complexity within the Kadazan-Dusun relationship has not been properly understood to know and understand how Kadazans and Dusuns relate to their labels, especially given the multiple shared categories and relabelling

exercises. In the colonial period, both Dusun and Kadazan groups were at first classified as 'Dusun' with the category 'Kadazan' appearing at the end of the colonial period. This resulted in the Kadazans' identity being seen as intertwined with that of the Dusuns, as some Kadazans were officially designated as 'Dusun'. The identity of Kadazans and Dusuns became increasingly complex when Kadazan leaders promoted the Kadazan label to Dusuns, Muruts and other predominantly non-Muslim indigenes in Sabah. At the end of the colonial period, in anticipation of the Malaysian confederation, Kadazan leaders sought to elevate the Kadazan label over Dusun because the term Kadazan was seen to connote modernity. While many Dusun leaders rejected the label switching, other Dusuns and other indigenes identified as Kadazan.

In 1997, Kadazan and Dusun leaders compromised on a shared label in Kadazandusun. The category 'Kadazandusun' then replaced the Kadazan and Dusun categories in the census and in other administrative contexts. However, many Kadazans and Dusuns protested against the Kadazandusun label. Stephen (2000: 20-21) criticised the confusing practice of label reconstruction when some Kadazan and Dusun leaders sought to further relabel 'Kadazandusun' as 'KadazandusunMurut' in order to be more inclusive to Muruts, who are predominantly non-Muslim indigenes and strongly aligned with Kadazandusun leaders in government.

Given the multiple categorisations in censuses, Reid (1997: 120) questions the identity of Kadazans and Dusuns when he asks, 'Going back through three previous censuses, all were called Pribumis (indigenous people) in 1980, all were called Kadazans in 1970, and all were called Dusuns in 1960 and all previous censuses. Who, we might ask, do *they* [emphasis Reid] think they [Kadazans and Dusuns] are?' The study of Kadazans relationship to their ethnic labels thus continue to be needed in order to understand

why, for instance, do many Kadazans continue to identify against Dusuns, and vice-versa, when both are now formally recognised as Kadazandusun. Also, the interplay between labels and identities among the Kadazans is important to know and understand if we are to understand the complexity of ethnic identification among the Kadazans. Kadazans may self-identify as Kadazan but it cannot be assumed, with which category a Kadazan will identify: as Dusun, Kadazan, Kadazandusun, Malay or Chinese, or any other ethnic label.

Fieldwork

For this research, I undertook fieldwork over a seventeen-month period in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, between July 2010 and November 2011. My primary fieldwork site of Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah, contains several enclaves populated predominantly by Kadazandusun people. I focussed on Penampang, an enclave associated with Kadazans southeast of the city spanning 289,988 sq. kilometres (178,948 sq. miles). The locations of Kota Kinabalu and Penampang are shown in Map 2 on the following page. Penampang is flanked by the districts of Tuaran, Tambunan and Papar, where Kadazandusuns also make up a large proportion of the population.



Map 2: Penampang, Sabah

Penampang is a densely populated and highly urbanised area and has one of the largest populations (125,913) outside of Kota Kinabalu proper (462,963) on the west coast (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2010). 35 per cent of residents in Penampang fall into the Kadazandusun category, inclusive of Kadazans and Dusuns, with the remaining proportions (in order of size in percentages) belonging under these census categories: Chinese (23%), PTI (16.5%), Other Indigenous (10.5%), Bajau (7.5%), Malay (4.5%), Murut (1%), Other (1.5%) and Indians (0.5%).⁷

⁷ See Malaysian Department of Statistics (2000).

Note that the number of PTIs in Penampang is higher if compared to other adjacent districts. There are 20,854 PTIs in Penampang compared to 112,145 PTIs in Kota Kinabalu. In Papar there are 21,500 PTIs recorded in year 2010; in Tuaran and Tambunan, there are 5,243 and 2,137 PTIs, respectively. There are 125,913 people in Papar while Tuaran and Tambunan are populated by 105,435 and 36,297 people, respectively.

Most Kadazans and Dusuns in Penampang are Christians belonging to the Catholic Church. The strong influence of Catholic missionising in Penampang since the late 1880s saw many Kadazans and Dusuns become Catholics by WWII (Rooney, 1981). Some Kadazans and Dusuns continue to adhere to traditional animistic beliefs and consult with *bobohizan*, the Kadazan ritual priestess (Tongkul, 2000). Some also hold on to beliefs centering on the idea of karma, luck, *pantang* (taboo) and fatalism, among others. Typically, Kadazans on the coast and plains become Muslim through intermarriage with the Bajau (Philippine origin) group that live along the Penampang coastline; while intermarriages with the Chinese show some Kadazans converting to Buddhism or Taoism under strong Chinese influence.

As Catholic missions occurred mainly at the coastal plains areas in Penampang as opposed to hill areas, more Kadazans than Dusuns became exposed to Westernising influences and formal education offered by the Catholic Church. This has resulted in Kadazans being seen as relatively more educated, more modern and more Westernised in comparison to Dusuns (Reid, 2011). This has also seen to rice-planting being no longer the main occupation of the Kadazans as well as an erosion of traditional Kadazan culture, beliefs and especially language, as many Kadazans seek a multilingual and cosmopolitan identity. One of the key events that I studied is the Kaamatan, the

Kadazandusun rice harvest festival, to understand what contemporary Kadazan worldviews are like. I also paid attention to Kadazans' relationship to their language use to explore which ethnic and hence language label they endear themselves to.

Participant observation was utilised as a main method for collecting data from Kadazandusun individuals. To collect more data, I conducted an archival study at selected libraries in Sabah and at the Sabah Archives. In particular, there was much historical, cultural and legal information on the Kadazan and Kadazandusun people written by local writers in commemorative magazines, such as *buku buah-tangan dan program* ('souvenir programme books' given out or sold during festivities and events). This material was produced in conjunction with Kaamatan, for instance, and written in English as well as Malay, Kadazan, Dusun or other dialects in the Kadazandusun grouping.

Interview data provided key data for my thesis: I conducted open-ended and semi-structured interviews with selected individuals, and collected audio-visual data using a tape recorder, camera and video recorder. Discussion centred mainly on informants' perceptions of their own ethnic identity in contrast with others' ethnic identity. Informants told me of their rich inter-ethnic experiences during their childhood, their school days and at their workplaces. They also related experiences of friendships, marriage and family relations that had influenced and shaped their ideas about ethnicity. Note therefore that given informants' multilingualism, unless stated otherwise, all interview data in excerpts in the thesis represents paraphrasing in English by the author.

My informants came from the towns of Donggongon and Putatan in Penampang, and many worked and also lived in the city. Penampang is administered separately as two separate townships, Putatan and Donggongon. Donggongon is derived from the Kadazan word *tundoongon* (meaning ‘a place for a short rest’) and Putatan is named after the Putat tree (scientific name: *barringtonia asiatica*). Putatan Town lies at the non-Muslim-Muslim boundary in contrast to the town of Donggongon, which is central to the predominantly non-Muslim areas of Penampang. Donggongon is comprised mainly of Kadazandusuns while Bajaus are dominant in Putatan Township. The Chinese lived in both towns and their influence is seen in the rise of the well-known Sino-Kadazan group.

My informants represented a good cross-section of the Kadazandusun umbrella grouping and informants included individuals who identified as Kadazan, Dusun, Sino-Kadazan, Muslim Kadazan and Kadazandusun, among others. As part of my fieldwork, I also spoke to Kadazandusun-PTI individuals, that is, PTIs who were perceived to be or identified themselves as ‘local’ through close association with Kadazandusuns via marriage, affianced status or a change in identification resulting from legal proceedings. Informants were drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and age groups: some worked in the civil service, corporate world or NGO sectors, others were school-leavers, pensioners and non-working parents.

Overall, I spoke with 75 informants. My informants’ ages ranged from late teenage to octogenarian with an equal number of female to male informants. Informants in their 40s and 50s, compared to younger informants in their 20s and 30s, were significantly more knowledgeable on current issues concerning Kadazandusun ethnic dynamics. Much older informants, aged 60 years or more, shared much local knowledge pertaining

to terms and names used in the Penampang context. It can be said that younger informants were not as familiar with the formation of the Kadazandusun group starting with the Kadazan and Dusun political amalgamation during the colonial period. Note that all care has been taken to protect the identities of all informants to preserve their anonymity. The names of informants in this thesis, therefore, represent pseudonyms.

While this thesis discusses the three major groups that the Kadazans have intermarried with—Muslims (including Malays), Chinese and Dusun—it is important to note that there are other groups that Kadazans have intermarried with that are not covered in this thesis. For instance, Kadazan-Indian individuals do exist although the size of the Indian population in Sabah is very small. Similarly, there are Kadazans who have intermarried with foreigners such as *orang putih* ('white person': Westerners/Caucasians) and South Koreans, a growing population in Sabah. These and other examples show that there are still cases of mixed Kadazan identity to be studied in order to round out our portrayal of Kadazan ethnic identity.

Thesis Structure

In Chapter 2, I provide a background on Sabah highlighting the various ethnic groups and their classification according to Sabah Native and Bumiputera, the two official Native categories, and the demographical changes in Sabah owing to the PTIs. I argue that PTIs not only impact on the current ethnic classification of Sabahans but influence the politics between Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputera, and the Sabahan society overall.

In Chapter 3, I begin exploring the Kadazans' relationship to major groups and discuss the Kadazans' views towards Islam and the Malay label. Many Kadazans find that they must negotiate their identity in the face of increasing Malayanisation. Despite it being advantageous for socio-economic and political potential if one were a Muslim, non-Muslim Kadazans typically seek to avoid Islamic and Malayanisation influences to avoid becoming subsumed under the Malay identity.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the Kadazans' relationship to the Chinese and the identity variation among so-called Sino-Kadazans. I show how there are many motivations for Sino-Kadazans' desire to identify as Kadazan or Chinese. A desire for the Sabah Native and Bumiputera statuses may prompt Sino-Kadazans to switch from Chinese to Kadazan. However, the Sino-Kadazan movement has risen, where there is a desire to identify solely as Sino-Kadazan.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the Kadazans' relationship to Dusuns and explore their intertwined identities and to narrate the ambiguity and ambivalence involved in deploying Kadazan identity in relation to Dusuns. Using Penampang, my fieldwork site, I explore how the Kadazan and Dusun labels are both used by Kadazans and Dusuns. Some Kadazans seek to distinguish themselves socially from the Dusun by using derogatory symbols but many are now seeking to re-Kadazanise through language. However, Kadazans lack contrast with Dusuns: many are not practising their language and/or using the Kadazan label.

In Chapter 6, I discuss the Kadazandusun identity from a Kadazan perspective to show Kadazan responses to the broader grouping label in Kadazandusun. Leaders may have deconstructed the pre-existing Kadazan and Dusun categories to create a cohesive Kadazandusun grouping. Yet, during the official state-level *Kaamatan*, a rice harvest festival in Sabah, a single cultural identity is not apparent. Instead, a group of Kadazans have rejected the Kadazandusun label and the Kadazandusun language. I end my thesis in Chapter 7 with a summary of the points made and a conclusion with remarks on possible areas for future study identified through this research.

Note on special terms and “PTI”

Various terms are used in this thesis to refer to indigenous and migrant belonging. It is important that the reader distinguish between, on the one hand, formal categories that are constructed and used by the authorities and, on the other hand, categories on the ground that are used by the Sabahans themselves. For instance, ‘Bumiputera’ and ‘Sabah Native’ refer specifically to Malaysian and Sabahan government constructs. ‘Aboriginal People’ is also an official term in Malaysia that is used specifically for indigenes in the Malaysian Peninsula that belong to ‘Orang Asli’ groups, but is not salient in Sabah. Instead, the Malay term ‘Orang Asal’, which means ‘original inhabitant’, is popularly used among Sabahan (and other Malaysian) non-Muslim indigenes. While this term and the term ‘Indigenous People’ may be used in Sabah specifically by indigenes with Bornean roots to highlight their claim as the primary indigenous populace, these are not typically considered official terms and categories by the authorities concerned. For the purpose of this thesis and to prevent confusion with the reader, note that I use ‘indigenes’ to mean ‘original inhabitants’ to refer to those groups originating from the island of Borneo.

As for the term 'Pendatang Tanpa Izin' or PTI, note that this term is also referred to elsewhere by the authorities as 'Pendatang Asing Tanpa Izin' or PATI; and/or as 'non-citizen' in census. Some scholars now advocate the use of the term 'irregular migrant' as opposed to 'illegal migrant' to highlight the fact that some ethnic groups in Sabah, such as the Bajau Laut, have yet to be granted Malaysian citizenship despite being part of the local population (Acciaoli et al, 2017). Distinctions are also being made upon street children in Sabah as being stateless rather than illegal; street kids are often regarded with suspicion by locals and local authorities for being part of the PTIs (Allerton, 2017).

However, the reader should note, that while PTIs may be viewed as 'stateless' persons with restricted access to Malaysian rights such as voting and social services, and further as 'persons temporarily residing in Sabah without Malaysian citizenship', I use the term PTI in this thesis to mean illegal immigrant, unless stated otherwise. I do this because this is how the Kadazans, the subject of my thesis, mainly use the term.

Chapter 2: About Sabah—Background

Sabah is at the northern end of the island of Borneo in the South China Sea. Adjacent to Brunei and Sarawak in the southwest, Sabah borders Indonesian Kalimantan and the Philippines in the southeast and northeast, respectively. In the past, Sabah came under the influence of the Sultanate of Brunei, a vassal of the Muslim empire in the Malay Archipelago, which had its capital in Malacca on the Malayan Peninsula. By the 16th century, the Brunei Empire had extended to all of Borneo Island and to the Philippine islands in the southern island region of Sulu. The Brunei Empire began to decline in the 17th century because of rivalry among its royalty. In return for his assistance in a royal war, the Sultan of Brunei gave Sabah to the Sultan of Sulu of the southern Philippine islands, a blood relative (Human Relations Area Files, 1956). The Sultan of Sulu then began to deal with the British foreseeing that their presence would help to balance the Spanish and Dutch monopolies in the Malay Archipelago.⁸

Sabah subsequently came under extensive British influence in the late 1800s. The British opened a trading post in the northern area of Kudat but constant raiding from pirates forced the British to move their capital to Sandakan on the east coast. Then in 1881, the British set up another post in the southwest of Sabah under the name, British North Borneo Provisional Association Ltd. The American Trading Company had previously leased the southern part of Sabah in 1875 but failed to gain support from the Sultan of Brunei to legitimise its claims (Tregonning, 1965: 4–10). The American, Torrey, and his partners, then sold their leasehold to the Austrian consul in Hong Kong, Baron von Overbeck, who in turn sold his leasehold to the English Dent brothers (Human Relations Area Files, 1956; Tregonning, 1965).

⁸ See also Singh (2000).

In 1881, the British government formally authorised the British North Borneo Company (then known as North Borneo Chartered Company (NBCC)) and incorporated it by Royal Charter. In 1882, all British outposts in Sabah formally came under the British Crown's Royal Charter and were consolidated as the British North Borneo Chartered Company (BNBCC). In 1888, the Sultanate of Brunei sought the protection of Britain and became a British protectorate. Sabah became a British Crown Colony in 1946 after World War II and became known as North Borneo (Padasian, 1981). Of British colonies in the Southeast Asian region, Sabah was the last area to be colonised; Malaya and Singapore were colonised by the British in 1771 and 1819, respectively. Prior to Sarawak becoming a British colony, James Brooke and his successors ruled Sarawak from 1841 to 1941.

In 1963, Sabah became independent from Britain following the emancipation of other British colonies in the region. In the same year, Sabah joined the Malaysian confederacy comprising the independent Federated States of Malaya, which had gained independence from the British in 1957, and the states of Sarawak (independence from British rule in 1963) and Singapore (independence from British rule in 1958). Singapore was expelled from the confederacy in 1965. Due to their geography, Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo is often colloquially viewed as being 'East Malaysia' to 'West Malaysia' comprising the rest of the Malaysian states on the Malaysian Peninsula, which is also collectively called 'Peninsular Malaysia'.⁹

⁹ Locally, the term 'Peninsula' and *semenanjung* (peninsula) in the Malay language are often used by Sabahans when referring to persons hailing from Peninsular Malaysia irrespective of the state they come from. Note therefore that in this thesis, I refer to Malays from Peninsular Malaysia as 'Peninsula Malays' to distinguish them from Malays from Sabah and elsewhere.

The Sabahan population has grown exponentially over time owing to migrant populations. In 1960, the Sabah state population was 929,999 and the Dusun (Kadazandusun) grouping was the largest group at 32 per cent of the state population. The Chinese group was the second largest at 23 per cent, followed by the Other Indigenous group at 17.5 per cent; the Bajau group at 13.1 per cent; 'Other' at 9.5 per cent; and the Murut group at 4.9 per cent.¹⁰ After 1963, the following census categories were added: 'Malay' (first appearing in the 1970 census),¹¹ 'PTI' (first appearing in the 2000 census), and 'Indian' (first appearing in the 2010 census). Otherwise, all other categories aforementioned have persisted unchanged (with the exception of label changes to Dusun) since the time of the colonial census prior to 1963.

There are currently around 3.2 million people in Sabah (2010 census).¹² Under the Malaysian census, Sabahans are officially grouped in terms of nine ethnic categories: Bajau, Chinese, Indian, Kadazandusun, Malay, Murut, Other Indigenous, Others & PTI (Pendatang Tanpa Izin), translated as 'undocumented arrival' or locally as 'illegal immigrant'. Note that PTIs now comprise the largest grouping in Sabah at close to 30 per cent followed by the Other Indigenous grouping at slightly over 20 per cent. Details of the Sabahan population, outlining the size of each ethnic group, are indicated in Table 1.

¹⁰ Sources: Lim (2008: 48) citing census data from the 1961 British North Borneo census and 1979 Sabah Government statistics; 2000 Sabah Government Statistics.

¹¹ The term 'Malay' was not used in census data prior to 1970. It can be assumed that the Bajau grouping referred to both Bajau and Malay groups at that time.

¹² See Malaysian Department of Statistics (2000).

Table 1: Sabah population in 2010 by ethnic group and size (percentage)¹³

| Name of group | Number of population | Percentage (+/-) |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| PTI | 889,779 | 27.7% |
| Other Indigenous | 659,856 | 20.5% |
| Kadazandusun | 568,575 | 17.7% |
| Bajau | 450,279 | 14% |
| Chinese | 295,674 | 9.2% |
| Malay | 184,197 | 5.7% |
| Murut | 102,393 | 3.2% |
| Other | 48,527 | 1.5% |
| Indian | 7,453 | 0.2% |
| Total population: | 3,206,742 | |

Sabah's economy depends heavily on migrant and PTI labour. In the 1920s, Chinese labourers worked in the timber and rubber industries. By 1950, rubber exports were 82 per cent of the Sabahan revenue and more Chinese labourers were recruited. The British government also recruited Cocos Islanders, Filipinos (from the northern Philippines Luzon province) and Javanese (Human Relations Area Files, 1956: 166) as well as Bugis migrants from Sulawesi (Ito, 2002; Ito, 2004). Thus, at the time, 56 per cent of those employed in the estates and industries were from indigenous populations, while 26.5 per cent were Chinese, 7.5 per cent were Javanese and 10 per cent were Others (Human Relations Area Files, 1956: 166).¹⁴

¹³ Source: Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics, Malaysia Department of Statistics (2010).

¹⁴ Note that the colonial government had also recruited Sikhs from India to form the constabulary (Singh, 2000: 158-9).

After 1963, timber exports and the production of palm oil and (petroleum) crude oil began to make significant changes to the economy of Sabah. In the year of Independence in 1963, timber exports made up 82 per cent of Sabah's commodity production, replacing rubber as the dominant export industry (Pang 1988: 105) but in 2008, the Sabah government reported that rubber and timber exports only contributed 1.2 per cent and 4.3 per cent, respectively, while the tourism industry earned close to a billion dollars (RM 2.875 billion) in 2006.¹⁵ In 2010, Sabah's major exports were mainly palm oil (including palm kernel oil) and crude petroleum at 39.4 per cent and 35.4 per cent, respectively, of the total exports of RM 43.61 billion or close to 15 billion Australian dollars (Sabah Government Statistics, 2010: xxiii).

The boom in the palm oil industry has meant a greater demand for labour, which attracted migrant labourers, both legal and illegal, to work in the estates and industries in Sabah. It is estimated that at the present time, for the palm oil plantations alone, at least 180,000 workers are needed on the basis of one worker per 13 acres of plantation. This high number of labourers is necessary because the acreage for plantations increased almost 50 times from 50,000 acres in 1963 to 2.3 million acres in 2002. It should be noted that foreign workers comprise the primary recruits by palm oil estate owners, since local workers have tended to shun the manual tasks of pruning and harvesting, the bulk of the work required, in favour of tasks within the refinery or the lighter tasks of weeding and fertilising (Gatidis, 2004). The ratio of local to foreign workers is 30:70, with only around 20 per cent of foreign workers (or one out of five) holding legal work permits. The importation of foreign labour to work in the estates and industries has vast implications for contemporary Sabahan society, as PTIs are heavily implicated in obtaining identity documents illicitly.

¹⁵ See Sabah Tourism Board, Visitor Arrivals and International Visitor Profiles Statistics.

Sabah's ethnic groups and ethnic classification

From an anthropological point of view, Sabahans can be divided into three different groups based on their indigenous Bornean status. Appell and Harrison (1969) reported that groups of Bornean stock are 'indigenous' and, in the census, this typically refers to groups belonging under Other Indigenous, Kadazandusun and Murut. Almost 50 per cent of these Bornean Sabah indigenes are identified as 'Other Indigenous' and more than 40 per cent are identified as 'Kadazandusun' while the remainder are considered to be part of the Murut grouping. Kadazandusuns and Muruts are traditionally pagan or predominantly non-Muslim (Christian, animist, Buddhist or other) in their beliefs and are comprised primarily of inland agricultural groups throughout Sabah.

Kadazandusuns and Muruts are agrarian by tradition and practice swidden and wet-rice cultivation. Encouraged in the past by the British government, Kadazandusuns and Muruts began to settle and farm, or work for wages in the agricultural estates and in industry. In terms of governance, Native chiefs, together with village headmen and elders, traditionally lead the Kadazandusuns and Muruts. Decision-making is based on a 'consensus-style' leadership.¹⁶ Apart from their political alliances, Kadazandusun and Murut leaders rely on ethnolinguistic surveys as well as other socio-cultural evidence to claim close ethnic relations to the groups in their areas.

Other indigenous groups in Sabah that do not claim to be ethnically Kadazandusun or Murut tend to be categorised by the authorities under the 'Other Indigenous' grouping. Note that by Independence in 1963, 80 per cent of those under the Other Indigenous

¹⁶ The 'consensus-style' decision-making involves deliberations made between chiefs, headmen and elders at the village and area levels prior to a consensus being proclaimed. See further Lim (2008: 30–1), Tongkul (2002) and Lasimbang & Miller (1990).

grouping were Muslims owing to extensive intermarriage with Muslim groups.¹⁷ For instance, among the Paitan grouping towards the central northeastern parts of Sabah, those who are Muslims self-identify as Sungai as they are descendants of intermarriage between Paitan (Other Indigenous) (Singh, 2000: 15-6) and Tausug/Suluk (classified under the Bajau category in census). Similarly, the Idaan grouping in Lahad Datu town and district on the east coast of Sabah are represented mainly by Begak (Muslim) and Idaan (non-Muslim) people (Harrisson & Harrisson, 1971; Gourdsward, 2005).

Muslim groups, which originate from elsewhere in the wider Malay Archipelago, such as the Bajau and Malay groups, are viewed as separate from the Bornean Sabahan indigenous groups (Appell & Harrison 1969). The Bajau grouping in Sabah is divided culturally and linguistically into two major groups, that is, West Coast Bajau and East Coast Bajau, with the latter being more closely related to Southern Sama in the southern Philippines than to West Coast Bajau (Sather, 1997). The Malay grouping typically refers to groups like the Bugis from the Indonesian islands, the Malays from the Malaysian Peninsula, and Malays or 'Brunei' from the adjacent country of Brunei. Today, the Bajau and Malay groupings are predominantly found along the coasts of Sabah and in all major towns.

The Bajaus and Malays are wholly viewed by religious authorities as being Muslims, where Muslims in the past were collectively referred to as Mohammedans (Rutter 1929). In contrast to the agricultural pursuits of Sabahan indigenes, seafaring is the primary and traditional occupation of the Bajaus. For instance, the Bajaus are renowned for collecting and trading items such as shark fin, dried fish, pearls, turtle eggs, mother-of-pearl, *trepanng* (sea cucumber, holothurian or *bêche-de-mer*) and more (Sather 1997: 13). The

¹⁷ Based on census data from the government of British North Borneo (1961), Sabah government (1979) and Sabah Statistics (2000). See also Lim (2008: 48).

Bajau and Malay groups became full-time fishermen and settled on Sabah's coastal fringes (Rutter 1929: 26–27; Human Relations Area Files 13–14). The Bajaus and Malays are hierarchically organised according to tradition. The leaders of these groups are descendants of military leaders and cohorts of the past Suluk and Bruneian royalty. Some are titled *datu* (a Malay title of nobility and ruler) and *pangeran* (a Brunei term).

Note that while 'Bajau' and 'Malay' are identities that are transnational in the Malay-Philippine-Indonesian archipelago, these terms imply certain national origins when read in Sabah. The term 'Bajau' implies broadly Philippine descent, and is commonly used in Sabah as an exonym; while the alternate ethnic name 'Sama' when used as a self-referent indicates a Bajau interlocutor's recognition of other Bajau people in their midst (Stephen 2000: 2). Meanwhile, 'Malay' as an identity label in Sabah typically refers to groups like the Bugis from the Indonesian islands, the Malays from the Malaysian Peninsula, and Brunei Malays from the adjacent territory of Brunei.

In the census, non-Bornean groups like the Chinese represent another population type in Sabah. Chinese presence in Sabah has been dated back to the spice trade era: an old Chinese settlement in the Kinabatangan area (central and east Sabah) was excavated along with Chinese ceramics from the Sung dynasty (960-1280) (Rutter, 1929: 8; Human Relations Area Files, 1956). In the early 1900s, Chinese were recruited *en masse* by the British to fill labour shortages in the estates and industries; the Hakka and Cantonese comprised the two largest Chinese groups from which labourers were sourced (Wong 2005). The Chinese are traditionally led by *towkays* (Chinese for head of a household or business (Lee, 1976: 1) and a Chinese consulate in 1916 was influential in establishing the Chinese in Sabah (Wong, 2005). The Chinese mainly reside in the city and town areas, as they primarily engage in business and entrepreneurship.

By comparison, the population of Indians is small in Sabah and there is little academic documentation about them. An organisation called ‘Sabah Indian Association’ (SIA) looks after their social and welfare needs. The predecessor of the SIA, ‘The Indian Association of North Borneo’, was established in 1947.¹⁸ Note that the census category ‘Other’ typically refers to any other non-Bornean group apart from the Chinese and Indian. For instance, there is a sizeable Korean community in Sabah with Korean expatriates working in the booming engineering, oil (petroleum) and gas sectors.¹⁹ Migrants in Sabah come from elsewhere in the Asian region including Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Japan. There are also Westerners that reside in Sabah and marry with locals.

The close proximity of Sabah to the Philippines and Indonesia has given rise to the contemporary issue of PTIs. Note that the term ‘PTI’ first became prominent after 1989 when the Sabahan government began to distinguish economic and political refugees and heavily restrict immigration into Sabah. Among Sabahans, a distinction is made between those migrants who are viewed as coming legally and those viewed as having illegally entered Sabah. The latter category includes asylum seekers who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s fleeing civil war in the Philippines and were subsequently absorbed into Sabahan society, becoming Malaysian citizens. They and their descendants are generally not considered as PTI. Thus, in a technical sense, ‘PTI’ refers explicitly to those migrants who, at the time of being apprehended by the authorities, do not possess proper identification documents such as valid visas or work permits.

¹⁸ See Sabah Indian Association (SIA) (Facebook page).

¹⁹ See “Brisk business at Korea Fair”, 2009.

In terms of cultural similarity to the local population, most Filipino and Indonesian migrants, whether PTIs or not, are Muslim and tend to share cultural and physical similarities with the local Bajaus and Malays. Many migrants may therefore adopt the Bajau or Malay labels as reflective of their new identities in Sabah while still upholding their affiliation to their respective cultural groups. As mentioned in earlier paragraphs, the terms 'Bajau' and 'Malay' presently include indeterminate Malaysian, Filipino and Indonesian groups of Muslim background. However, as some Filipinos who came to Sabah prior to Independence under the British government's labourer scheme were from the province of Luzon in the northern regions of the Philippines and were predominantly Christian (Catholic) (Human Relations Area Files, 1956), it is important to keep in mind that Filipino and Indonesian migrants to Sabah may also distinguish among themselves by religion.²⁰ In the current period most migrants to Sabah come from the neighbouring Philippines and Indonesia with Filipinos making up 40 per cent of all foreign nationals in Sabah in year 2000 (Peters, 2005: 141).

While intermarriages are the norm in Sabah, occurring four times more than the Malaysian average (Pue & Sulaiman, 2013), claiming ethnic membership to more than one group is viewed as a problem in the eyes of the Malaysian government agencies, such as the National Registration Department (NRD). Groups in Sabah, and in Malaysia in general, may be referred to anthropologically by their source of origin and intermarriage but for purposes of allocation of resources, the Malaysian government reads Sabahan official ethnic identities strictly in terms of 'Bumiputera' and 'Sabah Native' classificatory systems.

²⁰ Predominantly Christian, the Tator (Toraja) people from the southern parts of Sulawesi and Timorese from Flores (who are mainly Catholics) are among the many migrant groups residing in Sabah.

At the time of confederation in 1963, the interim governments of the Sabah and Sarawak states had demanded that, as a condition of their joining Malaysia, the status of Bumiputera in the Malayan states be extended to Sabah and Sarawak Natives, who would hitherto be entitled to claim 'Bumiputera' status in addition to their respective Native statuses. This became part of the Constitution, which states that in Sabah, Bumiputera status may only be awarded to those having the position and privilege of Sabah Native, which is a state-level status 'given to a citizen of Sabah who is a child of persons from any of the indigenous groups, but whose father's domicile must be in Sabah at the time of the child's birth' (The Malaysian Constitution, Article 161A 6 (b))²¹.

This has meant that since the colonial administration, the Sabah state government has recognised all Sabahan indigenes—the Malay, Bajau, Kadazandusun, Murut and Other Indigenous groups—as Sabah Natives and hence as Bumiputerans. Additionally, the Sabah government also recognised Sino-Natives—offspring of Sabah Native and Chinese parents—to have the same rights and privileges as full-blooded Sabah Natives. Sino-Natives, for instance, can access Sabah Native Title, which accords them the right to own land through inheritance or purchase Native Title from other Sabah Natives.

However, there are inconsistencies in the application of the terms 'Sabah Native' and 'Bumiputera' at the state and federal levels regarding Sino-Natives. Although Sino-Natives are recognised as Sabah Native at the state level and hence ought to have Bumiputera status, federal authorities view Sino-Natives as non-Bumiputera because of their Chinese surnames, especially if 'Chinese' is stated anywhere in their identification documents (birth certificate and/or identity card). Prior to 1963, the interim Sabah government raised the potential problem of the status of Sino Natives. According to

²¹ See Federal Constitution (2011).

Luping (1989: 29), the Sabahan inter-governmental committee, as part of the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) meeting in 1962 preceding Independence, stressed that the Native population in Sabah also included many people of mixed blood, in particular, a large number of Sino-Kadazans (through Kadazan-Chinese intermarriage).

The Sabahan interim government recommended that in the extension of the provisions of Article 153 of the Malaysian Constitution to Sabah, the King (of Malaysia) should act only upon the advice of the Sabah state government (Luping, 1980: 29; Luping, 1994: 70-72). The interim government was concerned that the 'Yang di Pertuan Agong' (King of Malaysia) and the federal cabinet might not know who the indigenous races in Sabah were and thus how to act on the matter of a Bumiputera quota system for the Natives of Sabah. However, no federal-level recognition process for Sino-Natives in Sabah was created.

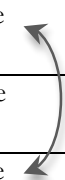
Given the above, in order to protect the ongoing rights of Sino-Natives at the local level, the Sabah state government after 1963 continued with the colonial convention of issuing a 'Sijil Anak Negeri' or SAN (Native certificate) through the Sabah Native courts to Sino-Native individuals who could claim no less than one-fourth '*anak Negeri*' or 'Native' blood (whether paternal or maternal) (Roff, 1969; Sullivan & Regis, 1981; Leong, 1982: 99). Additionally, many Sino-Natives sought to change their names to indigenous ones to ensure that they could access their Bumiputera rights at the federal level. Note that federal government officials typically scan the Malaysian Identity Card (IC) of Sabahans to determine whether their identities (as seen in their names and the names of their ethnic groups) are those of Bumiputera groups.

However, the SAN provision was jeopardised in the 1980s, when Sabahan authorities found that some pure Chinese individuals had falsified information and bribed government officials in order to obtain SANs, enabling them to buy Native land and access Bumiputera incentive programs. Many PTIs had also used SANs to establish local and/or fake identities, prompting the Sabah government to shut down its SAN services in 1985. This has resulted in some Sino-Natives seeking paperwork from various Sabahan government agencies, such as their local district offices, to help verify, for instance, their ties to a Native predecessor. The documentation allows them some leverage when attempting to access Sabah Native and Bumiputera programs.

The lack of proper Sabah Native recognition has created fundamental problems for many Sino-Natives. Those without such recognition are typically barred by the state from inheriting ancestral Native Title and gaining access to Bumiputera benefits, such as scholarships and the ‘Amanah Sabah Bumiputera’ or ASB (Bumiputera Shares Trust), a popular alternative wealth enhancement or savings scheme for Bumiputeras. In recent years, the Sabah government has been more open to calls from the public to review the nativisation process for Sino-Natives, resulting in the ‘Sino-Native’ category being formally introduced into the Sabah Native system. However, the Sino-Native category has an ambiguous status within the federal classification system: as shown in Figure 1, Sino-Natives may be classified as ‘Bumiputera Other’ or as ‘Non-Bumiputera’, depending on whether or not the particular individual has been able to demonstrate ‘nativeness’ to the federal authorities.

Fig. 1 Bumiputera vs. Sabah Native categories

| Federal (Bumiputera) | State (Sabah Native) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bumiputera Malay | Muslim Native |
| Bumiputera Other | Non-Muslim Native |
| | Sino-Native |
| Non-Bumiputera | Non-Native |
| | Sino-Native |



PTIs have a serious impact on ethnic classification in Sabah. In addition to breaches of the SAN, PTIs are heavily implicated in the racketeering of a wide range of identity documents, whether fake, forged or genuine articles, sold on the black market, namely the Malaysian Identity Card. Many PTIs claimed that they were issued proper ICs through 'Projek IC' also called 'Projek Mahathir' or 'Project M' after the ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia, an allegedly covert operation by the authorities to legitimise the identities of PTIs (Chong, 2009). According to informants, some PTIs also take advantage of mobile IC campaigns conducted by the authorities to ensure that rural Sabahans are equipped with ICs. During IC campaign periods, some PTIs stay with relatives in remote villages and adjust their lifestyle accordingly to convince government officials whose role it is to scrutinise the identity of applicants to determine localness before endorsing them for higher-level approval by their superiors.

Other ways that PTIs sourced their IC and other documents such as birth certificate are by taking the identities of dead persons, whose relatives had sold the deceased's paperwork on the black market. Informants holding these kinds of documents disclosed that they had not experienced any issues with the authorities so far and used their

‘official’ name (the name of the deceased) only rarely. Some PTI informants also mentioned that locals had adopted them in exchange for cash. The outcome of formal adoption thus enables these PTIs to legitimise their identity in Sabah.

PTIs also use other identity documents such as the ‘Kad Burung-Burung’ (literal translation: ‘Bird Card’), a document that has some clout but whose origin is contentious. Some PTIs claim that Sabah government officials issued them with the card, which bears a logo resembling a bird. Other PTIs say that they obtained these cards in the Philippines *en route* to Sabah. The Sabahan and Philippine cards in question did not however bear the same logo or design and had different serial numbers.²²

One of the more commonly used documents by PTIs is the ‘IMM13’ (a social visit pass issued for Filipino refugees in Sabah in the 1970s and 1980s), which allows the holder the right to work.²³ However, this document has since been criticised for bestowing legal identity on PTIs who are not political refugees. Chong (2009) states that ‘tens of thousands’ of IMM13 holders have received permanent residency in Malaysia and that the validity of some of these IMM13 visas is dubious. The IMM13 visa has been and continues to be abused by counterfeiters who sell them to PTIs.²⁴

Through all or any of these documents above, many genuine Sabahan Bumiputeras are concerned that PTIs’ identity documents have helped them to establish local identities that can continue to be seen as Native or Bumiputera. Equipped with their documentation, PTIs can lay claim to Sabah Native land, which is reserved for Sabah

²² See “Suluks had NRD receipts issued in Tawi-Tawi”, 2013. See also, “‘Kad Burung Burung’ issued in Philippines – witness”, 2013.

²³ See “Official blog of the Malaysian Attorney-General” for an explanation of the IMM13 (in the Malay language).

²⁴ See “Sabah Immigration cripples document forgery syndicate”, 2017.

Natives and their descendants. One of the concerns of genuine Sabahan Bumiputeras therefore is Sabah's current definition of Sabah Native that is open to interpretation. Apart from what has been articulated in the Malaysian Constitution, 'Sabah Native' in the 1952 'Definition of Native', Ordinance Cap 64 of the Sabah Laws has remained unchanged since the colonial period:

Any person who is ordinarily resident in the colony, is a member of a people indigenous to Indonesia, or the Sulu group of islands in the Philippines archipelago or the Federation of Malaya or colony of Singapore, has lived as and been a member of a native community for a continuous period of five years immediately preceding the date of his claim to be a Native, has borne a good character throughout that period and whose stay in the colony is not limited under any of the provisions of the Immigration Ordinance.²⁵

(Luping, 1989: 26)

The Sabah state government as a whole now accepts that a review of the Sabah Native term is needed to properly assess claims to 'Sabah Native' status, while some state agencies urge the reformulation 'Sabah Native' to be aligned to the Native Title (NT). The Local Government and Housing ministry in Sabah, for instance, is not inclined to support the Sabah Native review process, if it is rushed, citing the complications of NT transfer to subsequent descendants who do not qualify as 'Native' under the proposed terms.²⁶ The issue of NT transference is hotly debated because of rampant cases of NT lands being sold through trust deeds or nominees of non-Natives and via shady agreements with public listed companies and cash-rich foreigners or wealthy Chinese nationals.²⁷

²⁵ Excerpt taken from 'Special Position of the Indigenous Race', a paper prepared by the constitutional sub-committee of the Inter-Governmental Committee for Meetings prior to Independence in 1962 (see Luping, 1989).

²⁶ See "Defining 'native' to take time", 2011.

²⁷ See "Stop NT land deals via nominees", 2014.

Meanwhile, disputes between groups reveal the relation between Sabah Native and Native Title to be complex. For example, a Bajau group from Sabah's east coast town of Semporna claimed that many Bugis had gained access to NT lands meant for Bajaus in the 1980s.²⁸ The Bugis responded that they were 'Bugis Sabah', asserting that they had already been awarded SAN prior to the SAN system closing in 1982.²⁹ The Bugis group has cultural links to Sulawesi (Celebes) in Indonesia where they are believed to originate. However, the Bugis Sabah group claims that their antecedent came from pre-colonial communities on Sabah's east coast. For instance, the Bugis have been instrumental in developing the town and district of Tawau since the 1880s (Sintang, 2007).

To address the PTI problem perceived as being out of control, in 2011 a proposal to revamp the identification system in Sabah was put forward by some political leaders, notably from the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP), in response to calls from local Sabahans to prevent PTIs from blending into Sabahan society. This proposal demanded the recall of all existing Malaysian Identity Cards. The Malaysian IC would subsequently only be reissued to those Sabahans whose identity had been verified. In addition, these Sabahans would be issued with a Sabahan identity card. The SAPP gained support from 'Solidariti Tanahairku' or STAR (Homeland Solidarity) and 'Parti Cinta Sabah' or PCS (Love Sabah Party), aligning under the 'Gabungan Sabah Charter' or United Sabah Alliance. Several NGOs in support of the idea, for instance, SORAK Sabah, MOSIK (Momogun Movement for Self-Determination), United Borneo Front (UBF), 'Angkatan Perubahan Sabah' or APS (Sabah Change Force) and 'Sunduvan' (Soul), have begun independently creating 'Sabah IC' cards for their members.³⁰

²⁸ See "Newly-formed Bajau association joins calls for setting up of RCI", 2012.

²⁹ See "Bugis NGO denies any role", 2013.

³⁰ See SAPP website and SORAK facebook.

Meanwhile, at the federal level, the Malaysian government has sought to tighten security measures around the IC by developing a bio-security feature comprising thumbprint identification and microchip. The Malaysian government also approved a 'Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on the PTIs in Sabah' to be initiated in 2012. This RCI reported in 2014 that government officials were involved in issuing ICs to illegal immigrants (The 2014 RCI Report). Several officials have now been prosecuted in court. The RCI also reported an increasing burden on the healthcare system from illegal immigrants due to unpaid costs for treatment and increased births; loss of tax revenue from rampant smuggling activities (cigarettes, alcohol, fireworks, etc.); increased crime (30 per cent attributed to PTIs); and prison space and cost due to incarceration of PTIs.

However, many Sabahans lack confidence that the authorities can address the impacts of PTIs in Sabah. Major stakeholders representing Sabahan industries have spoken out against the deportation of PTIs, claiming that the economy in Sabah has always been dependent on foreign labour and has become even more dependent in recent years. Many Sabahans expressed fear that PTIs are increasing in number over time and have outnumbered actual citizens. For instance, official statistics for the year 2000 revealed that authorities either apprehended or processed some 614,824 PTIs. Studies show that only 20 per cent of foreign nationals in the same year possessed a legitimate working visa while PTIs represented 40 per cent of all foreign nationals in Sabah with children and elderly PTIs representing a further 40 per cent (Kassim, 2004: 6-7).

Protest against PTIs has led to the rise of various pro-sovereignty movements; one of the largest movements is the SSKM or Sabah Sarawak Keluar Malaysia (literal translation: 'Sabah Sarawak Leave Malaysia') (Minahan 2016). Established in 2011, a separatist group called 'Sabah dan Sarawak Keluar Malaysia' (SSKM) ('Sabah and

Sarawak (to) Leave Malaysia’) has gained massive support from the grassroots. The SSKM is affiliated to ‘Sabah Sarawak Union – United Kingdom’ (SSUK), an NGO based in England under the leaderships of Zurainee Tehek from Sarawak and Doris Jones, a Sabahan, who is seeking a consensus for the Sabahan state to leave the Malaysian confederation citing the failure of the Malaysian state to work in the best interest of the Sabahans. SSKM and SSUK are in the process of collecting petitions from its supporters in the hopes that this can be tabled at the United Nations.³¹

One of the primary concerns of separatist movements such as the above and of many Sabahans is the matter of Sabah’s sovereignty. This is because royal descendants of the Suluk Sultanate in the southern Philippines continue to persist in their claim to the territory of Sabah.³² In 2013, a royal Suluk militia attacked Sabah on its eastern front but Malaysian forces were able to stop the attack carried out by a large group of over 100 heavily armed intruders.³³ As a result of the Suluk attack, Malaysian authorities have placed Sabah’s borders in the north and east under full military control and established the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) along the border areas.³⁴ Fears that future Suluk attacks may occur are prevalent among Sabahans, who believe that Suluk loyalists can be found among the numerous Filipino migrants in Sabah.³⁵

³¹ See “Sabah Sarawak Keluar Malaysia – Sabah Sarawak Union”.

³² In the late 1800s, following the decline of the Bruneian Sultanate, the Sultanate of Sulu fell to the Spanish. After the Spanish–American war in 1898, a treaty was signed between the Sulu and the United States governments, which was an agreement to gradually cede power to the Philippine-American administration. Sulu is now part of Mindanao, an autonomous southern region of the Philippines since 1989.

³³ See the statement by Anifah Aman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia. 2014.

³⁴ See Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM). Official Website.

³⁵ See “ESSCOM seals off Sabah plantation after armed men spotted”, 2017.

With PTI misuse of identification systems in Sabah, particularly breaches in relation to the Malaysian Identity Card, the primary form of official identification, reports have shown that PTIs are recruited as ‘phantom voters’ during election periods. As phantom voters, PTIs can assume the identity of deceased citizens, for instance, as well as take the identities of ex-Malaysians, that is, those who have migrated out of Malaysia and have returned their citizenship documents (passport) to the Malaysian embassy in their new countries of residence.³⁶ Some informants said that they had gone to the polling station on Election Day only to find that their names were not on the list but had mysteriously appeared in another district, and that someone—presumed to be a PTI and allegedly paid off by crooked politicians—had already cast a vote in their name. The complicit participation by PTIs in the situation above affects relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputeras: non-Muslim Bumiputeras question their Bumiputera standing because they fear that the high proportion of PTIs who are Muslim means that they are voting as Muslim Bumiputera.

Power, politics and religion: Muslim Bumiputera and non-Muslim Bumiputera

Throughout Sabah’s political history, the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputeras is imbalanced: they have been contesting each other for leadership in the Sabah state government with Muslim Bumiputera typically being more dominant. Prior to 1963, indigenous and migrant groups in Sabah were separately governed under the British administration, where group leaders communicated the needs of their respective groups through their own governing bodies or elders. For instance, the Chinese Consulate spoke for the Chinese group and *towkays* sat in municipal council committees led by British officials to ensure that the Chinese community’s needs were met. For the

³⁶ See “What now, migrated phantom voters?”, 2008.

Native populations, leaders from Bajau, Malay (Brunei origin) and indigenous groups, such as Dusun—*datu*, *pangeran* and *orang tua*—convened in a ‘Native Council’ to negotiate directly with British officials, typically the district officer in their respective areas.³⁷ The Native Council had the financial power to administer villages and constituencies. It performed administrative tasks, such as handling the collection of taxes/levies, and managed a series of ‘Native courts’, which were incorporated into the district structure for the purpose of maintaining *adat*, that is, customary law and practices³⁸ (Lee, 1976: 10; Lim, 2008: 32; Singh, 2000).

After 1963, the first Sabah state government saw Donald Stephens, a then non-Muslim Kadazan-Japanese-British-Australian, become chief minister with Mustapha Harun, a Muslim Suluk of royal standing, as the Tuan Yang Terutama (TYT) or head of state.³⁹ To foster alliances with other non-Muslim groups, that is, Dusuns and Muruts, Donald Stephens renamed his political party, the United National Kadazan Organization (UNKO) as the United Pasok Kadazan Organization (UPKO). The term *pasok* refers to ‘indigene’. Mustapha Harun registered the United Sabah National Organization (USNO), which catered to the Muslim groups while Chinese leaders created the Sabah Chinese Association (SCA). However, prior to the 1967 state election, so that he might actively pursue politics, Mustapha Harun vacated the TYT post to become the Sabah chief minister while Donald Stephens took up the more prestigious TYT post. Stephens’

³⁷ Note that the British government turned its control of indigenous land and natural resources over to the Natives (Lim, 2008: 30), and subsequently permitted them self-rule after several incidences of Native resistance, namely the Bajau-Suluk resistance led by Mat Salleh from 1894-1903 and the Dusun-Murut resistance at Rundum led by Antanom in 1915. The Advisory Council of Native Affairs (ACNA) was then instituted in 1915 (Lim, 2008) and became the ‘Native Council’ in the 1930s (Singh, 2000).

³⁸ The *adat* in Sabah continues to be upheld by the Sabah state government. For instance, Sabah Natives can choose to marry under federal law (Marriage and Divorce Act 1976) or under customary law in their respective district (Maning, 2015: 6).

³⁹ Typically, the head of state position is apolitical. In Sabah, Penang and Sarawak, a civilian can fill the position; elsewhere in Malaysia, this position can only be filled by the sultan of the state in question.

power defused, his party, UPKO, did not win any seats in the election, and the government went to USNO and SCA. Stephens then disbanded UPKO, became a Muslim and joined USNO.

Non-Muslim Bumiputeras faced difficulty in retaining political power given the conversion of Donald Stephens and Ghani Gilong, leaders of the Kadazans and Dusuns, respectively, which further acted to promote Islam to the non-Muslim indigenous population. The conversion of Chief Bobohizan, the head of all traditional priestesses in Kuala Penyu (in the south of Sabah), also influenced conversion among non-Muslim Bumiputeras in the area (Lim, 2008; Rooney, 1981). Islamisation in Sabah saw to the state sponsorship of mass conversion ceremonies among pagan populations, specifically among non-Muslim Bumiputera groups in the rural areas. According to Lim (2008: 111), in mass conversion ceremonies, hundreds and in one case up to 2000 individuals became Muslims in a single ceremony. High-profile guests, such as the Malaysian Prime Minister, kings of Malaysia and Brunei, and visiting dignitaries from Islamic countries, attended these ceremonies.

At the time, to strengthen the Islamic base in Sabah, action was taken against any protest against Islamisation; for instance, Christian priests' visas were cancelled and they were deported (in the past, most priests in Sabah were foreigners) (Rooney, 1981). Further, in order to weaken any opposition to the state government and its policies, leaders defying the government at the time were sent to detention without trial (permissible under the Internal Security Act (ISA), a preventive detention law (Lim, 2008: 52) which was repealed in 2012 and replaced with the Security Offences Act).

The intensive Islamisation of Sabah also saw a standardisation of Islamic practices among the Muslim Bumiputera groups. Under the British government in the colonial period, institutional support for Muslims was typically denied (Lim, 2008: 33-4 citing Singh, 2000: 293). Under the government of Mustapha Harun between 1963 and 1975, government aid was given to support the missionising activities of various Islamic charities and associations (Lim, 2008: 105-10). Government-aided Islamic missions continued to increase in Sabah in the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, in the 1978 budget, 80 per cent of federal funds for religious development projects went to the 'Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah' or MUIS [Sabah Islam Affairs] with the remainder going to other religious bodies. MUIS was given responsibility for establishing Sabah's Islamic base, for example, by selecting and authorising Bajau Islamic teachers as *uẓtạẓ* and by providing *uẓtạẓ* training facilities for Muslim youth (Nagatsu, 2003).

As a result, due to Islamisation campaigns, the Muslim population in Sabah rose from 37.4 per cent in 1960 to 51 per cent in 1980. Non-Muslims typically become Muslim owing to intermarriage. Note that in Malaysia, Muslims are not allowed to marry a *kafir* (a non-Muslim, a term used chiefly by Muslims). Based on statistics, Muslim numbers are currently rising in Sabah while non-Muslim numbers are falling: in year 2000, there were 1,658,285 Muslims to 724,833 Christians, representing 64 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively, of the total population of 2.6 million people. In year 2010, in a total population of 3.2 million people, Muslim numbers rose to 2,096,153 people or 65.5 per cent in relation to Christian numbers, which were 853,726 or 26.7 per cent (Sabah Government Statistics, 2000 & 2010).

The Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputera relationship in Sabah is further affected by the presence and influence of Peninsula Malays. The IGC had agreed that Peninsula Malay officers from could fill the top government posts in Sabah, given the disparity in educational attainment between Peninsula Malay and local Bumiputera groups. In the 1960s, at the time of Sabah's transition into Malaysia, only 0.1 per cent of all Sabah Bumiputera groups had attained the 'Secondary School Certificate' compared to 3.5 per cent of the Peninsula Malay group. More recent data shows the national average of 90 per cent with Peninsula Malays' completion of basic Malaysian education at the secondary school level at 92 per cent, while the Bajau and Kadazandusun groups representing Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputera in Sabah score 79 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively. In Sabah, the Chinese group continues to be the most highly educated group with an educational attainment score of 93 per cent.⁴⁰

The entry of Peninsula Malays into the Sabahan administration saw the topmost government positions going mainly to Peninsula Malay officials while local Bumiputeras filled deputy and senior officer roles. For instance, while 60 per cent of the management and skilled posts in the civil service went to Sabahan Bumiputeras in 1975, only 45 per cent of top posts were given to Sabahan Bumiputeras (in 1978 and 1981) (Lim, 2008). Malay administrators from the Malay Peninsula thus held an average of 40-60 per cent of management and skilled posts in the civil service in the 1970 and 1980s. This represented a ratio of one Peninsula Malay Bumiputera officer to three Sabahan Bumiputera officers (the present ratio is unknown).

⁴⁰ See Malaysia Department of Statistics, Education and Social Characteristics of the Population (2000).

The influence of the federal government through Peninsula Malay presence in Sabah is became increasingly apparent in Sabah Muslim leaders' acquiescence to its power. From 1967 to 1976, the Sabah government under the leadership of Mustapha Harun became autocratic, and when oil deposits were discovered on Sabah shores, Mustapha Harun began speaking of secession from the Malaysian confederation. In response, the federal government began to support an opposition party, BERJAYA (meaning 'victorious' and standing for the official party 'Parti Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah' or the United Sabah People's Party) to topple Mustapha's government despite BERJAYA's multi-ethnic platform. From 1976-1986, BERJAYA was the ruling party under the leadership of Harris Salleh, a Suluk-Bajau-Pakistani leader.

During this period (1976-1986), Harris Salleh enabled a 'federalisation' of Sabahan government agencies: the administration of Immigration and Road and Transport were turned over to the federal government; Malay officials in top government posts were increased in the name of national integration; and the island of Labuan in the southern part of Sabah became a federal territory. USNO, under Mustapha Harun, continued to win favour among the older generation of Peninsula Malay politicians who supported the idea of an Islamic state. To improve his standing with UMNO (United Malay National Organization)⁴¹, the main Peninsula Malay political party which led and continues to lead the Malaysian coalitional government called 'Barisan Nasional' or BN ((National Front), Harris Salleh allowed the religious monitoring body, 'Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah' (MUIS), which was formed under the USNO government, to intensify its missionising. USNO was ousted in 1984 after Mustapha Harun fell out of favour with the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad.

⁴¹ Formed in 1946, UMNO is currently the ruling party in Malaysia.

In 1985, non-Muslim Bumiputera sought to gain power when Pairin Kitingan, a Christian Kadazan-Dusun leader, left BERJAYA to form Parti Bersatu Sabah or PBS [Sabah United Party]. The following year, PBS won the state election by a landslide and became part of 'Barisan Nasional' (BN). In 1990, PBS won the state election but the annual federal budget to the Sabah state was decreased, state logging exports were banned, and several key state cabinet members were accused of secessionism and detained. Pairin attempted to re-enter PBS into the BN but was unsuccessful and many PBS leaders defected to BN. In 1994, PBS won the state for the third time with a narrow majority of 25 out of 48 seats. However, all state ministers under the PBS ticket, except Pairin Kitingan and his deputy, left PBS to enter BN, thus collapsing the state assembly. The then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammad, instituted a policy of rotation of the chief minister position every two years, allowing representation from each major ethnic grouping in Sabah. In 1994, many Sabah Muslim leaders, with their followers, made the decision to enter UMNO, which also opened its membership to non-Muslim (Christian) Bumiputeras.

Peninsula Malay influence has deepened progressively over time. In 2005, the two-year rotation system was abolished. From 2005 until the present, a Muslim Bumiputera, Musa Aman, a Dusun-Pakistani leader, has held the position of Sabah chief minister. UMNO currently holds the largest majority of seats in Sabah (30 out of 60 seats). Ethnic-based political parties continue today, for example, Parti Demokratik Sabah or PDS, renamed UPKO, and associated with non-Muslim Bumiputera, and SAPP, which is associated with the Chinese. The mainstream opposition party, the 'Pakatan Rakyat' (People's Pact) led federally by Anwar Ibrahim, a well-known opposition figure, has expanded into Sabah to compete against UMNO for seats. Despite Pakatan Rakyat contesting all seats in the 2008 election, the Sabahan public voted for the current

government. According to political analysis, Sabahans are still voting for BN because they fear that if they do not, they will not be able to press the government for much-needed development and infrastructure in the state. Chin & Puyok (2010) also claimed that Sabahans lack a strong connection to Anwar Ibrahim and his Peninsula-based party.

Today, the government Opposition attributes the political situation in Sabah to the weaknesses of past governments. The issue of early Islamisation in Sabah persists as a controversial issue, as it went against the 'no official religion' policy that was included in the 20-point agreement made between the Sabah state government and the federal government in 1963 (Ongkili, 1967: 77). The topic of Islamisation is a sensitive one among many non-Muslim Bumiputeras in Sabah who feel disadvantaged in the workplace, as these do not feel that they receive the same opportunities as Muslim Bumiputeras.⁴² Some non-Muslim Bumiputeras may therefore choose to become Muslim. I address the topic of conversion to Islam in the following chapter.

The federalisation of some of Sabah's government agencies also causes debate among Sabahans. By opening up state departments to the federal government, the participation of Sabahans has also reduced in civil service positions based in Sabah but are advertised nationally. While the island of Labuan, a booming oil and gas hub, for instance, was also annexed to the federal government in 1984, which has turned it into a tax-free free trade and shopping zone and an Islamic banking hub. In short, federalisation entailed replacing the bulk of policy-making decisions at the state level with directives from the federal government.

⁴² It is important to note that the Muslim Bumiputera category is not homogenous either, and that some of the issues that concern the Kadazans also concern minority Muslim groups in Sabah. Due to a lack of space, issues specific to the Bajau and other Muslim minorities, such as assimilation as 'Malays' and loss of distinctive languages and cultural identities, are not explored in this thesis.

The effects of federalisation also involved an oil royalty issue between federal and state governments. The division of oil royalties between the state and federal governments is based on an agreement made in 1976, which resulted in Sabah's crude oil revenue surrendered to the confederation with only a 5 per cent share flowing back to Sabah. The 5 per cent royalty figure is now being contested; critics believed that a higher percentage was negotiated before the tragic death of the key negotiator, the then Chief Minister of Sabah, Donald Fuad Stephens. Critics have raised the possibility that a 20 per cent royalty was being discussed, but the death of Stephens prior to the signing of the oil royalty agreement prevented this from coming to pass.

The oil sales split between federal and state governments is further linked to the federal budget to Sabah. Many Sabahans are unhappy about infrastructural development and poverty in the state and believe that Sabah's contribution through the oil sales split is not commensurate with the yearly budget. The state of Sabah has been cited as the poorest state in Malaysia with 23 per cent of its population living below the poverty line (Hassan, 2011).

Today, there is considerable sentiment in Sabah against UMNO, stemming from a desire to return to local-based political parties. A new party called 'Parti Warisan Sabah' (Sabah Heritage Party) heavily criticises the Sabahan government on the grounds that it is made up of pro-federal government loyalists.⁴³ However, political analysts predict that Sabah will continue to be a BN state owing to the distribution of seats favouring UMNO leaders, and Muslim Bumiputeras overall.

⁴³ See "Parti Warisan Sabah is new name of Shafie-led party", 2016.

Meanwhile, the identities ‘Sabahan’ and ‘Orang Asal’ (Indigenous People) have a growing place in the lives of non-Muslim Bumiputeras indicating that many Native-born Sabahans are broadening their perception on ethnic identity. I touch on the Orang Asal identity in the penultimate chapter of this thesis when I discuss Kadazandusun in relation to Kadazan. As for the Sabahan identity, while separatists continue to heavily influence Sabahans to harden their political stance as ‘Sabahan’, some Sabahans also question whether it is possible to separate completely from PTIs. Many informants told me that due to ongoing blending with locals, it is no longer clear which migrants are PTI and which do not. A key example was given in how many migrants including PTIs have adapted to Sabahan culture and produce a crucial sign of localness by using the local language, Sabah Malay. Sabah Malay spoken with a heavy Indonesian or Filipino accent quickly identifies ‘migrant’ and signals the likelihood of being PTI. As local Bugis tend to distinguish between themselves and migrant Bugis, the latter seek to *tapok kebugisannya* (hide their Bugisness) and that ‘this was especially true for those whose “[Malay] language is really Bugis” (*kebugisan betul bahasanya*) and decidedly foreign’ (Carruthers, 2017a: 137-8; Carruthers, 2017b: 251).

The boundary between local and migrant is also blurring because locals tend to look approvingly at those migrants who learn to discern hierarchy and status within Sabahan society, and who aspire to elevate their position. In many cases, Chineseness becomes key, as the Chinese symbolise success and wealth, and both locals and migrants are deliberately ‘sinicising’ to acquire higher social status in society. Similarly, ‘Westernising’, through speaking English can override a migrant’s PTI identity through functioning as a status symbol indicating a more globalised identity and prowess. Non-English speaking Filipinos, according to some informants, are not as welcome as English-speaking Filipinos because they are often associated with poorer, provincial backgrounds.

Some other Sabahans view PTIs differently, as these may comprise their spouse and/or children or descendants, and see them as being as much a part of Sabahan society as locals. A deeper discussion with informants revealed that ascertaining the identity of Sabahans, migrant or local, can involve a wide range of references but ultimately it is the feeling of belonging to Sabah that is more important. For instance, among those who consider themselves to be Sabahan, there is the perception that the only 'real Sabahans' are those Sabahans who come from pre-Independence communities, that is, groups that existed before 1963 and before the arrival of large numbers of PTIs. Thus, immigrants who have relatively longer histories in Sabah and have acquired knowledge of the local frames of reference, especially those who have married into the pre-Independence Sabahan set have a greater claim to Sabahan identity.

Many migrants actively seek to manufacture an identity, which is considered legitimate in the eyes of locals in order to establish themselves in Sabahan society. Migrants aspire to possess legitimate paperwork, rather than fake or illegal documents, not only out of fear of capture and deportation by the authorities, who regularly conduct raids on business offices and set up road blocks, but also to demonstrate their determination not to be identified with PTIs as a group. PTIs compete with each other to appear 'more Sabahan'. Harnita, an informant of Indonesian background in her late 20s, was born in Sabah. Some of her siblings reside in Sabah along with their mother but she has a brother in Indonesia. Her father is deceased and was an itinerant worker in logging camps. Harnita speaks fluent Sabah Malay as well as English and Mandarin, and has a job with a marketing firm. At the nail salon (beauty salon) where we met, several beauticians, local Chinese and Filipino, started chatting with us while they ushered us into a private room. After a while, guessing that Harnita was a migrant, one of them casually asked her:

‘What colour is your IC?’ Harnita replied, ‘Oh no [you’re mistaken], I was born here. So, of course, it’s the blue one’. The beautician, a Filipino lady, responded: ‘Oh, wow!’ in admiration and continued, ‘I only have the red one’.

Later when Harnita spoke in Mandarin to the Chinese beautician attending her, this elicited praise again from the Filipino beautician. An IC (Malaysian Identity Card) may be blue or red and obtained from the Registrar or purchased on the black market. Red-coloured ICs indicate permanent residency status in Malaysia as opposed to the citizenship conferred by the blue IC. The colour of one’s IC is crucial for accessing government services and facilities, such as schools, hospitals, banks and other places of business. PTIs also often question one another concerning who among them were born in Sabah and who have localised names. These details, shown on ICs, enable PTIs to build up a storyline of another PTI’s Sabahan identity.

Yet, some Sabahans say that they simply cannot accept that many among them in Sabah have illegal statuses and believe that these people cannot be allowed to be Sabahan. These required evidence of even longer connection to Sabah. One of the concrete ways in which locals find out whether others around them are ‘real’ Sabahans or not is by judging their claims made to the local area. That is, many Sabahans engage in preliminary conversations about where they come from as a way of claiming ‘Sabahan’ identity. For instance, locals say they look to see whether the ethnic group of a person matches the name of the *kampung* or village and whether it can be verified: did such and such a group reside or originate in the area before Independence; before the colonial period? Other informants say that it is more effective to ascertain the claimed identity of a person through family ties and to verify this claim with those who know the clan or kin mentioned. Such questions that probe personal and family histories are becoming *de rigueur* among Sabahans.

Meanwhile, authorities appear keen to emphasise the unique cultural milieu of Sabah and to draw on its strengths of cultural harmony and group unity. The Sabah government, for instance, continues to support the ‘Filipino market’ or *Pasar Pilipin*, an iconic landmark in the city of Kota Kinabalu built by the UNHCR in the 1980s to encourage self-sufficiency and enterprise among Filipino refugees, which has now evolved into an arts and crafts shopping centre. Religious bodies such as the Catholic Church, also seek to accommodate the needs of Christian migrants, who represent a minority in the overall migrant population. The Catholic Church in Sabah, for instance, caters to the Timorese (Flores) and provides masses in Tagalog for Filipino church-goers. A mass in Korean is also conducted in Church of Mary Immaculate in Kota Kinabalu.

Government authorities also seek to be more inclusive in promoting cultures. For instance, *poco-poco*, a line dance with origins in Sulawesi, Indonesia, is very popular during weddings and parties. The Sabah Tourism Board recently organised both *poco-poco* and *sumazau* (Kadazandusun dance) as part of the entertainment during the 23rd Conference of Speakers and Presiding officers of the Commonwealth in Sabah in January 2016.⁴⁴ Poco-poco, however, has drawn criticism by some Muslim religious authorities in Malaysia, who find it lewd and having roots in spirit worship; while others saw it as a form of *senam robik* or aerobic exercise.⁴⁵ Kadazandusun leaders on the other hand saw the dance as threatening to eclipse traditional dances, especially when *poco-poco* dancing occurs during Kaamatan, the major celebration of the Kadazandusuns, as ‘it is alien to the festivity and causing it to lose its intrinsic value’.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See “CSPOC delegates dance Sabah’s sumazau dance”, 2016.

⁴⁵ See “Poco-poco diharamkan di Perak, Malaysia”, 2011.

⁴⁶ See “Poco-poco did not fit into event: Jornah”, 2007.



A mock-up of the proposed Sabah IC with words 'Sabahan Tulen' (Original Sabahan)⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Taken from the Facebook page of SORAK.

Chapter 3: Kadazan, Islam and the Malay label

Mentioning PTI today to local Sabahans often elicits negative reactions: PTIs are ‘rude’; ‘dirty’; ‘criminal’; ‘illegal’; ‘hostile’; and have ‘foreign cultures’. Many speak of the problems that PTIs bring such as street children, who are made up primarily of homeless migrant children. In town areas, many of these children are found trying to survive on their own: some peddle smuggled cigarettes, selling them at intersections to drivers in their vehicles who stop at the traffic lights; some beg; and some of these children also become vulnerable to vice and crime. The negative view towards Sabah’s street children masks the problem of their being stateless, an issue that Allerton (2017) argues is not being treated as a genuine problem by the Sabahan government due to political and moral conflicts involving illicit documentation of PTIs and a strong resentment from locals towards PTIs.

The foreignness of PTIs has been found unsettling: migrant cultures are perceived to be ‘alien’ to Sabahans and incompatible with the local Sabahan culture (Chong, 2009). Other unacceptable behaviours popularly linked to the PTI population include: littering, lack of hygiene, and abandoning newborns where Sabah is second highest state in Malaysia after Selangor.⁴⁸ Others speak of the violence perpetrated by and among PTIs, which also causes many locals to compare Sabahan society in the present with Sabahan society in the past when migrant influence was not seen as overt and one felt relatively safe. Alisha, a Filipino-Chinese small business owner, is in her 30s. Alisha’s grandparents were originally from the Philippines and came to Sabah before Independence to work in Sandakan. Alisha’s mother married a Sandakan-born Chinese man. Alisha said:

⁴⁸ See “Minister says 697 abandoned babies from 2010 to 2016”, 2017.

Back in those days, my parents said that no one knew to build fences between their houses. Then we moved to KK [Kota Kinabalu, capital city of Sabah] and I saw that houses were all fenced in. Broken glass cemented in the fence prevented anyone from climbing it. Then, my parents said we too had to get grilles for all our doors and windows or else the PTIs would come to steal things from us.

To many Christian Kadazans, migrants and PTIs represent more than just being dangerous and foreign outsiders. As many are Muslims, they mirror the overall Malayanisation in Sabah, where Islamisation is both feared and resented, given the drastic change of lifestyle it can incur and the lack of Muslim privilege in the workplace. For the predominantly Catholic Kadazans,⁴⁹ becoming Muslim is antithetical to their identity and adherence to the Malay label, now used widely by an indeterminate number of local and migrant Muslim groups, is to allow the Kadazan identity and label to become subsumed.

The Kadazans of Penampang are among the most culturally mixed of the non-Muslim Bumiputera groups. Heavily intermarried with the Chinese and Dusuns, the Kadazans have also intermarried with Muslims albeit in smaller numbers. The number of Muslim Kadazans in Penampang today is unclear. Based on anecdotal observation and knowledge, I estimate that at least one or two members in each Kadazan clan are Muslim. Note that contemporary intermarriage among Muslim Kadazans occurs with Muslims from the Malaysian Peninsula (Peninsula Malays), Muslim Indonesians and Filipinos including PTIs, and other Muslim groups from other parts of Sabah.

⁴⁹ While at first, Kadazans rejected Christianity for fear that ‘white men’—foreign priests from Austria, England and other places—were taking their children away from them, they sought to embrace it seeing that their children were being educated at the same time in Catholic mission schools. Christianity is thus positively associated with Westernising influences, modernity, speaking of English language, among others. See Rooney (1981), Sacred Heart Cathedral (Sabah) (2003) and St. Aloysius Church Limbanak (Sabah) (2010).

In the pre-colonial and colonial period, Kadazan and Muslim contact typically occurred through trade. Bajau traders exchanged items such as salted fish and salt for rice grains with Kadazans residing up the Moyog River. The Bajaus came in *sampans* (small boats with oars at the stern) to attend the then famous Moyog *tamu* (outdoor market; barter trading site). Cornelius, a non-Muslim Kadazan man, aged in his 70s, said that at night after trading had taken place in the day, some of the Bajaus would put on cultural shows for the Kadazans in the area. Many of the Kadazan men, said Cornelius, would fall head-over-heels in love with a Muslim Bajau woman called ‘Maya’ who was a dancer with the travelling Bajaus. These wanted to do the *joget*, a popular Malay dance, with her.

Intermarriages also occurred between Kadazans living near the coastal areas of Putatan and Petagas in Penampang and Bajaus on the coast; and also with Brunei Malays.

Kadazan-Bajau intermarriages are often spoken of in sentimental terms. For instance, an informant, Jamilah, a Kadazan-Bajau in her 40s from the town of Putatan, told me that the reason why her mother, a Kadazan, came to marry her father, a Bajau, was due to their parents’ desire to keep their adjacent lands within their two families. ‘My mother was like a princess in her village [she was a daughter of a wealthy Kadazan landowner] and my father loved her greatly’ said Jamilah. In another case, Bartholomew, a Sino-Kadazan man, aged in his late 50s, spoke fondly of Bajau relatives ‘living on the other side of the hill’ in the Putatan-Penampang boundary area and reminisced about his childhood:

Yes, we have Muslim relatives who are Kadazan mixed-in with Bajau. When I was a small boy, I remember a Muslim aunt coming from the other side of the hill. She would walk for a day and come and spend at least two weeks with my family. My parents would exchange husked rice — two bagfuls — for salt and fish that she would bring with her, since she lived on the coast. While she lived with us, she would mill rice into flour and make those lovely Malay cakes you see in the *tamu*. It was fascinating to watch!

Can you imagine all that rice for just some cakes? My siblings and I would fight over the cakes. Then I remember that one time my aunt came again and this time she brought her teenage daughter along. “To introduce [her], or else relations are forgotten [*Man kasi kanal-kanal, nanti lupa saudara*]”, she said.

After Independence, however, Kadazans came to view Muslim contact more negatively. Bartholomew said that one day, his aunt simply stopped visiting and he found tales of conversion to Islam among Kadazans were being discussed with much apprehension for it incurred a total change in lifestyle. Starting from the decision to convert, Kadazans are expected to cease eating pork and drinking alcohol; some Kadazan parents feared that their daughters would endure a strict and regulated life as Muslims as well as being a co-wife due to the institution of polygamy in Islam. Some informants referred to Kadazan women they knew who had become a *bini kedua* (second wife) or *bini ketiga* (third wife) to their Muslim husbands. Meanwhile, male Muslim converts must undergo circumcision. Michael, a Kadazan man in his 60s, said in mock jest, ‘I don’t want to be a Muslim. I will get the snip [circumcision] [*Nanti kana putung!*]. I also like my *vugok* (pork or pig), you see’.

Informants also spoke of the switch to Islam as being irreversible and punishable, as Malaysia’s shariah law does not permit the renouncing of Islam. In some cases, the converted partner of a born Muslim may be allowed to return to their original religion under specific circumstances, such as divorce, as seen in cases among indigenes from the states of Sabah and Sarawak (Sintang et al, 2011). Some informants said that what increases their wariness of becoming Muslim is the treatment of Muslim Kadazan apostates upon death; it was claimed that Muslim authorities would force the family to surrender the body of a deceased Muslim relative for burial in a Muslim plots, even when the deceased had not given consent.

Despite the drastic change in lifestyle, some Kadazans do convert to Islam. It is claimed that converts typically become Muslim prior to marrying a born Muslim. Some Muslim Kadazan informants who say that they chose to convert based on personal conviction refute this view stemming from non-Muslim Kadazans. Shareen, a Kadazan-Dusun informant in her 40s, had converted to Islam from Christianity before she met and married her Muslim partner. She told me that she was aware of the perception among many non-Muslim Kadazans that Kadazan Muslim converts only do so superficially. Shareen said that it was her own decision to convert to Islam and that it had helped her to change her lifestyle, which she felt was out of control when she was a Christian. She said, 'Muslim culture is better' because after her conversion to Islam she found that she was no longer wild in her ways, that is, drinking and smoking. Shareen also said that being Muslim enforced propriety through strict and explicit rules: 'For instance, Christianity does not tell you not to smoke. But in Islam, it is taught that it isn't good'.

For many non-Muslim Kadazans, one of the main reasons why Islamisation is seen through negative lens is due to past Islamisation campaigns by the state, which affected their political position. This was seen when Donald Stephens, Kadazan leader in the 1950s to the 1970s, became a Muslim. The announcement from Stephens, as recalled by older informants, was received with shock and disappointment in the Christian Kadazan community. Many Christian Kadazans thus believe that by becoming Muslim, they go to 'the other side' (join the Malay grouping) and their overall Kadazan number will dwindle, and Kadazans will become a minority 'in their own land'. However, by not converting and remaining non-Muslim Bumiputera, many Christian Kadazans fear that they will continue to sit at the bottom rung of Bumiputera society. Yet, many seem to endure disadvantage and lack of opportunity as a protest against the perceived coercive nature of Islamic conversion.

I found that in general many non-Muslim Kadazans when feeling frustrated about their given situation would attempt to mask their feelings, as these work with Muslims and sought to negotiate their identity carefully around them. Facial expression and body language, discreet and miniscule, are carefully constructed and used deliberately to vent non-Muslim Kadazans' frustration. Ellen, a Kadazan public servant in her thirties, said:

I'm coordinating this program now. Most of "our people" [referring to non-Muslim Bumiputera] are coordinating this program. Also, the Chinese [are coordinators, too]. But they [Muslim Bumiputeras], they are managing the overall program, and all of them hold the top positions in this school.

I asked Ellen, 'Why do you think you did not get the job [in the coveted administration part of the department]?' Ellen had applied for such a role previously and said, 'Well, I don't have "Vitamin M" now, do I?' 'Vitamin M?', I asked inquiringly. 'Don't you know?' replied Ellen, taking her fingers and rubbing them on her forearm. It took me a while to understand that she was referring to the skin colour of the Malay ethnic group. In the quiet of her office, Ellen had felt free to make such a gesture but when a Muslim colleague entered her room to consult about their work schedule, Ellen's face assumed a neutral expression.

In another interview, I spoke with Martin, a non-Muslim Kadazan in his forties, about perceived job and opportunity loss between Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputeras in the workplace. After explaining his own situation in the workplace, he then ended his narrative with '*Koibo ko, no*' (You should know, right). He said this while quickly averting his eyes towards a table beside ours at the café where we met. Following his gaze, I saw that the patrons on the other table were Muslims, discernible by the mother's headscarf (*hijab* or *tudung*), a sign of propriety for Muslim women.

However, other informants were less guarded and spoke strongly of Muslim privilege in the workplace whereby only Muslims receive automatic recognition and access to position and power. This was the case of Alex, a Christian Kadazan man in his early 50s, who said:

I have been in the same post for over five years [deputy general manager]. Yet when the general manager retired, my junior [research assistant] who came in only two years ago got his spot. How can this be? It's just not fair, and not right. He has no experience in this role but he is given the top post because he is a Muslim Bumiputera. I just know it.

Alex gave me his business card as he narrated his story. His card contained the information that he was a manager in a government branch. When I commented that he must have a good job in government, Alex replied:

Yes, I am now a manager. But you see, they [his Muslim Bumiputera bosses] knew that I was quite upset about the guy's promotion. So, they quickly gave me a job as manager. But as a manager of *this* station [in a far-flung/remote area]. It looks like a promotion, doesn't it? But they're just getting rid of me; taking me away from HQ so that it won't look so obvious to people [that he should have gotten the prime job]. Everyone knows that I have been doing the work of the general manager all this time. The job should have gone to me.

'But you know-*lah*', Alex added with emphasis while shrugging his shoulders in resignation. Muslim applicants typically are favoured to fill the so-called Bumiputera quota. Another informant said that Muslim managers or supervisors tend to shortlist more Muslim than non-Muslim Bumiputeras, even though the latter may be more qualified for promotion. Typically, the informant said, non-Muslim Bumiputera applicants are fewer because there is an increasing number of Muslim job applicants from the 'new Bumiputera' group, that is, the migrants and PTIs who have acquired Bumiputera status.

Many Christian Kadazans say their disadvantaged position is serious and that they are now resorting to other strategies to gain success. For instance, to avoid the pressure to Islamise, non-Muslim Bumiputeras resort to patronising those leaders who they feel are most influential in Bumiputera society. Among Bumiputeras, a patronage system exists: non-Muslim leaders obtain resources for their followers, since these leaders are connected to influential Muslim leaders. These resources take the form of contracts and projects in development, housing and roadworks; job appointments; paid positions as suppliers and providers of services, among others. Once obtained, these resources are then distributed among non-Muslim followers.

In another scenario, to gain access to resources to which Muslim Bumiputeras are entitled, non-Muslim Bumiputeras attempt to partner with Muslim counterparts. However, informants say that they realise that the profit margin may be minimal for non-Muslim Bumiputera entrepreneurs because their Muslim Bumiputera partners may take a bigger share of the project's profits. This situation typically occurs because the latter exacts a kind of 'fee' for enabling their counterpart access to certain resources.

In another example, individuals court powerful men and women in the Bumiputera community to help them gain access to certain opportunities. For instance, informants spoke about their attempts to get scholarships for their children or relatives. Some applicants mentioned approaching well-connected relatives in positions of power to 'pull strings', a popular euphemism among Sabahans to refer to the act of obtaining resources without going through the proper channels. Kadazan informants say that this may render them beholden to their relative, for example, one must demonstrate loyalty by voting for them in the next election or support their political ambitions; as a way to return the favour.

In some cases, bribes are involved. While some non-Muslim Kadazans said that some bribery was acceptable to ‘get the job done’, others felt that participating in bribery made them complicit. For instance, some Chinese building contractors may seek sleeping business partnerships with Muslim Bumiputeras, which can involve under-table money. However, non-Muslim Bumiputeras can become involved in the process by acting as a buffer between the Chinese and Muslim Bumiputeras. Tony, a 50-something Chinese businessman said:

Thank God, He [Jesus] has been good to me. I got the contract by going through the right channels. I didn’t pull strings or anything. But later on, just to make things easy for my staff and me, I did give something-*lah* to the Muslim fella in charge of the project on the other side. I asked my non-Muslim Bumiputera staff to do it, since he can at least talk to this person for me.

In several cases, non-Muslim Bumiputeras attempted to improve their access to Bumiputera resources by faking their identity—acting as if they were Muslim—with some success. In one case, Edward, a young non-Muslim Kadazandusun man in his early 20s, had failed an earlier application for university entrance. He had learned from other friends that applications like his are likely to be passed over in favour of those from Muslim candidates, who form the majority of applicants. Edward explained: ‘A friend said to me, “Why don’t you tick ‘Islam’ as your religion in the application form?” So, I reapplied and did this. I could not believe it but I got in!’.

In another example, Azhar, a Dusun man in his 40s, said that because his name is a Malay name, many of his colleagues had assumed when he first stepped into the office, that he was a Muslim. Azhar said that he never bothered to correct their assumption, especially since he was often included in conversations with Muslim colleagues who held high-level positions, and so became privy to their plans for the department.

Azhar said that he would join Muslim colleagues in fasting (during the holy Muslim month of Ramadhan) and use the Malay male costume during Muslim festivities around his workplace. Azhar admitted that he benefited from his 'Muslim' identity and that he had often been identified for a post that might otherwise have gone to a Muslim in his department. Yet, Azhar also told me that he wished to migrate out of Sabah one day so that he could stop the pretense. 'I don't want my children to eventually have to be Muslim', Azhar confessed. Azhar then explained that he did not think that Christian colleagues in his department knew that he was Christian like them. Azhar said, 'I am friendly to my Christian workmates but I don't tell them anything about my life. As far as I know, they think I am a Muslim too'. Azhar continues to attend church services when he visits his wife's family in another part of Malaysia, and observes Christmas.

While there are some non-Muslim Kadazans who may consider Islamic conversion for the purpose of socio-economic advancement, others mainly observe their Muslim counterparts to see how conversion is changing their life outcomes. Muslim converts are seen as increasing their opportunities, for instance, in their chances of promotion in their existing workplace. This belief is so commonplace among non-Muslim Bumiputeras that some believe that potential converts can already begin to reap the benefits of conversion even while they are in the process of conversion. Diana, a non-Muslim Kadazan housewife in her 40s said:

I don't believe that nothing happens afterwards. Don't you think that was not their [Muslims'] consideration in the first place? That when Kadazans become Muslims it will float through their minds that they will get better attention from their bosses and Muslim friends? I am sure that converts think this. You see, even when you are preparing to become a Muslim and undergo all the religious classes and so on, even then you are already looked upon differently. You have a new status. You're suddenly better than the rest [non-Muslim Kadazans].

Jenny, a non-Muslim Kadazan woman in her 30s, noticed that her Kadazan workmate, a recent Muslim convert, began to receive a lot of attention from their new boss despite being a non-permanent staffer:

My colleague, Fadzil [previously Stanley], married this Muslim girl from Beaufort [a Brunei Malay enclave]. He's only an auxiliary staff [*staff tambahan*] but wow, our big boss from KL, who was visiting Sabah at the time, even came to his wedding in the *kampung*. You know how remote his village was? It was not easily accessible. So, all that effort—it was like he was being given due respect and recognition [*macam kena beri penghormatan lah, kira*] [for having converted to the main religion of the country].

Some Muslim Kadazan informants, however, do not agree that Islamic conversion is a pathway to economic success and increased social status. Hamdan, a Bajau-Kadazan man, aged in his 30s and a born Muslim, said that it all depends on one's self-initiative and that new converts with high expectations of elevated status may find that this cannot be gained easily, quickly or free-of-charge. Hamdan said that new converts should not expect sudden good fortune upon Muslim conversion. Hamdan told me:

It doesn't mean that now just because I am Muslim, everything is better for me. You see, you have to see yourself as a goal-getter, and go for that job promotion, or whatever. I, personally, never use my status or myself as 'Muslim' in order to get what I want. My being Muslim is not the main reason why I excel in my job.

Two women who were ex-schoolmates, Nor Alinah and Siti Khadijah, both aged in their early 40s, confirmed Hamdan's opinion. Nor Alina is a Muslim by birth. She has a Kadazan mother and a Bajau father. Siti Khadijah, on the other hand, is a Muslim convert and married a Peninsula Malay man whom she met while studying in Kuala Lumpur in the 1990s. Nor Alina started by saying:

Okay, yes, it may appear as if things start looking up for us Kadazan Muslims. But it's complicated. In any case, it all depends on the boss in your department. For instance, where I work, my boss is a Peninsula Malay lady. She takes care of her own first [Peninsula Malays]. Then, another supervisor of mine [Sabah Chinese] will notice this and complain that this is biased. You see, we [Sabahan Muslims] don't get looked at immediately. It's like this: if there are no Peninsula Malay takers then it goes to Sabahan Muslims. Then, if there are none from that group it will go to Sabahan non-Muslims.

Siti Khadijah agreed, and said:

That is true. Now, I work for the private sector. Just because I am Bumiputera, I am the one my boss will ask to represent the company whenever we need to deal with government officers. But you see, I use my original name [not a Muslim name] at my work and I have a Chinese last name [*siang*]. To my boss, it's okay. To him it's like I have everything. He is Chinese, and he's mentioned more than once to me, "You go. You're Bumiputera. You can talk to them". So, I don't think it's even about being Muslim. My boss just feels I can connect with them better than the others could.

Both Nor Alina and Siti Khadijah then said that, from their point of view, whether Kadazan Muslims work in the government or private sectors, treatment by one's boss depends in part on the boss's ethnicity. A Malay boss is inclined to favour Malay employees, just as Chinese bosses will be more supportive of their Chinese employees. Further, both agreed that the responsiveness of the employee is also a factor. Both said that they are often expected to play by the boss's rules whether they are Muslim converts or not.

Meanwhile, in private spaces, although some tension can also occur, non-Muslim Kadazans seek to place their frustrations aside in order to maintain good social relations with their Muslim Kadazan family members and friends. The area of food and drink was one that informants spoke much on given that social relations are maintained via

hospitality, food and drink prohibitions could comprise an obstacle. In general, non-Muslim and Muslim Kadazan say that prohibitions do not compromise social relations. Non-Muslim Kadazans, for instance, provide *halal* (food prepared according to Muslim code) options for their Muslim family members while Muslim members assist to prepare the *halal* part of the menu during meals at home or at wedding celebrations and funeral gatherings. Kadazan Muslims and non-Muslims also visit each other's homes during religious holidays such as Hari Raya (main Muslim holiday) and Christmas day.

Tolerance among Muslim Kadazans can also be high with some Muslim Kadazans choosing not to strictly observe *halal* food and drink. Some non-Muslim Kadazan men said to me that if one knew which Muslim Kadazans were more liberal, they could socialise with them by drinking alcohol together. These liberal Muslims are described as, '*Muslim yang okay punya*' (Muslims who are not particular about what they eat or drink). In Sabah, it is commonplace for both Muslim and non-Muslim to eat together in restaurants. One of the iconic features of Sabahan eateries and restaurants is the generic menu offered, enabling Muslims and non-Muslims, including Chinese, to select without reservation. Some Muslims, however, may find that the 'no pork' menu served by some restaurants, such as 'fish-soup only' restaurants, is not necessarily a *halal* menu. These may seek to inspect a restaurant to check whether official *halal* certification is displayed, indicating the owner has fulfilled the criteria laid down by the Muslim authorities.

In the example of Junaidi, and his wife Mimi, a Kadazan Muslim convert and a Muslim-born Kadazan respectively, both in their 30s, are relaxed about Muslim codes. The couple live in close proximity to non-Muslims in Junaidi's natal village in Penampang. Mimi, who comes from a Muslim village in another district, did not consider herself pious and wore *seluar puntung* (cropped pants that ended at the calves) when I met her, a

fashion that some Muslim informants considered to be unIslamic although others found it daring and modern. While Junaidi no longer ate pork, he occasionally drank beer or *bing*, a Kadazan alcohol made from fermented rice. Mimi vouched for Junaidi that he did not do this to get drunk but only sipped. At family get-togethers, Mimi said:

When we have our family gatherings, someone always yells, “Watch out for the pork!” so that the Muslim families do not accidentally eat the dish that has pork in it. You see, Junaidi’s sister is also Muslim and all our kids are always over at their grandmother’s house whether to eat their meals there or to keep their grandma company. But sometimes, we forget to say this, because we all assume everyone knows which is which [which dish has pork meat]. So, hopefully none of the kids [her kids and Muslim nephews and nieces] accidentally ate [*termakan*] pork.

In some Kadazan families, however, to avoid issues arising from food prohibitions, members must cooperate with one another and parents typically take the lead. Mary, a Christian Kadazan aged 40, spoke of her older sister, Normala, a 50-year-old Kadazan who had converted to Islam in her teens. Mary said that her sister, Normala, converted to Islam in her university days in the 1980s prior to meeting her Peninsula Malay husband. Normala, according to Mary, is fairly pious and wears the *tudung* (a head-scarf that completely covers her hair) while her husband is a fairly moderate Muslim man and has no qualms about living in the Christian Kadazan household of Normala’s parents, whenever they visit along with their children during their school holidays.

When Mary and her siblings decided to rebuild their ancestral family home, their father requested that the newly built house include several self-contained apartments. Mary recounted what her father said:

With my children all marrying people from various ethnic groups, it is nice to have a *halal* kitchen for the Muslims. This is for their convenience. There, they can cook anything they want, and they do not have to ask whether the food being prepared is *halal* or not. It makes me happy when everyone's preferences can be accommodated.

Yet, in the following excerpt, a non-Kadazan Muslim can influence his Muslim convert wife to strictly follow food prohibitions at gatherings of her own (non-Muslim) family, causing tensions. Kenny, a non-Muslim Kadazan in his 60s, recounted what happened with his Muslim convert sister:

My sister is a Muslim and she can be quite overbearing. Yes, I know that our Kadazan cooking is not *halal* with pork and what not. But really, she should know better. There are more of us [non-Muslim Kadazans] than there are of them [Muslim Kadazans] in the family. There are eight of us siblings who are Christians, and she is the only one who is Muslim. We prepare some *halal* food for her when we have our family parties. But she insists that we cook all *halal* food the next time. How can she insist this, when there are only a handful of Muslims at the party? Herself, her husband and their two children.

But over the years, I have come to realise that her husband is the one who is influencing her. Sometimes, during gatherings, he'll come to the table, take one look at our food, and walk away. He will not even touch the vegetables. That's so rude! Then one time, they left after coming for just one hour, without waiting for the meal to start. So, why bother coming at all?

Discussions with several Muslim Kadazans showed that they were keenly aware of how conflict can arise between them and non-Muslim Kadazans due to the opinions of more pious Muslims. Zaidah, a Kadazan-Bajau in her 30s from Putatan, and a second generation Kadazan on her mother's side, said:

People, especially Malays from the Peninsula, should understand how we Muslims in Sabah live. It's like that we are so mixed here and that's why we are more tolerant than them because in the Peninsula not many of the Malays marry with other ethnic groups, compared to here in Sabah.

They just have to understand us—that we can sit down and eat and drink together, no problem! But I know, it's different for non-Sabahan Muslims. They look at us and they feel mixed feelings—confused, angry, upset but amazed that we can live together peacefully. You see, just because we can do all these, it does not mean that we [the Muslims] become apostate [*murtad*]. I am still a Muslim, aren't I? It doesn't change me at all.

In another example, Norashikin, a Kadazan-Dusun Muslim convert in her late 40s, whose father is a Kadazan from Penampang and who converted to Islam upon marrying her husband, a Bajau-Dusun man from Tuaran, said:

It's not 'us' [the Muslims in Sabah] that are changing perspectives around. It is rather 'them' [Muslims from the Malaysian Peninsula] who are bringing this kind of narrow thinking over here. We, in Sabah, we never had problems about who is Christian or who is Muslim, and who can eat this or that. You should know who you are! [*Kau sendiri tau bab!*] If you don't eat pork, then don't go and eat pork. If Islam says don't drink alcohol then why do you drink alcohol if you are Muslim? We are different here in Sabah. We are okay with all kinds of cultures around us. We have gotten used to it. It is just other people who refuse to understand us.

The practices surrounding holidays provide another area that offers insights into how Muslim and non-Muslim Kadazans negotiate their identities. Aminah, a Muslim Kadazan woman in her 30s who converted upon marriage, and her husband Shahid, a Malay man from Peninsular Malaysia, both live and work in Kuala Lumpur. At first, Shahid was open to their children's desire to explore their Kadazan identity. Aminah said the children looked forward to visiting Sabah in the year-end so that they can take part in Christmas events. "They really like singing Christmas carols", said Aminah. However, when Shahid found out, he was angry and told the children not to take part in carol singing, as the songs mentioned Jesus. Aminah responded by organising their holidays separately, but over the years Shahid has relaxed his stance. Aminah said:

How we deal with this kind of problem is that I just take the kids back to Sabah earlier during the school holidays. So that when the Christmas season begins, they can join in the carolling program. Shahid then comes to join us around one week later. By then, he will have missed out on the whole Christmas carolling thing and won't have to feel uncomfortable or offended.

Meanwhile, there are efforts among Muslim Kadazans to incorporate their traditional Kadazan culture into their identity. During fieldwork I noted that many Muslim Kadazans and Dusuns who took part in organising the Kaamatan programs in Kota Kinabalu, in Penampang and at the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (KDCA) event, wore the traditional costumes of their groups. In fact, some informants told me that, unlike in the past, people were now proud to wear traditional costumes. It has become commonplace, and cheaper than having one tailor-made, to hire a costume from one of several businesses established in response to this demand. Some also said that it was exciting to try on various traditional costumes in a costume hire shop because one was not restricted to wearing the particular costume of one's own group and did not risk complaints from the group concerned. At wedding celebrations, Kadazan men and women, whether Muslim or not, are reported in print and social media (for instance, Facebook) as proudly wearing their traditional costumes symbolising their ethnic heritage. The Kadazan costume is otherwise not used as daily wear.

However, in some extreme cases, religious differences can generate significant tension and there becomes a need for some physical space between Muslim and non-Muslim dwellings. Crispin, a 30-year-old Christian Kadazan man sensed some hostility brewing between his brother, Jack, and other Christian siblings. Jack is married to a Peninsula Malay woman and works in Kuala Lumpur. Jack's Muslim name is Irfan but his siblings still call him by his Christian name. He and his wife have a teenage son and they

frequently return to Sabah to visit Jack's mother, who is a widow. Crispin said that some of his Christian siblings were unhappy when Jack bought the piece of land next to their mother's home, which is also part of the family estate. Jack built a holiday home for his own family on the land he bought. Crispin told me:

I don't think Jack 'moved out' from the big house, because he is Muslim, or anything. I mean, we have the separate kitchen there for his family to use. But he could afford to, you see, to build a new house and we have quite a lot of land around the main house. So, good for him.

But then, of course, my other sister, Carol, was quite upset. I just don't understand the two [Jack and Carol]. They have never gotten along, especially after Jack became a Muslim. You see, Carol's very active in church and feels that Jack is a hypocrite since the two used to do everything in church together, for example, carolling and choir and so on.

The other day, after Jack's house had already been built, Carol confided in me. She said that 'the Muslims' were taking over the village. So, I figured out that that must be why she was upset about Jack buying the land from Mum. I mean, he has a good job and was able to buy it from Mum, and so he should. It's nothing to do with being Muslim. But that's just Carol, she's a public servant and sees a lot of this unfair treatment towards non-Muslims at work. She's very sensitive about this Muslim versus non-Muslim Bumiputera thing.

Today, while tolerance is high in Sabah, there is increasing pressure from Islamic authorities upon Sabahans overall. Informants cited the much-publicised verdict by the Malaysian courts to prohibit Christians from using the term 'Allah' as a direct translation of 'God'. The Catholic Church in Malaysia appealed a 2007 directive from the Home Ministry of Malaysia, which sought to revoke the publishing permit of the Herald, a newspaper for Catholic churchgoers, due to use of the word 'Allah' in its Malay-language edition, which is meant primarily for Malay readership among Catholics in Sabah and Sarawak. In 2009, in a lower court, the Catholic Church won their case arguing that 'Allah' had been used for centuries—in Malay language Bibles and other

literature in reference to ‘God’ outside of Islam. However, an appeals court in October 2013 overturned the lower court’s ruling and reinstated the ban. Muslim authorities argued that using ‘Allah’ in non-Muslim literature could confuse Muslims and entice them to commit apostasy.⁵⁰

In Penampang, some Christian Kadazans have reacted negatively to what they considered to be ‘Muslim projects’. In 2013, some Kadazan opposition leaders questioned the state government’s proposal to build a mosque, claiming that the planned location for the mosque was not sensitive to the surrounding predominantly Christian community.⁵¹ In a separate case, some Christian Kadazans protested against the building of a mosque beside the Penampang Police Department⁵² However, spokespersons for Muslim Kadazans assured that the majority of people in Penampang were related to one another and were peaceful, and hence there is no cause to worry.⁵³

Many Christian Kadazans also recently criticised the use of Islamic nuances in a cultural Kadazan event. In May 2017, a group of Muslim Kadazans from the district of Papar hosted a Muslim-oriented Kaamatan program. Funded by the Hidayah Center Foundation (HCF) in Sabah, the program conducted events similar to Unduk Ngadau—a beauty pageant in honour of the legendary Huminodun, the daughter of Kinoingan (God). A ‘Momogun Muslim’ beauty queen contest coupled with an ethnic Islamic fashion show was organised. The ‘Kaamatan Islamik’ program also replaced the traditional worship of the rice spirits with a thanksgiving prayer in Dusun and Arabic.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See “Malaysia’s highest court backs a ban on ‘Allah’ in Christian bibles”, 2014.

⁵¹ See “No different from Mazu issue, says MP”, 2013.

⁵² See “No necessity to have a mosque in the middle of Christian dominated Penampang”, 2015.

⁵³ See “No reason to oppose P’pang mosque: YIS”, 2015.

⁵⁴ See “Sabah festivity name change to reflect inclusiveness”, 2017.

Organisers of the event represented it as a creative attempt to synthesise their indigenous (Kadazan) and religious (Muslim) identities. However, the program was viewed negatively by many non-Muslim Kadazans, reflecting their opposition to Malayisation. Kadazan activists condemned the name ‘Kaamatan Islamik’ as an ‘oxymoron’ given that the Kaamatan is based on paganistic rituals. They also stressed that the Kaamatan served to inculcate indigenous identity whereas the Kaamatan Islamik program was an attempt to ‘rape our culture, our customary practice [*adat*] and the essence of being Indigenous People [*Orang Asal*]’.⁵⁵ While the organisers agreed to drop the term ‘Islamik’ in the future after high-level officials from the state government intervened,⁵⁶ some informants continued to express alarm at the whole event, as they considered that Kadazan and Malay cultures were generally not compatible and should not be merged in any way.

Labels: Malay or Kadazan?

Today, many non-Muslim Kadazans say that the religion of Islam and the label Malay is now so intrinsically woven into the matrix of mainstream power that when someone among them identifies as Muslim, they are keen to see if this entails allegiance to the Malay identity. In the past, if local Muslim Bumiputeras in Sabah identified themselves by using the term Malay, this would be considered as breaching a social norm; for seeking to identify as Malay is to claim to be Peninsula Malay. In fact, a tripartite distinction exists among Sabahans: Peninsula Malays in Sabah are known as ‘Malay’; Sabah-born Muslim Bumiputeras are referred to as ‘Muslim (Bumiputera)’; and non-Muslim Bumiputeras are typically understood as being ‘non-Muslim (Bumiputera)’. For example, Brunei Malays may figure as ‘Melayu Brunei’ and become listed under

⁵⁵ See “Hotly debated in social media”, 2017.

⁵⁶ See “‘Islamic’ to be dropped from Kaamatan event”, 2017.

‘Malay’ in the census, but locally, Brunei Malays self-identify as ‘Brunei’. The local influences here thus keep the Muslim and Malay terms separated, in contrast to the situation elsewhere.

However, owing to external pressures, current views towards the Malay label show that the local framing of identity is changing, that is, the Malay term is now perceived by some as a blanket term of reference for all Muslims regardless of their ethnic identity. For many Kadazans, this is a worrying trend because they feel the pressure of Malayisation and not to mention to feeling of betrayal, when one among them choose to convert out of Christianity to Islam.

In 2013, an incident involving the Sabah state *mufti* (senior Muslim official (scholar and expert)) caused a furore among Kadazan elders, as he had questioned the ethnogenesis of the Kadazans. In his speech to a convention for Muslim religious leaders, the *mufti* began by stressing the need for all Muslims in Sabah to formally adopt Malay as a singular identification label.⁵⁷ The *mufti* then stated that many groups in Sabah did not have a proper ethnic identity and cited the Kadazans as an example of an invented race who were ambivalent about their own ethnic labels.

The *mufti*'s allegation caused elders from The Kadazan Society of Sabah (KSS) to file a *saman malu* (defamation summon) and the Sabah Native court later found the mufti to be guilty and fined him the customary *sogit* (traditional Kadazan fine paid in the form of livestock, typically buffalo for major grievances). The *mufti* afterward stated that, as a fellow Sabahan, from the Brunei and Dusun ethnic groups, he had not intended to

⁵⁷ The Mufti, head administrator of the Shariah (a body of Islamic laws) in Sabah, presented the speech titled ‘The Malay Agenda in the Leadership Crisis’ in a religious symposium in Kuala Lumpur (Putrajaya) for a Bumiputera Muslim audience. See “MeMelayukan! Suku Kaum Sabah (‘Malay’anising the Sabahan ethnic groups’), 2013.

cause offence to any race or ethnic group in Sabah. High-level Sabah officials then commented on the issue, reiterating that the official view of the Sabah government was to respect the diversity of Sabah's Native groups, and described the call to become 'Malay' as the personal view of the *mufti*.⁵⁸

Despite the tolerant view of the Sabah government towards self-identification, the pressure to adopt the Malay label continued. In 2014, some Sabahan leaders expressed openness to the idea of broadening Malay ethnicity from group to 'stock' or *rumpun* (in Malay) to include all related groups in Sabah and throughout Malaysia. However, Kadazandusun leaders argued that, in social, cultural and political terms, 'Malay' was antithetical to the indigenous, non-Muslim Bumiputera identity. Further, Kadazandusun leaders argued that Malaysian legislation clearly stated that a Malay person must both habitually practise the Malay culture and be a practising Muslim.⁵⁹ In other words, as many of my non-Muslim Kadazan informants explained, they simply cannot apply this term to themselves; to call oneself Malay is not congruent with their lived identities as Christian Kadazans.

The tension surrounding the Malay label is pin-pointed as stemming from its popular use among existing Sabahan Muslim Bumiputeras, especially among Muslim migrants, as becoming 'Malay' is a conscious consideration among migrants. These are making extensive use of the 'Malay' identity—and so obscure their localised or migrant identities—in order to successfully navigate the social and political world of Sabah and Malaysia overall. An informant called Maria, a Kadazan woman from Penampang in her 50s, highlights this in her narration of her long-time migrant worker, 'Z', originally from Nusa Tenggara Timor (Flores). Without the legal paperwork that would permit him to

⁵⁸ See "Kadazan Society summons Mufti", 2013.

⁵⁹ See "Google my statement on 'Rumpun Melayu', says Masidi", 2014.

remain in Sabah, Z had switched employers in the past. Maria told me that she felt *kasian* (pity) for him and employed him to tend to her vegetable farm. One day, Z confided in Maria that he had recently been offered a Malaysian Identity Card by someone involved in politics in exchange for his vote during an upcoming election. The catch was that Z had to become a Muslim and adopt a Malay name. Maria told Z that he could not pass for a Malay since he was a man of Flores origin, and that he did not fit the phenotype commonly associated with Malays. Maria said, ‘Z kept saying to me, “Boss, couldn’t I, boss? I’m sure I can be Malay”. He had stars in his eyes. I think he was already thinking of the lucrative jobs he might be able to get once he switches to his new identity’.

Some non-Muslim Bumiputeras now find that political parties and interest groups are creating imbalance in the Bumiputera Malay-Bumiputera Other relationship by promoting the Malay identity. Gary, a Christian Kadazandusun informant in his 50s, said, ‘What I detest is the way that people are conveniently welcome to join political parties, and then be declared Malay. It is all about winning in the election and getting more votes.’

However, many Muslim Kadazans informants say that Christian Kadazans should not worry about the perceived threat of the Malay label towards Kadazan identity, because many, if not all, Muslim Kadazans continue to retain their identity as Kadazan. In this, the influence of parents appears key, as some Muslim Kadazans say that they prefer simply to call themselves Kadazan over Malay because they have done so since childhood. Other Muslim Kadazan informants in their teens and early 20s say that it is their parents who want them to identify only as Kadazan. Other young Muslim Kadazan informants also say that parents want them to identify as Kadazan on the basis that

Kadazans are unique to Borneo while Malay refers to a broader identity used throughout the Indonesian-Philippine-Malaysian archipelagos. As one young Muslim Kadazan in his late teens said to me:

My father said you can find Malay anywhere, but Kadazan is rare. So, he says, tell people that you are Kadazan. I also feel kind of special, when people ask me what that [Kadazan] is, I can tell them that I come from Borneo and that it is one of the indigenous groups there; that we are very rare now in the world because there are fewer of us, and so on. This is important when you study overseas, because there, you will meet Indonesians and other Malaysians.

The stance of many Muslim Kadazans to be flexible and maintain their own freedom to choose their ethnic labels also helps to allay tension and fear among non-Muslim Kadazans. As Arianti, a Kadazan Muslim convert in her 20s said:

I don't feel like I have to drag out this deep identity inside me to show to anyone just who I am or what I am. For me, my religious identity is the most important and that is evident in what I do every day, how I act, how I wear my clothes. But as for my deep ethnic identity, it is hidden inside me and it should remain private and not for others to tell me what or who I am. So I can be Kadazan or Malay or whatever. But to me, I am Muslim, full stop.

Some Christian Kadazans feel somewhat reassured that Muslim Kadazans used the Malay label less if compared to other Kadazandusuns. By comparison, the Dusuns are relatively more Malayanised than the Kadazans. Muslim Dusuns or *Dusun Islam* are prominent owing to the spread of Islam in their areas before WWII (Joko et al, 2016). Inter-marriages between Dusuns and Muslim labour migrants from Indonesia occurred in Ranau (Lobou Estate) and a prominent Indonesian called Mandur Syarif or 'Bapak Tua' (elder) was influential, especially in healing the illnesses among Dusuns at the time that could not be otherwise healed by the *bobobizan* (Joko et. al, 2016: 113).

Although not often the case, Kadazan informants say that they are often taken aback when they hear Muslim Dusuns identifying as ‘Malay’ and not as ‘Dusun’. Christopher, a non-Muslim Kadazan man in his 60s said:

I feel quite mad sometimes when I hear Dusuns call themselves Malay. One time, I bought vegetables from the vegetable stalls in Kundasang [a famous town in the foothills of Mount Kinabalu in the Ranau district]. I casually asked the seller, “Are you from this area? [*Kau orang sini kab?*]”.

You know what she said, “Yes, I’m a Malay [*Ya, orang Malayu*]”. “Huh? Malay? You are a Dusun, aren’t you? Not a Malay [*Huh? Malayu? Kau Kadazan bab kan? Bukan Malayu*]”. The seller then looked confused, and said, “Yes, the one that is Muslim [*Ya, yang Muslim*]”. “Then you should not have to call yourself ‘Malay’. ‘Malay’ is what Peninsula people [*orang Semenanjung*] call themselves”, I said.

You see, they [Muslim Dusuns] should just call themselves Dusun, even if they are Muslim. See, they are confused because Malay identity is so strong. Just because you are Muslim, you are not a Malay. You can be anything [from any ethnic group].

Donald, a non-Muslim Kadazan man in his 30s, similarly found that a preference for using the Malay label is occurring among some Kadazandusun Muslim leaders. Donald said, ‘I heard one call himself a Malay. Then not long after that, I heard him say that he is a Kadazandusun. Now, which is which? I mean, is he confused? Doesn’t he know who he is?’. I asked Donald what he believes the leader’s identity is or should be. He responded, ‘So, okay, if he considers himself Muslim then he calls himself Malay. Is that it? But how about “Kadazandusun”? You can’t use these two at the same time. I mean, come on, pick one!’. Donald continued, ‘You see, it’s like he keeps his Kadazandusun identity when he is with us [Sabahans]. Then as soon as he is with a different crowd and his Malay bosses from KL are there, he won’t think twice to call himself a “Malay”’.

Donald's sentiment echoes the awkward feeling of other non-Muslim Kadazan informants upon hearing Muslim Bumiputeras, converts from either Dusun, Murut or other groups, use both their group label and Malay label. These informants said that not only does the individual concerned appear to lack loyalty towards their own ethnic group but their act of label-switching positions their own group as the weaker one in relation to the Malay group. Label switching was considered to reduce a person's trustworthiness, as one did not know where their loyalty lay.

The use of the Malay label can also be subjective among younger Muslims, grappling with their ambiguous identities. Corinna, a Christian Dusun teacher in her 40s, discussed her Muslim Bumiputera students' dilemma over whether they ought to call themselves Malay or go by the name of their particular ethnic group.

Corinna said:

Some of my students came up to me after class to ask an unusual question. These were students who had become a tight-knit group. All come from different parts of Sabah. One of them asked, "Teacher, what do I call myself now? I am confused, because some people say that we should call ourselves Malay because we are Muslim. But my family and I are Dusun with some intermarriage with other groups. It's all very confusing". I said, "You should call yourself whatever you want. But being Muslim is quite different from coming from an ethnic group. For instance, I am Dusun, too, but I don't call myself a Roman, just because I am Catholic".

Yet, despite how some Kadazans believe that the Malay label is only salient among Dusun Muslims and non-Kadazan Muslim indigenes at large, I found that the subjectivity of identification among Kadazans is prevalent. Muslim Kadazans may use 'Muslim', 'Muslim Kadazan' and/or 'Sabah Muslim' or vacillate between Kadazan and Malay as label and identity. Typically, the Malay label is used to infer association with the Malays, elevating one's Bumiputera status, while Muslim Kadazans use Kadazan to

denote their original identity, or because of sentiment. Daniel, a non-Muslim Kadazan in his 30s, has an older brother who married a Muslim woman from a coastal Muslim community. His brother, Mohammad Ishak (formerly Isaac) has been married for 15 years. Daniel said,

In those days when Isaac just got married, wow, wasn't he strict with his religious fervour [*bukan main lagi 'strict' dia punya religion*]. But over the years, I have seen him change. He has become less and less strict about saying 'Islam this' or 'Malay that'. In fact, he's even more patriotic about this Kadazandusun thing than me. He will say things like, "We have to protect our Kadazan culture from disappearing. We must always remember that we are first and foremost 'Kadazan' before anything else". He has really changed over the years. So, it's quite strange his Muslim and Kadazan identity. I don't really get it, because to me, at the end of the day, if you are a Muslim, you will somehow be seen to belong to the Malay group than to the Kadazan group.

The tendency to drop the Malay label and return to using Kadazan as a primary identifier also occurs after de-conversion. This typically happens when a Muslim Kadazan divorces from his/her Muslim spouse to return to Christianity. Michael, a Kadazan in his 40s, working in another part of Malaysia, returned to Sabah at least once a year. His schoolmate, Halimah, converted to Islam after marrying a Muslim man from the northern coast of Sabah. One day, Michael returned to Sabah to find that his schoolmate had reverted to her Christian name, Helen. Apparently, Halimah had broken up with her Muslim husband, and had converted back to Christianity. Michael said:

Helen is even more devout now as a Christian than in the past before her Muslim conversion. [She is] forever preaching about Jesus and helping in the Church. I didn't know you could do that. I mean, become Christian again after becoming Muslim. Someone said you can reverse the process, if you take it up in court or Shariah Court. But it is so confusing to me. Maybe because I am not there all the time. One day she is Malay, next day she is Kadazan again.

Yet, there continues to be underlying tension in the whole matter, as many Christian Kadazans continue to regard Islamisation and the use of the Malay label with fear, anger and defensiveness. At one level they fear lifestyle change as a result of Islamic conversion and loss of job opportunity but at a deeper level they fear the loss of Kadazan identity as a result of Malay influence. Many informants constantly spoke of the fear that Kadazans in Penampang were becoming subsumed under the Malay grouping. Some cited the use of Sabah Malay language as mother tongue among Kadazan families and worried about the demise of the Kadazan language, a topic for our discussion in latter chapters.

That the Kadazans were no longer predominant in Penampang due to the vast number of migrants was another concern clearly expressed by Christian Kadazan informants. With PTIs forming the largest population in Sabah, and the third largest community after Kadazandusun and Chinese in Penampang, some Kadazans expressed fear that Muslim PTIs were now intermarrying with Kadazans. Patricia, a Kadazan of mixed Indian and Chinese ancestry aged in her 50s, worried that Kadazans were de-ethnicising to become part of the Bumiputera Malay, as the larger pool of potential marriage partners happens to be Muslim. Patricia said:

I tell you, people are not worried that their children are marrying Muslims, and “Filipino [read: PTI] at that!” [*Pilipin lagi tu!*] ... This lady [a neighbour] just let her daughter marry this guy. They even organised a huge wedding. I tell you honestly, they will regret it come the day when the whole of Penampang is only filled with ‘their kind’ of people [Muslims and PTIs]. There will not be any Kadazan left.



Muslim Kadazan female participants in the recent 'Kaamatan Islamik' in their hybrid Muslim 'traditional' costumes. Source: The Star (Malaysia). 9 May 2017.

Chapter 4: Kadazan and Chinese

As I watch a young mother push her toddler around in a pram in a busy department store, I noticed a small group of shopping attendants gathering around her, completely taken by her daughter. “Oh, how fair she is!” remarks one. “Just like a Chinese”, said the other. Instantly, the mother retorts, “Oh no, no, no, she’s not Chinese! We’re not Chinese!”. “But she looks so much like a Chinese” said one of the shopping attendants. “No, we are 100 per cent Kadazan. No mix of Chinese whatsoever” argued the mother. Unconvinced, two attendants standing farther away from the centre, and closest to me, chat between themselves, “Don’t you think the child looks just like a Chinese?” “Yes, look at ‘how white her skin is’ [*punya putih kulit dia*]”.

The Kadazans of Penampang are well known in Sabah for intermarrying with the Chinese and this is evidenced by the presence of many Sino-Kadazans—descendants of intermarriage between the two groups. Today, owing to this history, it is not unusual, for instance, for outsiders and locals alike, including Dusuns and Sabahans who do not come from Penampang, to mistake the phenotypical features of the Kadazans for Chinese. Intermarriage between the Chinese and indigenous people in Sabah before amalgamation into Malaysia is well documented.⁶⁰ In my field site of Penampang, Chinese people represent almost 20 per cent of the population and is the fourth largest Chinese populace in Sabah at 23,517 people compared to the largest Chinese population (82,837 people) residing in the city of Kota Kinabalu (Sabah Statistics, 2010).

⁶⁰ Sino-Natives in the southern parts of Sabah were recorded in 1862 by Spenser St. John, British Consul to Brunei, who wrote of the intermarriage between Chinese in Labuan (an island off Sabah) with mainlanders in Klias. In the area of Klias (in the modern-day district of Beaufort), Sino-Natives spoke some Hokkien and showed definite traces of Chinese influence (see St. John, 1862; Wong, 2005; Rutter, 1922: 56-58).

The Chinese presence in Penampang is evident in the four well-established Chinese communities, which have existed prior to Malaysian Independence in 1963. One community was established on the coastal front in the Petagas and Putatan areas.⁶¹ Three other Chinese communities emerged inland: in Kasigui⁶², Moyog (village of Inobong and nearby villages) and in the Donggongon area, the site of the main town of Penampang today.⁶³ The Chinese in these communities comprise a mixture of Hainanese, Hokkien and Hakka people, among other Chinese groups.

It is unknown today just how many Sino-Kadazans there are in Penampang, as there is no statistics for mixed Kadazan identities in census or in other formal records. It can be estimated based on informant accounts that half or more than half of all Penampang Kadazans have some Chinese heritage owing to the historical intermarriages between the two groups. Some Kadazan families claim that their Chinese origin dates back to the colonial period, while others state that according to their family histories, their Chinese antecedents had arrived in Sabah in the sultanate period (circa 1700s). As a rule of thumb, Sino-Kadazan is largely self-determined by Kadazans concerned and the use of the label 'Sino' is often indicative of this.

While Sino-Kadazans describe their identity as being mainly 'Sino' in reference to their mixed heritage, Sino-Kadazan identity is ambiguous. In the 1950s, Glyn-Jones reported that it was likely that those who considered themselves to be pure Dusun (the

⁶¹ To make way for a highway in the 1980s, the Sabah government reclaimed the Petagas area while Putatan was developed into a township.

⁶² Also known as Kosigui after the Kadazan name for the flame-of-the-forest trees growing wild in the area. Note that this area was a designated settlement for the Chinese during the colonial period, which resulted in the building of a row of shops. The Sabah government has since reclaimed the area and the shops were demolished in the 1980s. In recent years, locals have established a small eatery and a local market selling fruit, vegetables and meat by the Kasigui roadside.

⁶³ See Thu (1983).

classification that the Kadazans came under at the time) had several Chinese ancestors owing to the physical similarities between the Kadazans and the Chinese. Glyn-Jones also noted that ‘the Penampang dialect is more akin to the Chinese pronunciation than any other speech’ (Glyn-Jones, 1953: 105). Apart from these similarities to the Chinese, Sino-Kadazans’ Chinese heritage is also apparent through their *siang* (Chinese surname).

Mahibol (1994) states that the choice of Kadazan or Chinese identity depends largely on whether Sino-Kadazans reside in the Chinese or Kadazan community. However, the culture practised by Sino-Kadazans, whether traditional Kadazan or Chinese culture, did not discernibly impact identity choice. According to Mahibol (1994), it was their religion that predicated which identity was more likely to be formally adopted. Sino-Kadazans who are Catholic tend to identify as Kadazan given that the majority of Kadazans are Catholic, while Buddhist or Taoist Sino-Kadazans tend to identify as Chinese.⁶⁴ However, as we will see in this chapter, the subjectivity of identification can be politically or culturally motivated and further tied to one’s economic desires and the desire for official recognition overall.

⁶⁴ It is not unusual for some Sino-Kadazan families to combine Kadazan and Chinese practices. For instance, in some Sino-Kadazan homes, one finds photos of Chinese ancestors in Sino-Kadazan homes along with holy pictures of Jesus and Mary on the same wall. In other Sino-Kadazan homes, where Buddhism or Taoism is practised, elders may continue to keep the tradition of burning joss sticks for prayers for their Chinese ancestors during auspicious occasions such as Chinese New Year. In Buddhist Sino-Kadazan homes, the Chinese table for ancestral worship can also take a prominent spot in the house.

However, in some Sino-Kadazan families, where some family members are Buddhist while others are Christians or belong to other religions, references to non-Buddhist religions are kept out of sight, if the patriarch in the family is a staunch Buddhist. Additionally, some Sino-Kadazans become Christians only after the demise of a Chinese parent so as not to cause conflict in the home.

Chinese influences have received mixed reception among the Penampang Kadazans. In the colonial period, many Sino-Kadazans preferred to identify as Chinese, as the British government had faith in the Chinese due to their involvement in business. It was considered advantageous by many Kadazans to identify as ‘Chinese’ in order to be associated with their enterprising qualities, and to ensure the success of an application for a business license, for instance. At the time, the bulk of logging concessions awarded by the government went to British and other European firms, but locals—mainly Chinese *towkays*—also possessed annual licenses and were allowed to operate freely. Chinese *towkays* also performed sub-contracting work for expatriate logging firms (Lee, 1976: 5).

Some Kadazan elders however saw the Chinese influence on Kadazaaan culture in negative terms and attempted to oust the Chinese from Penampang in the 1930s. After the economic downturn following WWI, many Chinese migrants relocated to Kadazan villages seeking subsistence. Kadazan elders claimed that these newcomers engaged in making *arrack* (or ‘*arak*’ in Malay, referring to alcoholic drink) and gambled, and they petitioned the British government to resettle the Chinese elsewhere. The Chinese in response wrote an appeal to the British governor stating that they had intermarried with the Kadazans, and that a move would mean breaking up families. The incident saw the resettling of some of the Chinese into the Kasigui area mentioned earlier. A private initiative by several Kadazan-Chinese families also resulted in the establishment of a settlement in the Donggongon area, which then became the Donggongon town.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Information about the 1937 petition against the Chinese can be found in a letter to the British governor written by Mr. Tsen En Fook, secretary of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. See “A Petition by the Chinese in Penampang”, 1937. See also Wong (2005: 51-56). (I thank Dr. Liang Chen, who was a fellow student at ANU, for taking the time to look at parts of the petition letter that was written in Chinese, and translate and discuss the content with me).

Despite the complaints of some Kadazan elders, some Kadazans, who became self-conscious of the social differences between their groups, considered the Chinese with a mixture of admiration and apprehension. Kadazans generally look towards the Chinese in their daily lives because of the latter's socio-economic mobility and prosperity, and hope to achieve the same success as their Chinese counterparts. The early interaction with the Chinese has done much to instil self-consciousness among the Kadazans in this area. In the colonial period, Kadazans (mainly women) rapidly intermarried with the Chinese and these marriages became a pathway for Kadazans to assert themselves as higher on the social scale than their indigenous counterparts, the Dusuns.

However, while Kadazan women who married Chinese men were seen to have the opportunity to change their lot in life, the intermarriage also meant taking up a differing worldview. As an elderly informant in her 80s said, "When I got married, my parents said, 'Should anything happen to your marriage, you need to follow your husband. They [the Chinese] are different from us. We will not know how to deal with them.' A number of my conversations with informants revealed a picture of uncertainty and change among Kadazans in the colonial days, and while Chinese influence was welcomed, it often served to create a marked distinction between the two groups. Many Kadazans in the 1930s were not urbanised: some had the advantage of their wealth and land, and/or schooling; others had to emulate the Sino-Kadazans and/or the Chinese to get ahead. Stories of the haves and have-nots marked the experiences in the early contact days in Penampang.

Like many Kadazans of her time, Mama Ben, an elderly Kadazan woman in her 80s, spoke of the bucolic Kadazan lifestyle as subsistence farmers during the 1920s. In her teens, Mama Ben became an *amah* (house-help) to her sister whose husband was

Chinese; Mama Ben herself married a Sino-Kadazan. Mama Ben spoke at length about her childhood: as a Kadazan child, the oldest in the family, she was expected to care for her younger siblings while her parents worked the paddy field, hunted, tended to their vegetable patch, foraged in the jungle or fished in the rivers. Mama Ben said that even as a young child she felt conscious about the difference between herself and the Sino-Kadazan children in the village, as the latter seemed to know a lot about how things worked and carried themselves more confidently.

One day, she went to the home of a Sino-Kadazan playmate and watched an omelette being made for the first time. Mama Ben said that up until then, she had only eaten rice and *pinaasakan* (stewed fish) or *kinoing* (salted fish), staple foods among Kadazans at the time—considered ‘traditional’ food by many Kadazans today. Mama Ben said:

You know, in those days, I did not know how to make an omelette, let alone know what that was all about. It was only after seeing a Sino-Kadazan friend breaking some eggs to fry them in a pan with some oil in it that I knew how it was done. He flipped the omelette in one single move with his chopsticks!

When I asked Mama Ben whether her parents had shown her how to make an omelette prior to this, Mama Ben responded by telling me a story about eating chicken for the first time. Mama Ben said:

No, you see, they didn’t know how to do that either! What they knew to do, and they felt so foolish and embarrassed afterwards, was to exchange their eggs with the Chinese. The Chinese would come around door-to-door selling their galvanised tin plates [*pinggan*].

We also didn’t know to eat our chickens for their meat. One day, my brother came home from grazing the buffaloes. He was so tired, and threw his body to the floor. He had this strange look over his face, when suddenly, he says to me, ‘Sister, I am so hungry! Please do not tell father and mother, but I am going to catch one of our chickens and have it for our dinner’. Then, off he went to catch one, and I didn’t know how he knew what

to do, but he knew exactly how to slaughter the chicken by nicking the main artery at the neck of the chicken. He also knew to step on the chicken's legs without getting pecked, and how to pluck out the feathers and singe the remaining tiny feathers afterward by passing the chicken over the fire. We boiled it up and we each had a chicken thigh to ourselves.

It was the best meal ever, but we just couldn't finish the entire chicken. So, we hid the chicken breast in our salt jar, and we threw all the soup away. My brother told me to go down to the river and throw all the feathers away toward mid-river so that they wouldn't get caught on the rushes [*tamahang*]. 'Mother might see them' [*Okito mai di ina*], he said.

When our parents came home that night from a long day in the paddy fields, my mother began to prepare dinner. She reached into the salt jar and shouted, 'snake!' [*bokusi!*]. She had touched something fleshy and thought it was a snake, but it was the chicken breast! When our parents found out what we had done, they became silent. They did not get angry with us. They ate the leftover chicken quietly, and then said to us that, tomorrow morning, before we did our chores, we were to wake up early and catch two chickens. 'Because we want to eat them again', they said. Then throughout dinner, we all talked about how delicious the chicken was, and how foolish we were for selling our chickens and eggs to the Chinese, not knowing that chicken meat was delicious.

You see, we just didn't know any better. We continued to eat rice and salted fish, as other Kadazan families around us did. Little did we know that we could try to eat something else.

Mama Ben may have told an apocryphal story, as it seems unlikely that the Kadazans had never consumed chicken meat in those days. Other Kadazan informants similarly spoke of the gap between the experiences and worldviews of the Chinese and Kadazans.

Matthew, a Kadazan man in his 50s, commenting on Kadazan life in the past said:

They just didn't have any idea in those days. Knowledge is copied, you know. It won't come straight away that this should be this or that. They would exchange the foods they had, but eat only what they were familiar with [fish and rice] even though this may be less nutritious for them day in and day out.

Another informant, Jonathan, a Dusun man in his 30s from a district outside Penampang, recalled a similar story for his area:

People back then were comfortable living from day to day. As the Malay saying goes, 'to live from hand to mouth' [*Kais pagi, makan pagi; kais petang, makan petang*]. That was just the way it was. And sadly, some of our people [the indigenes] still see life this way and do not aspire for greater things.

Some Kadazans were also reported as feeling insecure that their lack of money demeaned them, as the Chinese were firmly associated with entrepreneuring and the cash economy. According to James, a retired Kadazan teacher in his 70s:

I used to teach in one of the Penampang primary schools in the 1960s. There was a parent who could not afford to pay her child's school fees. One day, she came to the school in an irate manner, and demanded to speak to the teacher who had been 'rude' to her child. After speaking with her, I realised that she was referring to a reminder sent to all parents to pay outstanding fees from last term. "You think I can't pay up, don't you? Do you think I have no money to pay?" she argued. Well, later on, she did pay but she had to borrow money from one of her cousins, a wealthy Kadazan married to a Chinese shopkeeper. Oh, I tell you, in those days, it was very sensitive to mention anything about money to Kadazans. You see, the Kadazans had very little money, because they ate from the land and did not sell things like the Chinese.

The position of the Sino-Kadazans was also tenuous in the past, as they were not seen to fit in readily with either Kadazan or Chinese groups. Glyn-Jones, in her research on the indigenes in Penampang, said:

A Sino-Dusun [Sino-Kadazan] who has been brought up in the town will be laughed at not because his father was Chinese but because he can't handle a buffalo or make a harrow board. Similarly the Chinese are apt to despise the Dusun and Sino-Dusun who have no idea how to manage a business, who haven't been to school and can't read Chinese writing.

(Glyn-Jones, 1953: 105)

In the homes of some Sino-Kadazans, a Chinese parent may point out to his/her children the differences between their Kadazan and Chinese cultures. Doris and Rosalind, two Sino-Kadazan sisters in their 50s and 60s respectively, spoke about their Chinese father who did not hide his disdain for the Kadazans. While Doris and Rosalind did not reject the idea that they were part-Kadazan, some of their siblings were affected by their Chinese father's sentiment and saw things differently. Doris said:

My father was too Chinese, you see. He didn't like that he had so many daughters. He even threw my oldest sister [Agatha] down a well once! She didn't die but maybe this was just to scare her or something. But he was a hard man. Yet, a long time ago people were like this. Even about getting married, he wanted his children to marry his own kind [the Chinese group that he comes from]. As for learning to speak Kadazan, he never did. He would always say to us that Kadazans are *fan-po*,⁶⁶ from the boondocks.

Rosalind added:

He would say *Dusun mau-yung* [Dusuns are worthless/hopeless]. To him, Kadazan or Dusun, it meant the same thing, we're backwards. So among us siblings, Ah Chung doesn't know [how to speak] Kadazan. Ah Mei, too, doesn't. But me and Rosalind, yes, a little. Helen, she doesn't like it. She would call it *Pongku-ker* [Pongku language]. When we speak Kadazan, she would tease and say, '*Pongku, pongku!*' Then, I would say back to her, '*And your blood isn't Pongku!?*'. *Pongku* is simply something to say *fan-po*, meaning *Kadazan po* (Kadazan woman/girl).

Preference for identifying as Kadazan by Sino-Kadazans emerged when Kadazan sentiment rose towards the end of the colonial period. After WWII, Kadazan nationalism became more pronounced. In 1952, Sino-Kadazans formed the Society of

⁶⁶ The term '*fan*', has a pejorative nuance and is used in this instance to create a boundary between the Chinese and the Other. Roslan, a Malay man in his early 60s and married to a Kadazan said, 'I used to have a Chinese girlfriend before I got married. She would call me in jest, "You're a *fan-na*". Her calling me *fan-na* is like saying I am *orang ulu* [meaning in Malay: 'people from the interior' or 'a bumpkin']'.

Kadazan so that Sino-Kadazans, along with other Kadazans and Dusuns in the areas of Penampang and from the adjacent district of Papar, could ‘reinvent their community and enhance the community’s position in the social, economic and political spheres’ (Wong, 2012). In 1961, members of the Society of Kadazan joined UNKO (United National Kadazan Organisation), a political group, to support the formation of a new Federation of Malaysia that would include Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah).

In the 1950s and 1960s, some Sino-Kadazans began to reidentify as ‘Kadazan’ and in some cases, Sino-Kadazans began reindigenising much earlier. The case of the Manjaji family as reported by Danny Wong (2012) is a clear example. The Manjaji family are Sino-Kadazan descendants of Wong Loong (d. 1895); they dropped their Chinese surname ‘Wong’ by the early 1900s. A prominent local figure, Joe Manjaji, the grandson of Wong Loong, wrote articles in the Kadazan language for local newspapers and became a promoter of Kadazan identity and a leader in UNKO. He went on to become a member of the first Malaysian parliament after Independence in 1963. Meanwhile, Richard Maning, a former head of the Sabah State Ministry of Finance, and a great great grandson of Wong Loong, had briefly used the Wong surname. Richard’s father, Francis Malakin, took up the Wong family name at the request of the Chinese school he attended, adopting the name Francis Wong Yu Ken. However, Richard told me that, following Chinese naming practices, as a descendant of Wong through the female line he was not supposed to use the ‘Wong’ surname, and so dropped it.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Personal communication with Richard Maning.

After Independence in 1963, a trend to *buang siang* ('throw away the Chinese surname' in the Malay language) occurred among Sino-Kadazans in Penampang. Motivated by public antipathy towards the Chinese at the time, many Sino-Kadazans sought to avoid prejudice by hiding their Chinese heritage but to also retain their ties as Sabah Natives, an important status if one wanted to claim NT inheritance. *Buang siang* occurs when, for instance, a Chinese father and Kadazan mother register their child at birth using the mother's last name and declare their child as 'Kadazan'. Another *buang siang* strategy involves keeping some parts of the *siang* by conjoining parts of the Chinese syllabary and romanising the result, so that the new surname resembles a Kadazan one. For example, a Sino-Kadazan with a Chinese forebear by the name of 'Lo Pin Jang' might create the surname 'Pinjang'. The phonetically adjusted combination of parts of the ancestor's name now highly resembles a name that a Kadazan is likely to have.

There are reasons to believe that contemporary Kadazans are resinicising—becoming like the Chinese again. For instance, some Kadazan families conduct clan meetings and reunions to recognise their Chinese and Kadazan lineage. In some cases, yearly trips to China are organised so that Sino-Kadazans can visit their Chinese ancestors' places of birth to demonstrate their cultural awareness and to connect with any remaining Chinese relatives. One of the goals of such visits is to register, in the genealogical records of their Chinese place of origin, the names of Sino-Kadazan family members in Sabah. Meanwhile, many Sino-Kadazan families continue to celebrate Chinese New Year. Sino-Kadazan elders take the opportunity during these occasions to give *angpon*⁶⁸ as a sign of good luck and fortune.

⁶⁸ Traditional Chinese envelopes typically red in colour containing money and usually given to the young or unmarried men and women in the family during the Chinese New Year occasion as a sign of good luck and prosperity.

Wong (2012) states that Sino-Kadazans' desire to partner with Chinese in business has increased their desire to resinicise, as the association elevates Kadazan social status in Sabah today, as it has often done in the past. To gain status and facilitate trust with Chinese business partners, many Kadazans are eager to learn the Mandarin language and other Chinese dialects to demonstrate their readiness to do business and capacity to negotiate on their terms. The trend to sinicise is also seen in countries like Indonesia, where hybridised Chinese Indonesians are acquainting themselves with primordial Chineseness, learning Mandarin for instance in order to open up economic opportunities (Hoon, 2017).

The resinicisation among Kadazans is especially clear in the educational pathways taken: many Kadazans send their children to Chinese schools from a very early age so that they may acquire the Chinese language and emulate the behaviours and worldviews of the Chinese. Sheila, a Kadazan mother in her 40s, who does not claim to have any Chinese ancestry, is a single parent with two teenage children and one child in primary school. Sheila was determined at the outset that all of her children should have a Chinese education. She, too, sought to learn some Chinese. 'Thomas, take care of your sister over there', she said in passable Mandarin. 'Oh, you speak Mandarin yourself', I said. Sheila replied, 'I had to, because I want them to learn the language and be competent in it, and if they practise more at home, then they will be able to make it a normal part of their life in school, too'.

Thomas and his older sister, Marilyn, exchanged commentary in Mandarin on the movie they were watching (an English program) while minding their sister, Cornelia, who was busy colouring in her book. 'Chinese school is better, you see', said Sheila, she told me:

They [Chinese schools] really promote discipline in the children. Homework is considered important. I also want my children to understand the Chinese mentality because they are a mega-economy. It's for their future. I want them to put their studies first. If I compare my kids to my sister's, her children put house chores in front of their studies. For my sister, as long as her children go to school that's enough. She doesn't mind if they don't excel.

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the resinicisation of the Kadazans is the return of Chinese surnames. Among my informants, some third or fourth generation Sino-Kadazans sought to emphasise their Chinese identity upon intermarriage with other Sino-Kadazans. For instance, upon becoming parents, some of these younger Sino-Kadazans, especially those who felt close to their Chinese roots, had registered their newborns as 'Chinese' at the Malaysian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Some had further given their children a Chinese surname as well as a two-syllabary Chinese personal name (in addition to the child's Anglo first name given at the time of baptism).

Some informants, however, were wary of resinicising and saw it largely as a trend. These individuals were against the rush to adopt Chinese values. Grace, a Kadazan aged in her 30s, a teacher in a government-run primary school in Penampang, was not convinced that Chinese ways and thinking could guarantee a better future. Grace claimed that not all children who attended Chinese education became smart and hardworking, or excelled in their studies, as the Kadazans were inclined to believe. Grace said:

You know, not all of them are well disciplined, even though they are from Chinese schools. I can prove it. My students from the Chinese school, well, they are 'a thousand times lazy' [*gobulan insoibu*] and 'escape artists' [*kaki escape*]. It depends on the individual, you see. If you send your children to Chinese school, and you yourself don't know anything about Chinese 'that child will be truly worse-off' [*nadaa ibia tanak, bo*]. Not all of them are good.

Some other informants said that while Kadazans continue to emulate the Chinese—rather than the Malays—in order to prosper, Kadazans cannot become ‘just like the Chinese’, as they do not have the heart to be tough and exacting like the Chinese when doing business. For instance, a young Kadazan girl in her teens told me that, given the extent of Chinese influence on the Kadazans, the only way for Kadazans to be less Chinese and more ‘Kadazan’ is to be more compassionate towards people. She also said that Kadazans’ natural affection for nature and animals further distinguished Kadazanness.

Some informants also suggested that Kadazan values are changing too much under Chinese influence and that there is an increasing tendency for Kadazans to treat acquired Chineseness as an integral part of Kadazan identity. For instance, some said Kadazans are now inclined to complain about the slow start of events in the *kampung*. As in many indigenous communities throughout Sabah, Kadazan events commonly start later than notified to ensure that all elders are present prior to the program commencing. However, this relaxed view greatly frustrates Kadazans who are time-conscious, such as Pauline, a 40-year-old Sino-Kadazan. Pauline said:

I don’t understand why we Kadazans can be so trivial about being punctual. The other day, there was a mass held at my sister’s house. But the priest came very late. It was a whole hour that we were waiting there and still no priest. My [Chinese] husband was there and my kids. He was getting frustrated, too. So, you know what? We just left!

Then the next day or so, my sister calls me and has a row with me on the phone. She said I was ‘trying to act like a Chinese’ [*mingsiisina*] being picky about time and so on. She said, why couldn’t I wait like everybody else. Why show my irritation like that. But I said to her, ‘The mass shouldn’t start so late. That’s disrespectful to people too, for starting so late. So, if my trying to be punctual with my time is trying to act like a Chinese then what is being Kadazan? Being late? Late all the time?’ I got mad with her too. Sometimes, I don’t understand why the Kadazans treat time so carelessly.

The topic of money was also keenly debated, as some informants felt that Kadazans were coming to use the so-called '*Chinese punya thinking*' (literally 'Chinese thinking' or 'Chinese approach') for problem-solving. A Kadazan proprietor can be said to be *lokek* (meaning in Chinese 'parsimonious', 'close-fisted' or roughly meaning 'stingy'), if she/he refuses to give a discount on his goods, claiming instead the exact dollar and cent, as a Chinese seller is observed to do.

Meanwhile, monetisation is part of Kadazan practice: some Kadazan informants have said that it has now become commonplace in their family or in their village to contribute money, if they do not have time to personally help out in communal activities, such as clearing up the village compound and the community hall. The exchange of time and energy for money is also seen and widely accepted even in the Kadazan practice of *mogitaatabang* or *gotong-royong* (communal work) required when performing important cultural rituals such as burials. This often happens when Kadazans do not live in the village concerned but in towns, in different cities or overseas. It is also common practice among Kadazans to follow the Chinese custom of giving money as a wedding gift, whether or not the groom or bride is Chinese. Such adoptions of Chinese customs and practices are widespread among contemporary Kadazans, and often go uncontested.

Choosing 'Kadazan' over 'Chinese' among Sino-Kadazans

While identity choice—to be Kadazan or Chinese—can be influenced by sentiment, lifestyle, and religion, it can also be determined by the Malaysian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages or National Registration Department (NRD) as a matter of default, that is, following the identity of one's parent. That is, if one's father is Chinese and mother is Kadazan, it is likely that offspring will be registered as 'Chinese' by the

NRD. In recent years, the NRD has been more flexible in allowing identification to follow the matrilineal line. For instance, a child born in 2011 of a Chinese father and Kadazan mother can be identified as being 'Kadazan' by his/her parents at the time of birth registration.

During my fieldwork in 2010-2011, informants spoke of a trend among Sino-Kadazans to petition the NRD for a formal identity change from 'Chinese' to 'Kadazan'. I observed that those who were involved in changing their identity to Kadazan were typically those who had been registered as 'Chinese' in their birth certificates and identity cards, and who carried the surname of their Chinese parent or ancestor. While at first, this was reminiscent of an earlier trend whereby Sino-Kadazans would identify primarily as 'Kadazan' owing to pressure from Kadazan nationalism, the current trend, however, appears closer to what happened after Independence in 1963 when some Sino-Kadazans, fearing they would lose their right to Sabah Native and Bumiputera statuses, sought to change their names and identify formally as 'Kadazan'.

As part of the transition to Kadazan, many informants performed *buang siang* in order to get rid of their Chinese identity. According to informants, the process for formal re-registration as 'Kadazan' takes place through a lottery system or *cabutan* administered by the NRD. One must apply to be placed in this system and when a person's number is drawn, they will be contacted and asked to appear in front of the Registrar to pursue their case with such evidence as a parent's birth certificate identifying them as 'Kadazan'. One informant said that a formal policy outlining the official process for changing one's identified ethnicity did not in fact exist but when one person successfully requested their identity to be changed to Kadazan using the strategy outlined above, others followed suit in a kind of snowball effect.

Other than being able to retain their Sabah Native status and so become eligible to inherit ancestral Native Title or Native land, a topic of much discussion, informants who changed their identity to Kadazan were also greatly motivated by various socio-economic opportunities for Bumiputera that would be difficult to access otherwise. For example, if they are recognised by the authorities as being Kadazan, and thus being part of a Bumiputera group, then they are entitled to gain access to the much-discussed government-run wealth enhancement programs targeting Natives, the ASB, which offers an interest rate of 11 per cent (compared to 3 per cent paid by local banks).

Among other Bumiputera programs that greatly appeal to Sino-Kadazan parents is the Bumiputera study loan offered under the prospective student's name with the parents acting as loan guarantor. Loan repayments begin after a student completes their studies and formally enters the workforce. Without access to such a loan scheme, parents are compelled to take out a higher interest loan from a private bank. While various educational funds administered by the Malaysian government are open to all Malaysians regardless of ethnic background, scholarships are also offered that prioritise Bumiputera applicants, such as those from the Public Service Department or Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA). Many Sino-Kadazan parents aspire for their child to obtain a Bumiputera scholarship for which there is no repayment. Scholarship holders may be further advantaged by endorsement from the JPA once they have graduated and are seeking employment.

The decision making around label switching differs among Sino-Kadazan individuals: some change their names and formal ethnic identities without much thought, while others find the decision to be difficult and emotional. Sceptical about identity change, Vicky, a 40-year-old Sino-Kadazan from Penampang married to a Sabahan Chinese, saw

the act of abandoning one's Chinese name as drastic, even farcical. Curious about the process, she accompanied her sister, Maria, to the Registrar's office to apply to change her children's ethnic identification. Maria is also married to a Chinese man from *semenanjung* (meaning 'peninsula', a colloquial reference to no particular state on the Malaysian Peninsula). While Maria went ahead with making the change on behalf of her children, Vicky hesitated. She said:

Yes, my sister Maria and I always talk about this topic. But Maria is more concerned about these things than I. Maria says all the time that it is important that we go to the Registrar and change the 'race' in our children's identity cards. She's done it. 'It's all for the good of the kids', she said. My other sister, Jenny, and my brother, Paul, have also made this change for their kids.

I am concerned about all these things but sometimes I feel that everything's so superficial. For example, I am married to a Chinese, too, right? And I am born with a Chinese last name too. Well, it's different now but still my grandfather had Chinese blood [Vicky's maiden name appears more Kadazan]. But I don't care [about my last name being a Chinese name]. I'm just Kadazan, a Sino-Kadazan.

But with Maria, she is super conscious about these things. Even before her kids were born, she was already inventing their names to sound partly Kadazan and partly Chinese. One of her kids has a name that sounds like 'Konlaumee'⁶⁹ or something like that. I mean, it just sounds so weird. It does not make sense. It's so superficial.

Another informant, John, a Sino-Kadazan aged in his 50s, said that it was too easy nowadays to change from 'Chinese' to 'Kadazan'. He said that he could see how the Registrar's current policy through the *cabutan* system was trying to help Sino-Kadazans by minimising the red tape involved. John said:⁷⁰

⁶⁹ 'Konlaumee' or 'Kon-Lau-Mee' is a common Hakka noodle dish typically served at Chinese restaurants in Sabah.

⁷⁰ All John's responses are verbatim translations by the author.

What I can see is that the people in the Registration [office] cannot be bothered. [In the case of] Kadazan parents with Chinese blood, they [the Registration staff] don't put Sino-Native anymore, they don't put Sino-Kadazan anymore. They are fed-up. They look at your parents. If you have one Kadazan, one Chinese, they ask you what you want. If you say Kadazan, they will put 'Kadazan-*lab*' [emphatic marker]. You see, there are so many of us, they cannot process the work. They will say, 'I don't have the power to make that decision', and so they are stuck. So now, with the circular [pamphlet outlining a new government directive], it has been simplified [they are advised to] just ask the person. If you say, 'Sino', they will put Kadazan or Dusun. Kadazan or Dusun, it doesn't matter. As far as I'm concerned, and my friends like me, I'm happy, we're happy.

However, John then told me of an emotional argument that occurred with his sister.

Being the eldest sibling and family matriarch, John's sister vehemently opposed any label change to 'Kadazan'. John said it all started when John's sister's grown-up children also wanted to follow John and his family in changing to the Kadazan label. However, John's sister forbade them from doing so. John said:

...[I told my sister] 'if you want to declare the Chinese [connection], it is very easy. But if you want to declare Kadazan, claim your Native blood, it is difficult. But if you want to claim your Chinese blood, tomorrow you can do that'.

'Look, the situation is very simple. You want to call yourself Kadazan for the main reason to hold the NT [Native Title], that's number one. Number two, your children can work. Number three, you can apply Bumiputera status and enjoy ASB [shares], contract licenses and all that. These are your considerations, correct? Tell me if I am wrong', I said.

Then I said, 'So, what is your problem?' 'No, we are Chinese' [said the sister]. 'So, why don't you declare this to the Registrar? But no you don't, otherwise, how about mother?' [John's mother is Kadazan]. 'You see', I told my sister, 'You got to make a decision you know [for the children], cos these people [John's sister's children] are confused. You are making life difficult for them'.

Despite John's attempts to convince her, his sister did not give her consent to her children making the change. As her children did not dare cross their mother they placed the matter aside. As a last resort, John brought them (his sister and her children) to China to meet their Chinese relatives there. Only after assurance that her children would still be considered 'Chinese' by relatives in China did John's sister agree to the label change. John said:

Our relatives said, 'You people are Malaysian. You are not Chinese from China, you are from Malaysia. Call yourself Malay [even] not Chinese. But in China, you are Chinese, cos we have your record here. So follow what John said. What he says is correct, if it is easier for your future, do it. We have no problem, if you come to China, even if your passports say that you are Muslim, or Russian or what, we know that you are one of ours. We will accept you, no problem with that'.

Meanwhile, there are others who reject the idea of changing identity because of the high pressure involved. Connie, a Sino-Kadazan in her 30s, thought hard about changing to 'Kadazan' and felt ambivalent about the whole process. She spoke of not following the crowd and taking the time to consider the gravity of the identity change decision. In the end, it was too late for her to make the change. Connie told me:

Well, yes, in the end I wanted to do what other people are doing and ask to be registered as 'Kadazan'. But I don't know, I couldn't make up my mind, and then people told me that the Registrar had suddenly 'frozen' the label changing. Honestly, this thing of choosing 'Kadazan' over 'Chinese' in front of the Registrar makes me feel scared and depressed, because I feel like I'm being forced to give up one culture for another.

Some informants said that, even after undergoing identity transformation, they continue to feel some stress over their identity. This is especially true for those Sino-Kadazans who are now officially 'Kadazan' but did not give up their *siang*. These people feel insecure since their names show that they are linked to the Chinese. 'It's true. It's not

that easy', said Jacinta, aged in her late 30s, a Sino-Kadazan married to a local Chinese.

She explained:

You see, it's not that easy. So you should try your best to get this [change of label]. If they [the children] are recognised as Bumiputera, they will be able to apply for educational loans. I told my son that yes, there is 'help' coming from above with this ethnic label change, but it is still important that he opens his mouth and be vocal and pushes himself out there. You see, his name still has the *siang*. But what can you do? So, you see, you still have to push yourself out there.

Some Sino-Kadazan informants, after changing their identity, experienced awkward situations such as when public officials scrutinised their Kadazan identity. I was told that, in some cases, Sino-Kadazans were asked to perform their Nativeness on demand by speaking or singing a song in the Kadazan language. This was experienced as both embarrassing and shameful, especially if an individual was unable to demonstrate their Nativeness as required. Having to demonstrate their Kadazanness as part of demonstrating their indigenous status contrasts sharply with the experiences of other Sabah Natives who can take their Native belonging for granted and do not have to demonstrate their indigenous identity in front of an official.

In one example, Stanley and Shirley, two young Sino-Kadazan cousins in their early 20s, renewed their Identity Cards to become officially recognised as 'Kadazan'. Both Stanley and Shirley have Chinese last names owing to their paternal Chinese grandfather.

Stanley said that Shirley did not fully comprehend that government officers might put her new identity to the test in the process of applying for an ASB account. Stanley said:

Shirley thought that she could just go up to any ASB counter with her IC [Identity Card] and open an account in her name like everyone else [other indigenes] does. But I told her be careful because Auntie so-and-so said it all depends who's dealing with you over the counter. They can be mean and ask you to produce more supporting documents.

Then, when Shirley got there, they [ASB officers] gave her a hard time. They said that she looked too Chinese to be a Kadazan. And then, they asked her to speak in Kadazan. Of course, Shirley does not know how to speak Kadazan. Her mother always told her to learn the language because it would be useful one day, but she did not. So now she was made to feel ashamed [*kana kasi malu*]. Shirley said she felt so embarrassed that she left the ASB office. She's not gotten around to opening her account since the incident.

Meanwhile, there were also some Sino-Kadazans who did not want to become 'Kadazan'. Many said they had no desire to do so, while a few said they felt they simply did not belong as 'Kadazan'. One informant said that he had negative experiences because of his mixed identity, and simply did not wish to court the idea of officially becoming Kadazan. Marvin, a Sino-Kadazan man, aged in his early 50s said:

I tell you a story. This man, X, until now, he is the worst. He got it from me one day at a coffee shop. There were 8 or 9 of them big-shots there. Since X knows me very well, he saw me passing by and thought that was a good time to dig me in the ribs. 'I'm in a hurry', I said as I sat down with them. Most of them knew me. Then he started his teasing, 'So, Marvin, the problem with you is that you are neither...nor' and he started chuckling. The people there couldn't figure out what he meant by 'neither...nor'.

But I said, 'Hey, I know what you mean, so please get that stupid smile off your face. You know how many Chinese in the world, 1.6 billion, Kadazan there are 300,000 only. And you have the cheek to tell me that I am neither nor. Who are you to say this? What are you? What is your background? You answer me this'. He turned red and kept quiet.⁷¹

Discussions with Sino-Kadazans who had not switched to the Kadazan label showed that while some worried that the switch was irreversible, cultural reasons were also at play in reaching a decision not to switch. Loyalty to the Chinese name and label is considered an expression of filial piety, a key tenet in Chinese culture that includes the tradition of ancestor worship. Some informants said that, in denying their Chinese

⁷¹Verbatim translation by the author.

blood through the act of *buang siang*, they would disrespect their Chinese elders and culture. Further, they expressed devotion to their family name and pride in their *siang* and being a descendant of what may be a long line of Sino-Kadazans in Sabah.

Other informants who retained their Chinese identity spoke of the trend among Sino-Kadazans to formalise their Kadazan identity as an act of ‘de-ethnicising’ and as alienating Sino-Kadazans from their Chinese culture. These people felt that once traces of their Chinese heritage became eliminated, nothing remained to identify their hybrid Sino-Kadazan identity. Some felt that some day they could incur blame from their children for muddling their backgrounds and family histories, especially as Kadazans continue to heavily out marry. For Catholic Sino-Kadazans, for instance, their Chinese name and label becomes the last reference point or connection to their Chinese culture since they do not practise it. The act of *buang siang* and officially becoming Kadazan therefore means the dissolution of ties to the Chinese.

Today, it is probable that among so-called pure Chinese individuals in Sabah—that is, those who are categorised in the census as ‘Chinese’, identify as Chinese and live a Chinese lifestyle—there are some with Sino-Kadazan roots who have chosen, for some reason, to bury past Kadazan ties. Among these people, the Bumiputera connection and Kadazan identity petered out at some point, failing to be transferred to the following generation. This can be seen in the case of Henry, aged in his mid-20s who identifies as Chinese and whose parents are identified as ‘Chinese’ in their birth certificates. Henry told me:

Now and again, my mother would pester my father about this Bumiputera thing. You see, she said that we are actually part-Native somewhere [in our genealogy]. My father’s people: I think his mother is like Sino or something like that; my dad is a Bumiputera. He has access to all the Bumiputera programs.

My mum would get riled about this because my dad never bothered to get us registered properly [as a ‘Kadazan’ and ‘Sabah Native’]. ‘A waste!’ [*Sayang!*], she would say. Because then we could have applied for a scholarship and ASB. However, my dad would reply and say things like ‘no need’ and ‘won’t change a thing’.

Further discussion with Sino-Kadazan informants revealed some ambivalence around changing one’s identity for the purpose of attaining Bumiputera status. The process of becoming identified as Kadazan was considered excessively drawn out and tenuous by some; the return was not worth the effort invested. Others said that it was better to be self-reliant and not dependent on government handouts—a line of thinking that is associated more with the Chinese than with the Kadazan. Still other informants insisted that taking up Bumiputera status was important.

Several informants queried whether they actually needed the Bumiputera status to survive. Connie, mentioned earlier, said in retrospect that after failing to become ‘Kadazan’ she felt at first that she had missed out on becoming Bumiputera but her Chinese relatives advised her to get over her disappointment. Connie told me:

For me, I am proud to have a *siang*... but yes, in the end, I wish I did go and change my label. But my Chinese relatives told me not to be too upset. So, to make ourselves happy with all this Bumiputera talk, my Chinese relatives like to tell us, ‘Ah, so what with this Bumiputera [identity]. We don’t need it anyway’.

Some non-Muslim Kadazans (including non-Muslim Sino-Kadazans) and Chinese reflected on their shared experiences of subordination, particularly in public service, under the relatively superior position of Muslim and Malay Bumiputeras, and this acted to embolden their stance to be independent of the Bumiputera status. For instance, when these Kadazan informants confided in their Chinese friends about their struggles as Bumiputeras, they were likely to be reminded of the subordinate position of the

Chinese as ‘second-class citizen’—non-Bumiputera to the Bumiputeras. The Chinese further likened the Kadazans’ overall subservient position (as Bumiputera Other in relation to the Bumiputera Malays) to the Chinese position of being ‘second-class Bumiputera’ to the Malays. In another example, it was said that non-Muslim Kadazans, when competing against Muslims for job promotions and in vying for senior positions in the public sector, were considered a second choice (behind Muslim applicants). Chinese informants related to this situation: it was often only in the absence of Muslim and non-Muslim Bumiputera employees that Chinese employees gained the promotion or the position they sought.

In another example in the context of the workplace, non-Muslim Kadazan informants said they looked to the Chinese to support them and to help them withstand the Bumiputera imbalance. For instance, some informants said that Chinese staff members had been known to defend their Kadazan co-workers, especially when Muslim supervisors shortlisted Muslim applicants and included only one or two non-Muslim applicants, whether indigenous or not. When this resulted in complaint, the director of the department could reject the shortlist in order to prevent the issue of religion affecting work relations. Often disparities between non-Muslim and Muslim staff could go unchecked for long periods and non-Muslim staff felt powerless to improve their situation. However, when Chinese staff became vocal about the disparity between the number of non-Muslim and Muslim workers, their Muslim heads of departments usually addressed the situation, to avoid being seen as prejudiced. In this respect, the Chinese indirectly had become a sort of advocate for non-Muslim Kadazans.

However, some Sino-Kadazans agreed with their Chinese friends and relatives that despite their shared experiences, it would be foolish of them to not try to alter their identity just because they felt bitter about the politicisation of the Bumiputera category. Some Chinese in fact sought to encourage Sino-Kadazans to attempt to become Bumiputera claiming that resources for Bumiputera were not finite. Peter, a Kadazandusun man in his 40s, said that his Chinese friend Roger would often discuss the benefits of Bumiputera status. Peter said:

Roger always tells me how he does not have the same opportunities as me [as a Bumiputera] to apply for things. In some ways, Roger says that he is jealous of me and tells me this all the time: ‘You don’t know how far and deep this Bumiputera [identity] can take you, especially, you Kadazandusuns, you don’t know as much as the Malays. Take advantage of it, learn everything you can, do make full use of your Bumiputera status’.

Yet, for many Sino-Kadazans, their situation—alternating between ‘Chinese’ and ‘Kadazan’ identities—is not ideal. In recent years, activist Sino-Kadazans and other Sino-Natives have worked to formalise their groups and to petition for full recognition from the state. According to an association called ‘Sino-Native KDM’ (PPSBS)⁷², it is ‘unconstitutional’ to deprive Sino-Natives, including Sino-Kadazans, of their identity and rights to their own native certification.⁷³ PPSBS leaders want the National Registration Department (responsible for registering births, deaths and marriages) to include ‘Sino-Kadazan’ as a racial group. It is unclear whether this has been formally or fully adopted in the registration system, as mentioned earlier in the thesis, there is no federal process whereby Sino-Kadazans are recognised equally as other Bumiputerans.

⁷² Note that the Sino-Native KDM (PPSBS), which stands for ‘Sino-Native Kadazan Dusun Murut Association’ has made changes to their association name over time. PPSBS also refers itself as the ‘Sabah Sino Kadazandusun Murut Association’ (SSKMA) and more recently as ‘Sabah Sino KDM Association’ (SSKA). The PPSBS/SSKMA/SSKA has branches in districts where Sino-Kadazandusun and Sino-Murut predominate, such as in the capital city of Kota Kinabalu and in the west coast districts of Penampang and Keningau, among others.

⁷³ See “Sinos seek official NRD recognition”, 2017.

In the meantime, Sino-Kadazan activism is growing. For instance, Sino-Kadazan activists are now advocating for the rights of Sino-Kadazans to open ASB accounts.⁷⁴ The Sabah Sino KDM Association (SSKA) recently collaborated with a large Malaysian private bank, Maybank, which provides loans and financing programs designed specifically for Bumiputeras, to petition ASB headquarters in Kota Kinabalu. Thirty individuals, who did not possess the SAN to support their Bumiputera claim, were allowed to open their ASB accounts after ASB officials scanned their birth certificates to determine that they had at least one Native parent.⁷⁵

However, while Sino-Kadazan activists are gaining support, several issues confront the Sino-Kadazan movement. Firstly, the authenticity of Sino-Kadazan leaders' Sabah Native status has come into question. State assemblyman Jimmy Wong was found to be 'pure' Chinese rather than Sino-Kadazan, resulting in his SAN being retracted by the Sabah Native Court.⁷⁶ When asked about Jimmy Wong's case, KDCA responded that it was a 'personal matter' that did not involve them. Some informants interpreted this as an attempt at neutrality given that KDCA president Pairin Kitingan, held political office in the state government. However, others said that KDCA's focus was rather to promote Kadazandusun identity rather than Sino-Kadazan identity.

⁷⁴ See "Sinos finally get to open ASB accounts", 2015.

⁷⁵ Another program targeting Sino individuals is the annual 'Sino Day' celebration on November 11 started by the Sabah Sino Native Association (SSNA) in 2011. The SSKA also conducts the annual Kaamatan event for its members and a Raani Tavanus (Beauty Queen) contest for its single female members. See "Nov 11 is Sino day", 2011.

⁷⁶ See "Retract Jimmy's Cert without delay", 2011.

Secondly, a counter-proposal to uphold the rights of all Sino-Natives as a collective was seen by Sino-Kadazan supporters as competing with their own movement. A media report in 2011, the National Registration Department (NRD) had been registering Sino-Kadazan and Sino-Dusun children as ‘Sino-Native’ without the knowledge of parents.⁷⁷ Melissa, a 30 year old Sino-Kadazan and, critical of the ‘Sino-Native’ category, explained:

How can ‘Sino-Kadazan’ be placed in the same category as ‘Sino-Bajau’? Yes, it may be called ‘Sino-Native’ but being ‘Sino-Kadazan’ is very different from ‘Sino-Bajau’. Who is really in that [Sino-Bajau] category? Isn’t that opening the door for more PTIs [illegal immigrants] to get their identities ‘cleaned’ [legitimised] there? I will not accept being ‘Sino-Native’ in this way unless the government recognises ‘Sino-Kadazan’ as a proper ethnic group first. We have been here since before Independence and yet the government has not properly recognised us.

A third challenge facing the Sino-Kadazan movement is the public debate on delimiting Sabah Native claims by Sino-Kadazans up to the third consecutive generation. Spokespersons of the ‘Sabah Sino Kadazandusun Murut Association’ (SSKMA) said that the move to delimit claims ‘would trouble the minds and souls of the Sino citizens as it involves their fundamental rights’. Kevin Lim, the Penampang branch president of SSKMA further said that, ‘such rights should not be threatened by the government, instead the government should be giving greater assurance that those rights would be protected’. Some Sino-Kadazans said that they were perplexed as to why other Sabah Natives seemed intent on them ‘giving up’ their ethnic belonging to any other group on account of Native rights.

⁷⁷ See “‘Sino-Native’ term a threat to KDM identity”, 2011.

A similar debate exists among Sabahan indigenes at large who are now involved in promoting the concept of 'Indigenous People' in lieu of Bumiputera. Proponents of the 'Indigenous People' model support rural and marginalised Bornean indigenous groups in Sabah because of the latter's struggle with Native land claims, for instance. However, proponents favour indigenous recognition through the patrilineal line with the antecedent (grandfather) being born of (two) Bornean indigenous parents, that is, the forebear must come from a group that originates from the island of Borneo. However, given the mixing of groups in Sabah, there is likely to be a large proportion of so-called indigenous Sabahans who are from mixed Bornean and non-Bornean groups primarily from the Philippines and Indonesia, and among these indigenes are those with mixed identities such as the Sino-Kadazans.

The fourth challenge and perhaps one of the key criticisms towards Sino-Kadazan identity activism concerns the categories 'Kadazan' and 'Sino-Kadazan'. Kadazandusun informants, who were critical of Sino-Kadazanism because it opposed the Kadazandusun movement, did not want Sino-Kadazanism to contribute to the fragmentation of the non-Muslim Bumiputera groups. These informants said that many Kadazans could potentially claim Sino-Kadazan as identity and this could leave 'Kadazan' as an empty category. However, some Sino-Kadazan informants who were aware of the issue among Kadazandusuns said that this could never happen, as many Sino-Kadazans remained loyal to the Kadazan label, in recognition of the cultural group they come from.

Meanwhile, there are some Kadazans with weaker Sino identification and who may allude to Sino-Kadazan identity but otherwise do not solely identify as being one. Some informants said that it had become common among Kadazans that while they could be 'Sino', they could also be Muslim, Christian or Buddhist; and have other group descent such as Indian; and/or have intermarried with other ethnic groups from other parts of the world including with *orang putih* ('white person', a reference to Westerners/Caucasians). To identify exclusively as 'Sino-Kadazan' therefore would not make a lot of sense, as it would mean denying other identities. These have found the plethora of labels at their disposal a way to maintain equilibrium within their identity, and not to mention the ability to exercise their own prerogative as to which label most resonated with them.

In so saying, I also found at times that informants use 'Sino' to simply connote being one of mixed identity, whether or not clear lines of affiliation linked them to the Kadazan, Chinese or Sino-Kadazan groups. In some cases, one's official identity as 'Sino-Kadazan' does not relate at all to one's self-identity but in fact of a mistaken identity. For example, Judy, in her 50s, was classified as a Sino-Kadazan at birth, although her father was Indian and her mother a Kadazan. Judy was told by her parents (who in turn were informed by registration officers) that there was no category for Kadazan-Indian individuals in the birth application form and that the only mixed data field was 'Sino-Kadazan'. Judy said it had annoyed her that this was her official identity and in recent years, after hearing about the possible identity change to Kadazan from her Sino-Kadazan friends, she went to the Registrar's office to sort out her mistaken identity. Judy said:

Again, I was given the same reply that my parents got years ago: that there was no space in the Identity Card application for “Kadazan-Indian” unless I consented to being slotted under “Other” [*Lain Lain*]. Then, the officer said to me: “How about this? Which do you want to choose? ‘Kadazan’ or ‘Indian?’” Immediately, I said, “Kadazan”, because you see, all this while, like the Sino-Kadazans, I could not be recognised properly as Sabah Native let alone as Bumiputera. I am very happy now. As “Kadazan”, my children, too, could renew their National Identity Card and ask that they are listed as “Kadazan” like me. Now, we can apply for ASB and other things.

The issue of Sino-Kadazan versus Kadazan identity thus continues to be the subject of ongoing debate. Some informants continue to believe that the Sino-Kadazan grouping simply cannot work because there is no basis to the ethnic separation from a cultural point of view, as contrastive identity markers to distinguish Sino-Kadazan from Kadazan do not exist. While some non Sino-Kadazan informants wondered whether Sino-Kadazans had developed a unique language or tradition to distinguish their group from others including the Kadazan and Chinese. Such views are common in Sabah and point to the classic cultural essentialism that continues to run through not just the Kadazan group but also many other groups in Sabah, whenever they seek to distinguish themselves from one another.



Local Sabahan artist, Yu Tian Long, sings 'I love Sino-Kadazan' in Hakka with some lyrics in Kadazan, Mandarin and English. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVO04PdGuNE>

See also 'In Hakka song for Sino-Kadazan girls, a Johorean's paeon to multicultural Sabah (VIDEO)', Malay Mail Online. 2015. Source: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/in-hakka-song-for-sino-kadazan-girls-a-johoreans-paeon-to-multicultural-sab#es4bPCvTvK2HpOLK.99>

Chapter 5: Kadazan and Dusun

The Kadazans and Dusuns have one of the most complex inter-ethnic histories in Sabah. This is apparent from their differing categories in census records over time. Presently, the Kadazans and Dusuns fall under the Kadazandusun category in the Sabah and Malaysian censuses. In colonial censuses in the past, the category 'Dusun' comprised both Dusuns and Kadazans, resulting in Kadazans being identified officially as Dusun. In the 1960 colonial census, 'Kadazan' appeared as a separate category beside the categories of 'Dusun', 'Murut' and 'Other Indigenous'. This differentiation of Kadazans and Dusuns ceased in the 2000 census following the announcement in 1997 by Kadazan and Dusun leaders that they had unified their identities to become 'Kadazandusun'. (I will discuss the combining of group labels to Kadazandusun in the next chapter.)

While it is heavily assumed by outsiders that the Kadazan and Dusun labels may be arbitrarily used therefore given the inconsistency in their categories, and especially since Kadazans and Dusuns are now cooperating together as a single political unit under the combined identity of 'Kadazandusun', I did not find this to be the case: the Kadazan and Dusun labels are socially marked in Penampang, where I conducted my study, and Kadazans there who want to maintain distinction from Dusuns further look to do so by using language as a boundary.

In terms of anthropological evidence, the Kadazan and Dusun agricultural groups form two distinct societies. According to Appell and Harrison (1969), Kadazan and Dusun have evolved separately for a considerable period of time, with the Dusuns being 'dry-rice' planters (hill rice system) and the Kadazans being 'wet-rice' planters (irrigated rice

system). The divergence between Kadazan and Dusun also appears in gender roles: Dusun males and females tend to perform tasks collaboratively as a unit, while Kadazan females pursue separate socio-economic activities from Kadazan males. For instance, Kadazan women in the past performed riverine fishing and conducted the early rice planting stages, such as raising seedlings and planting, while their male counterparts pursued rice planting but also rubber tapping.⁷⁸

Kadazan and Dusun groups are culturally heterogeneous peoples (Appell & Harrison, 1969: 212; Appell, 1968: 2) with degrees of similarities that are evident in material culture. For instance, similarities are seen in food, where traditional Kadazan and Dusun cooking methods rely mainly on boiling and preservation (Wanita P.B.S. Division of Moyog, 1980).⁷⁹ In terms of traditional clothing, black is the predominantly colour: Kadazan and Dusun males wear loose tops and pants tied at the waist and a *sigah* (cloth headgear); while women typically wear unhemmed cotton sarong (Lasimbang et al, 1997).⁸⁰ More similarities are seen in dance movements (*sumazau*) for ritual or entertainment purposes; a common musical instrument among Kadazan and Dusun groups is the brass or bronze gongs called *tagung* (Benggon-Charuruks & Padasian, 1992).⁸¹

⁷⁸ See Glyn-Jones (1953).

⁷⁹ Fermentation is another method to preserve meat and/or vegetables. These are fermented in cooked rice and consumed after a number of days (known as *nonsom* in Kadazan and *bosou* in Dusun). A preserving agent, *pangi* (scientific name: *pangium edule*), is used to ferment the *nonsom* or *bosou*. Both Kadazan and Dusun groups also process cooked rice to become distilled (*montoken*) and undistilled wine (*libing*) using yeast.

⁸⁰ Unmarried and married Kadazan women typically wear sleeveless and short sleeve tops, respectively. A silver link belt (*tangkong*) at the waist and hip-belts made of brass rings (*bimpogol*) are also worn to show affluence. The Tindal women costume shows sleeves that are layered and multi-coloured; round silver clasps dangle from the neck.

⁸¹ The traditional dance and music of Kadazans and Dusuns also vary. Dancing is in pairs and involves gently bouncing from one foot to another with arms bobbing up and down by one's side. The lead male dancer will give a warrior cry (*pangkis*) to signal a change in dance pattern. In the Rungus *mongigol* dance, dancers gently twist their feet while moving their arms. The

More Kadazan and Dusun cultural similarities are found in their customs and beliefs. In marriage negotiations, for instance, it is customary for the bride's family to receive a 'bride-price' (*nopung*) consisting of cash, brass canons and/or gongs, Chinese jars, and buffaloes. Both male and female children can inherit heirlooms and land and a share of their parents' estates (Rutter, 1929), unless where a couple dies without heir, their properties will go to the closest blood relative on either side (Phelan, 1997). Kadazan and Dusun spiritual leader can be both genders. For instance, a *bobobizan* (also known as *bobolian* or *tantagas*), is consulted to perform a ritual and negotiate with spiritual beings believed to inflict pain on humankind (Pugh-Kitingan et al, 2011). The concept of healing and reparation involves a fine known as *sogit*, which is adhered to by both Kadazan and Dusun groups.⁸²

Today, Kadazans can be more clearly distinguished from Dusuns due to the impact of religion, education, modernity and intermarriage. In terms of Christianity, Kadazans, particularly in Penampang, are mainly Catholic, while Dusuns are Catholic and followers of other denominations, such as Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB), Seventh Day Adventist. Among Rungus, for instance, the Basel church (Lutheran in orientation; Swiss-funded in earlier days) is prominent in Kudat and is led mainly by Hakka Chinese. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Muslim Dusuns ('Dusun Islam') are prominent due to spread of Islam to their areas before WWII (Joko et al, 2015).

dancing patterns of Lotud and Tindal groups are characterised by criss-crossing side-to-side footwork. Traditional Kadazan and Dusun dancing and music are commonly performed during weddings and cultural celebrations.

⁸² The more serious the offence, the higher the *sogit*. At present, the village head and/or a council of elders are typically consulted to determine the appropriate *sogit*. For instance, past fines for cases of adultery could involve a penalty prescribed by adat (custom) and 'a fine [*sogit*] of \$100 or a year's rigorous imprisonment in lieu of payment' (Rutter, 1929: 136). Today, the *sogit lapau* (fine for adultery) can also comprise the giving of a pig and buffalo to the children of the (first) wife. See "Sogit Lapau for marrying without informing wife," 2006.

Perhaps the most apparent cultural distinction between Kadazans and Dusuns in the present is the extensive intermarriage occurring between the Kadazans and the Chinese, as discussed in the previous chapter. The onset of western education in the late 1800s leading to changes in occupation in public administration, governance and politics is evident among Kadazans (Reid, 1997). Their proximity to the city of Kota Kinabalu also makes Kadazan areas relatively more modernised and this has a direct impact on farming, particular rice-planting.⁸³

However, Kadazan and Dusun relationship became increasingly complex owing to their political reconstruction of identity resulting in sharing of ethnic labels and identity mergers. Towards the end of the colonial period, Kadazan leaders decided that it would be politically advantageous for Kadazans and Dusuns to unite into a single grouping in anticipation of the Malaysian confederation. These leaders believed that the Kadazan-Dusun group was entitled to political primacy on the basis of its greater numbers and greater claim to indigeneity in Sabah, and would achieve it if they acted in a united fashion (Reid, 2010: 195). To unite the Kadazan and Dusun groups, their leaders, mostly Kadazans, sought to reinvent a new identity. This unified identity was given the Kadazan label, because of the view held by Donald Stephens, the top Kadazan leader at the time that 'Dusun' bore the stigma of colonisation because it was an exonym, bestowed by the British government. As Ongkili explains:

⁸³ The reduced interest in farming and increased pressure to be a developed town saw many paddy-fields in Penampang sold for local (government and commercial) plans. According to a 'Town and Country Planning Memorandum' on the Penampang district land use and planning scheme, 2/5 of the low-lying lands or 'flat floodplain lands' in Penampang are developed; with the development of the remaining 3/5 underway (Sabah State Government, 2001). At the time of writing, the actual percentage of Kadazan people engaged in farming is not known. On a national scale, only 10 per cent of the Malaysian population are employed or engaged in the agriculture, hunting and forestry industry whereas more than half are in the service industry (for example, as teachers, nurses, civil workers, among others) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2009).

The Kadazans are the largest racial group in Sabah. In earlier days, and during the colonial period, they were given free-of-charge the name Dusun. Unfortunately for their colonial masters, these indigenous Borneans repudiated that name and declared that it had become obnoxious not only because they never called themselves cheerfully as Dusuns but also because that label which had been tagged on them bears the dirty stigma of colonialism.

(Ongkili, 1976: 6)

Stephens however struggled to convince all Dusuns to reconceptualise the Kadazan and Dusun identities into a single form. By the end of the colonial period, Dusun leaders were more opposed to Sabah's joining the Malaysian confederation than Kadazan leaders were. Further, there was Dusun perception that the Kadazan label as an autonym referred only to indigenes living in urbanised coastal-plains areas. Many Dusuns saw the Kadazan label as belonging to elites while the Dusun label was viewed as the identity of rural folk or *kampung* (village) people in the eyes of many Kadazans.

Nevertheless, at the inauguration of UNKO (United National Kadazan Organisation) in 1961, the only political party at the time dedicated to non-Muslim indigenes, Stephens urged all Dusun and Murut leaders to adopt the Kadazan label as the sole name for all non-Muslim indigenous groups in the state (Topin, 1997: 22). Some Murut leaders agreed and provided a written agreement renouncing the name 'Murut' for 'Kadazan' but many Dusun leaders protested against what they saw as Kadazan hegemony and sought to prevent this from happening. In 1967, G. S. Sundang, an OKK (Orang Kaya-Kaya) (a title typically carried by influential and wealthy men) of the Dusuns, led a pro-Dusun group to form the United Sabah Dusun Association (USDA) (Topin, 1997).

Due to the rejection from many Dusuns towards the Kadazan label, the meaning behind ethnic labels, especially the Kadazan label, often come into question. Rutter had stated that the so-called 'Dusun person only describes himself generically as a 'tulun tindal' (landsman) or, on the west coast, particularly at Papar, as a 'Kadazan' (1929: 31). 'Kadazan', for instance, had appeared as the race of several individuals' Catholic baptismal records in 1889 in the area of Papar, a district adjacent to Penampang (Wong 2012: 108). The term Kadazan also appeared in the 1920s in language research by Catholic priests, who stated that Kadazan was the name of the language used on the west coast of Sabah (Gossens, 1924; Staal, 1926). Meanwhile, Appell suggests that while 'Dusun' was the referent term originating in the sultanate period, the term 'Ida'an' was also used by Muslim communities in reference to Dusuns (1968: 1-2).

In terms of the Kadazan label, there is a connotation that 'Kadazan' is a common noun and not a name of group of people. Wong states how the term is commonly seen as being derived from *kadai* (shop) as opposed to *kebun* or *dusun* (orchard) (2012: 108). Kadazan apologists argue the meaning of 'Kadazan' as 'shop' [kakadazan] is a flawed perception among some Dusuns because there were no shops in the usual sense of the word in the Kadazan dominated districts, Penampang and Papar, until the 1960s (Tunggolou 1997). Cultural studies by the KDCA show that the word *kadazan* appears in *bobohizan* chants to mean 'people' in contrast to spirit beings (Guriting, 1991; Topin, 2000; Tunggolou, 1999).

However, given how Kadazan identity has become politically linked with Dusun, this has meant that over time, some of those who are not born of Kadazan parents or do not lead a Kadazan lifestyle may call themselves 'Kadazan' by choice. At the same time,

owing to past convention in the colonial period, many Kadazans have been recorded in census as 'Dusun' as well as 'Kadazan', post-Independence. For instance, some Kadazans born prior to Independence in 1963 may be identified as 'Dusun' on their birth certificates but these have registered their children, born after 1963, as 'Kadazan'. Further, despite the rejection from USDA leaders, some Dusun individuals officially took up the Kadazan label, and this can be seen in birth records of individuals I spoke with who do not typically hail from either Penampang or Papar, or have Kadazan parents. The official identity of some Dusuns in Penampang and other parts of Sabah may thus be 'Kadazan' owing to the promotion of the Kadazan label. It is not clear therefore whom among Kadazandusuns today had been previously recorded in past censuses as Kadazan or Dusun.

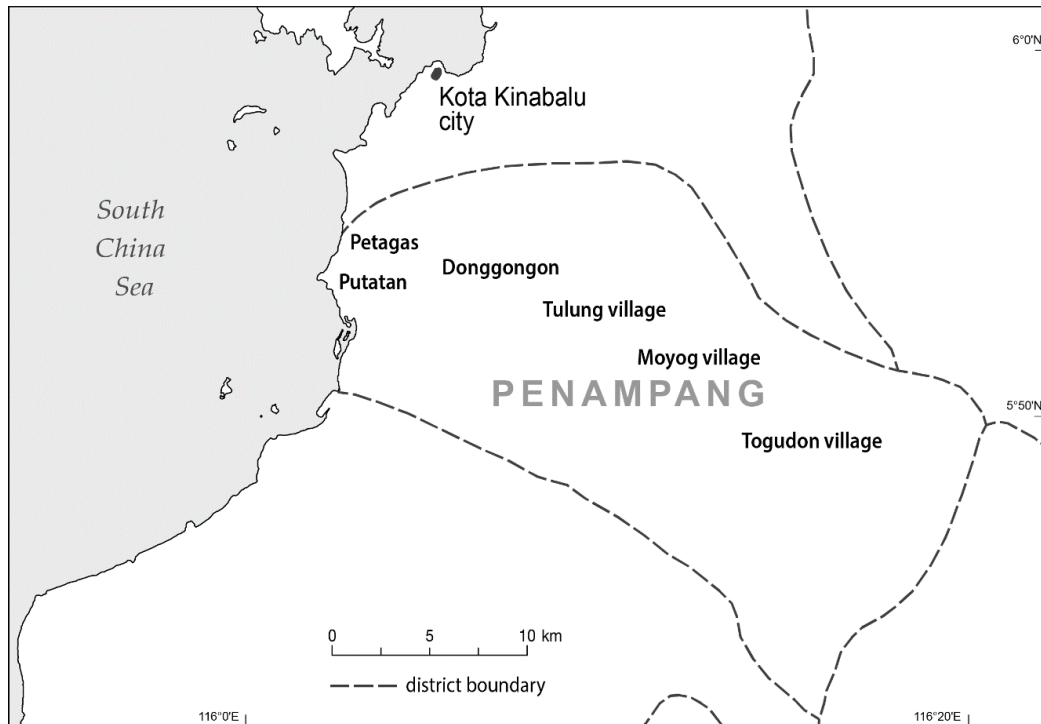
As I found in Penampang, the notion of who constitutes a 'Kadazan' or a 'Dusun' is complex. By location, it can be said that Dusuns living on the Penampang plains are 'Kadazan' given that they identified differently from Hill Dusuns (Glyn-Jones, 1953: 118). Penampang Kadazans and Dusuns may further be identified based on relative position along the Moyog River, the largest tributary in the Penampang region. Many Kadazans and Dusuns, especially the older generations, distinguish each another according to their respective up-river or down-river position. The terms *hivan*⁸⁴ (or *liwan* in the Dusun dialect) and *sokid* (up-hill), for instance, are also used by Kadazans to refer to Dusuns. Some older Kadazans also told me that they call themselves the *Dusun Laut* (Sea Dusun) to the Dusuns, who are the *Dusun Darat* (Land Dusun).

⁸⁴ While the general impression is that *hivan* connotes the hinterland, Luping (2011) states that *hivan* or *liwan* means 'forgotten'. Luping says, "The Liwan of Ranau and Tambunan call themselves by this name because they thought they were the forgotten children of Kinoingan (creator-God) and Nunuk Ragang (Red Banyan Tree)" (2011: 31). (I will discuss the Nunuk Ragang in greater detail in the following chapter).

Language further marks the Kadazan in relation to the Dusun. For instance, individuals may be identified as ‘Kadazan’ in Penampang on the basis of their use of the Tangaa dialect while Dusuns are seen as speaking the Bundu dialect, the primary Dusunic dialect in the hill areas in Penampang and in the adjacent district of Tambunan on the Crocker Range. Linguistically, Kadazan Tangaa is similar to Dusun Bundu in structure, but there is a significant degree of variation in terms of phonology between these dialects, which is also seen in the differences in stress, pitch and length (Lees & Lees, n.d.; Miller, 1993). Most Kadazan and Dusun speakers attribute differences in their dialects to native intuition and say that differences are a matter of one’s *bozuke* (or *loyuke* in the Dusun dialect), meaning accent. This native intuition often prompts many Kadazans and Dusuns to view their dialects as being ‘more or less’ similar to one another.⁸⁵

The following map provides a rough idea of Kadazan versus Dusun distribution in Penampang according to speech areas. Villages located easternmost from Donggongon Township in Penampang are more inland and elevated and villagers tend to speak Dusun, for instance, the villages of Tulung, Moyog and Togudon. The Dusun speech area is thus progressively east and inland towards Togudon village. In contrast, Kadazan speech areas are located in the coastal areas and are spread throughout Donggongon and surrounding villages as well as in Putatan town and the Petagas area. The rate of mutual intelligibility between Kadazan and Dusun speakers is high with more than 90 per cent of cognates shared (Tangit, 2005). Note therefore that many speakers in the Kadazan-Dusun speech boundaries areas speak both dialects.

⁸⁵ See Appendix A for tables on Kadazan and Dusun sound correspondences; and examples of sound correspondences in several shared cognates. Note that this appendix also features a sample of Kadazandusun text, the subject of discussion in the following chapter.



Map 3. Penampang, towns and villages (Kadazan and Dusun speech areas)

Yet, despite the clear speech communities and boundaries, I found that Kadazan and Dusun speech areas do not actually correlate more broadly with Kadazan or Dusun identities: Dusun speakers may not necessarily identify as Dusun. That is, Kadazan is preferred as an identity label regardless of whether the individual speaks Kadazan or Dusun. At a Kadazan-Dusun boundary, Kampung Tulung (Tulung village), I spoke to two female elders in their late 70s to early 80s whom I met while crossing a hanging bridge above the Moyog River. I asked in Kadazan: *'Inai, tubun Dusun naku poingizɔn doiti?'* (Auntie, do Dusuns live here?). One of them replied in Dusun, 'No, there are no Dusuns here. We are the Kadazan. You have to go farther up to the villages there. Those people there are the Dusuns'. The elderly Kadazan woman pointed to the mountain ranges on the Penampang highlands.

The Penampang lowlands and highlands, being the so-called Kadazan and Dusun areas respectively, are further heavily marked by socio-economic distinction. The plains and areas towards the coastline are relatively more modernised than the hills area, of which some parts remain difficult to access due to lack of roads. In relation to highlanders, Penampang inhabitants on the plains—the so-called Kadazans—tend to be seen as more modernised, as they were closest to the city of Kota Kinabalu. This is especially true for many Dusuns in the highlands who may continue to work the land by planting vegetables and rice, for instance, while Kadazans living in and around the city by and large no longer claim farming as their primary occupation. Being Kadazan therefore is typically associated with prestige while being Dusun is associated with stigma. From the Kadazan point of view, the Dusun language, label and identity is stigmatised also because of the views using the Tagas/*tagaas* lens.

Among many of my conversations with older Kadazan informants, the name ‘Tagas’ came up frequently in reference to Dusuns. Some Kadazan informants believed that the Dusuns in Penampang were actually the descendants of a long-ago tribe called the Tagas. In the past, the term ‘Tagas’ was applied indiscriminately in Penampang (Glyn-Jones, 1953: 118). Other informants said the Tagas is known for their backwardness, which they term *tagaas*. To these Kadazan informants, *tagaas* has a negative connotation, as it is used as an allegory for backward behaviour. These associations related to *tagaas* become mapped onto Dusun speakers because Dusun areas overlap with so-called Tagas areas.

Some Kadazans claimed that their ancestors were in touch with the Tagas. These informants also claimed that when their elders went foraging and hunting in the nearby jungle, they were aware of elusive people hiding in the jungle who they believed to be the Tagas. They said, 'Our elders would be walking along a path and suddenly become aware of the presence of others [the Tagas] behind trees, watching them. They [the Tagas] do not want to interact with you, though'. The Tagas were believed to take the forest trail to attend the *tamu*⁸⁶ in Inobong village located in the Kadazan-Dusun boundary area.

Fanny, a Kadazan woman aged in her late 40s, told me a story of trading between her ancestors and the Tagas, who were considered to have a completely different disposition compared to the Kadazan. Fanny explained: 'In my family, we have been passing down this story now for generations'.

A long time ago, there were people called 'Tagas' and they came from the hills [mountains]. People in our village would take in this so-called Tagas people when they requested to stay overnight at their places. The Tagas came down to the lowlands to take part in the barter exchange of goods there [called *badi* or *tamu* in the local language]. The Tagas would exchange jungle produce [hunted wild game] for salt, for instance.

One day, a group of Tagas men and women arrived and stayed for a week. On the last day, before leaving to return to the mountains, they were served *sinako*, a dry muesli type concoction of sago, rice and coconut, which had been toasted in a hot pan. After some time, the same group of Tagas returned to our village to take part in the upcoming *badi*. But this time, the group was noticeably smaller.

⁸⁶ The *tamu* or farmer's market is a cultural institution traditionally involving barter trading. It remains important among indigenous communities in Sabah.

Our village elder asked, 'What happened to some of your members? How come they did not return this time?' One of the Tagas men replied: 'Those died during our last trip'. What had happened was that after their meal of *sinako*, the Tagas left to walk uphill. They eventually made their stop at the Babagon [Moyog] River to drink/refill and rest. However, they started feeling bloated, as the *sinako* must have expanded in their stomachs through all the drinking, making them feel quite full.

The story goes that the group of Tagas men and women did not bother to eat again after that, saying that it was enough to drink the water of Babagon, as somehow there was something magical in the water, which made them feel very full. None of them bothered to bring any food along the way (typically, they would catch fish and roast some wild yams before going on their journey). As a result, some of them died from hunger along the way.

Fanny explained further:

So, that is why, the next time the same group of Tagas came to our area, there were fewer of them. This story is being passed down to descending generations. We say: 'Remember the Tagas'. It's like a warning for our younger generations to not be like the Tagas who were such simpletons that they did not even bother to pack extra food for their long journey, and who thought that water is magic, and did not know that *sinako* will eventually expand in your stomach, and that is what actually makes you feel full, not the water itself. So, you see, we are not the Tagas. They were simpletons. We were and are nothing like them.

However, when I asked several Dusun speakers in the highlands if 'Tagas' was interchangeable with Dusun, they refuted the association. Instead, Rita, a woman in her 40s, who comes from the highlands of Penampang and who identified as Kadazan, said that she had heard rumours from other Kadazans and Dusuns of is a tribe living deeper in the mountains, which could be descended from the Tagas. Rita told me:

Yes, I have heard it before, too, that we on the hills are supposed to be this Tagas group. But I tell you, we are not the Tagas. It's not a name my parents and my grandparents have ever used to summon our people.

You know what I think, you know who might be the Tagas in these parts since people think the Tagas live in the highlands? I think the Tagas are this group of people living farther on up the mountain, and deep inside the jungle. There seems to be this village there where people speak so differently from anyone I know in these parts. Every other word or so sounds like 'hehhh'. Do you think this might be the Tagas that people seem to be talking about?

Michael, a Kadazan his 50s, who comes from the plains area and is married to a Dusun from the hilly areas, said that he had also heard about the possibility of a mountain group being the descendants of the elusive Tagas tribe, and that they speak in a strange way. Michael demonstrated the 'heh' [he:] sound, much as Rita had, without any solicitation on my part.

Meanwhile, another informant from the adjacent district of Tambunan, a Dusun speaking area, stated that the only time that he had heard the term Tagas mentioned was in reference to the Tagas tree⁸⁷. Raymond, in his 40s, and identifying as a Tambunan Dusun, said:

According to our family and the people here in my village, we believed that some people a long time ago who were migrating into our parts lived under this tree called the Tagas tree. They didn't integrate very well with our kind. Yes, it could be that they are the Tagas that you mentioned. We are not them, and have not intermarried with them.

⁸⁷ The Tugas tree refers to the molave tree (scientific name: *vitex parviflora*); its etymology is traced to the Visayan language.

Villagers in the villages located in the speech boundary between the Kadazan and Dusun areas are keenly aware of this. Many are descendants of Kadazan-Dusun intermarriages and use either Kadazan or Dusun as their identity label, in the presence of Kadazan speakers they tend to identify as Kadazan. To avoid being identified as Dusun, many Kadazan-Dusun speakers spoke in Kadazan to Kadazan speakers rather than using the stigmatised Dusun dialect. Many Kadazan-Dusun speakers also attempt to hide the fact that they are conversant in Dusun. As seen in the examples below, the desire to distance from being associated with the Tagas is also to avoid being labelled as *tagaas* (bumpkin).

Connie, a Kadazan-Dusun in her 40s, said that she spoke mainly Dusun at home with her parents. When she was younger, she feared retribution from Kadazan on the plains and became conscious of how she should identify when around non-Dusun-speaking Kadazan. Later she identified as 'Kadazan' and saw no harm in calling herself a Kadazan, especially since her parentage is Kadazan and Dusun. Like Connie, William, a mid-40s man and father of three living in one of the villages in the boundary areas, also identified as Kadazan. However, he questioned why some Kadazans would persist in labelling Dusun speakers as Tagas. I found that some Dusun informants would exchange the word 'Dusun' with 'Tagas', seemingly in defiance of the moralistic view of Kadazans. William said:

Yes, I know people think that we are Dusun because they said our language is 'Tagas' or 'Dusun'. But you see, we have a story among our relatives that the Tagas came to our village a long time ago. But we never intermarried with them so how can we be the Tagas or Dusun?

Christina, from the boundary area in Penampang and in her late 50s, used Kadazan when in the company of other Kadazans. She told me that, by switching to Kadazan in public, she was conscious of using language to conceal her Dusun identity. Christina explained that this was important to avoid the derogatory label *tagaas*. When she was a teenager, boys from Christine's area would often get into fistfights with boys from the Kadazan-speaking area, as the latter would jeer and call the former *tagaas*:

As a school student in the 1960s and 1970s I witnessed a lot of tension between the Kadazan and Dusun sides in Penampang. You see the situation was such that the more students there were from the Kadazan side in class; the more antagonised those from the Dusun side would feel. Similarly, if the majority of the class were Dusun, the Kadazan students would feel threatened. In secondary school especially, fights would break out between the boys, just because someone had called someone else *tagaas*. Then boys from different villages in the Kadazan-Dusun boundary areas would form a group to fight against the Kadazan boys. We [Kadazan-Dusun] would always win because there were more of us than them [Kadazan] at secondary school. But there were more of them than us in my primary school, so I was always scared of them. I didn't dare speak to them in my [Dusun] language.

Meanwhile, some Kadazan-Dusun speakers attempt to mask their mixed identity by using Malay and English, the languages that are popular with cosmopolitan Kadazans. Both English and Malay are spoken in school and in wider communication with others in towns and cities. Jennifer, aged in her 40s and identifying as Sino-Kadazan from a village in the boundary area, attempted to convince her husband, Mark, a fellow Sino-Kadazan, to be more conscious about language use and identity to pattern more closely to the Kadazans. Both Jennifer and Mark were raised in families where one parent spoke Dusun and the other spoke Kadazan. At home, Kadazan and Dusun were used indeterminately. At the time of interview, Jennifer and Mark had four school-age children with two aged in their teens. Jennifer said:

I told my husband, speak to the kids in Kadazan. But he says, it is okay with me [if they don't speak Kadazan], because I have a Chinese surname [*siang*] and therefore I don't have to speak Kadazan, so the kids don't need to either. He said that he doesn't want the kids to go through an experience like his. You were teased if you went to school and didn't know how to speak Malay, and worse still if you didn't know how to speak English, people would call you T-A-G-A-A-S. From the hills, they would say.

So, the father says that he doesn't need to speak Kadazan because he is Chinese, but he doesn't speak Chinese either! Haha... Well, I want my kids to be able to speak like me: I can speak Tagas, Kadazan, and other languages. So, it would be nice if he also spoke the language with the kids, since we already speak Kadazan to each other. But I remember that language can get you into trouble. By speaking the Dusun, I would get called *tagaas*. In Penampang, the Kadazans would say to us, 'Why is your language so different? It's Tagas, right?' We couldn't answer. But when I started going to school, we learned Kadazan. Anyway, I managed to get our youngest to speak Kadazan, so at least one of my kids speaks to me in Kadazan.

To use or not use the Kadazan label

There is some reservation among Kadazans today to openly identify as Kadazan. Older Kadazans aged in their 70s and 80s expressed regret that Kadazan use of the term *tagaas* had caused offence to Dusun speakers in the past. Some considered it wrong that the term had been used at all to refer to Dusun. Mamai⁸⁸ Danny, a Kadazan man in his late 70s, said with remorse:

We were wrong to look at the Dusuns as the Tagas and to have used this term *tagaas* against them [Dusun speakers]. See, how we [Kadazans] are estranged from them now due to all these politics when we should be unifying with them and letting go our differences.

⁸⁸ This is an honorific term meaning 'male elder' or 'uncle' in Kadazan.

Mamai Danny further explained that *tagaas* really had nothing to do with a group of people (ethnicity) but was a term used to describe or chastise a drunken person. That is, a person preoccupied with getting drunk is called a *tagaas* because he/she buys alcoholic homemade wine⁸⁹ (*momoduke*) and further go out of one's way to look for someone else with an alcohol surplus, and to make them part with some of their alcohol (*mokiboduke*).⁹⁰

Mamai Danny told me:

To say *tagaas* is nothing more than a kind of saying or metaphor for someone who is prone to drinking the while away. We say to each other, 'Don't be a *tagaas*' in order to stop the other person from doing the wrong thing or going the wrong way.

A conversation with an elderly Dusun speaker revealed a lasting emotional impact as a result of Kadazan deployment of 'Tagas and *tagaas*. Now in his 70s, Alphonsus recalled that as a young boy in the 1930s, when his class teacher, a Kadazan, asked all Kadazans to stand up for a head-count, he would eagerly do so. But his teacher would come by his desk saying: 'Alphonsus, what are you doing? You're a Dusun, sit down!' Alphonsus said: 'The whole class would laugh. I was shocked and embarrassed. I had thought all along that I was a Kadazan. I think then it was because of my speaking Dusun that gave me away'.

On another occasion, Alphonsus recalled how the Kadazan boys at school made fun of the food that he ate (boiled wild yams and river snails/*tuntul*), causing him to hide in the bushes to eat. But one day, a Sino-Kadazan student saw him and taunted, 'Poor Alphonsus, is this all you can afford to eat? Why, you're nothing like us [Kadazans]'.

⁸⁹ *Talak* is a derivative of *arrack/arak* (alcohol) and *hiing* (undiluted rice wine).

⁹⁰ Among Kadazans and Kadazandusuns drinking is generally permitted. Rice wine making among the Kadazans is a popular activity and plays a role in fostering camaraderie and male bonding. Male Kadazans in a village may set up a drinking hut outside their main house in order to distill and store rice wine called *tapai*. See Barlocco (2013).

Alphonsus said that as he grew older, he continued to feel anger towards Kadazans but decided to let go of the bad memories:

You know, I still see that guy around today. He has probably forgotten what he said to me that day. But I never forgot how he made me feel. Whenever I feel bitter like this though, I have to let it go. I tell myself, 'Why should I do to them what they have done to me?' I have to remind myself that 'revenge is a poison that one pours for oneself, and hoping the other would die'.

Among younger Kadazans, the terms *Tagas* and *tagaas* appear to be dying out. Both terms are seen to belong to an older frame of reference and many younger Kadazans were not at all aware of the terms, indicating that anti-Dusun sentiment is not being transferred to subsequent Kadazan generations. Some Kadazans also say that nowadays while older terms of reference such as 'upriver' or 'downriver' are disappearing, terms such as *sokid* (interior/rural) are still used to refer to those coming from Dusun areas; although some claimed that *sokid* ought to be replaced with *takad* (highland) for the rural connotation in *sokid* can infer to backwardness.

I observe that many Kadazans and Dusuns in Penampang are relying more and more on local forms of identification by drawing on such information as place names, including the name of their ancestral village, and kinship details. Penampang Kadazans and Dusuns, given their mobility in modern times, are likely to identify themselves according to their ancestral village, that is, the birthplace of their parents and/or grandparents.

Inadvertently, this method averts attention away from the use of Kadazan or Dusun, as the mention of one's *nantadon* (village of origin) is often enough to specify one's identity as Kadazan or Dusun. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, this is a convention that is also common among other Sabahan groups interested in vetting the historicity of local identities given the presence of large migrant and PTI populations.

The lack of Kadazan label use shows that the Kadazans are perhaps changing in their self-perception around identity matters. Janet, a Kadazan woman in her 40s, told me that she has changed how she introduces herself to fellow Kadazandusuns. Instead of saying that she is a Kadazan, as she once would have done, she now says that she is from Penampang, and if more information is needed, she will then mention the village or ancestral village from which her family originates. When I asked Janet why she had changed her self-introduction, she said:

I have become self-conscious over time. I think it is due to all this labelling talk. I don't want people to start having different thoughts about me once they hear the word 'Kadazan'. Anyway, things have changed; people don't say 'I am Kadazan' or 'I am Dusun' anymore when they talk to each other. They just use the name of their area or village [for example, 'I am from Monsopiad village'], and it is up to others to guess what kind of people live there [whether Kadazan, Dusun, or others].

Some Kadazans may also hesitate to use the Kadazan label due to a perception that it is tainted by a notion of 'pride'. Studies show how Kadazans have become marked by status symbols, such as, educational achievement, English language proficiency and being part of the 'intelligentsia' (Reid, 1997) as a result of their participation in state politics in the pre-Independence period. Reflecting this, Kadazans are often viewed by other non-Muslim indigenes as self-important '*orang bandar*' (city folk), and this reputation has carried well outside of the Penampang area. Melissa, a Dusun speaker in her 40s from the Ranau area, a wholly Dusun-speaking district, said:

Yeah, in general, you have this feeling about the Kadazans whenever you meet one of them for the first time. I'm sure not all are like this, but on average, I can say that almost all the Kadazans that I have met would have this air about them [as though] they have their own worldview and approach to things, and it is somewhat better than ours [other indigenes].

‘Everyone has pride in themselves’, explained Marian, in her 50s, a Kadazan speaker from the Kadazan-Dusun speech boundary areas. Marian said, ‘But the Kadazans have extra pride in themselves. They feel like they’re constantly on top of the world: the superior ones among the Natives, the ones who have made it. This is their “high pride” about them’. Rosie, a Kadazan in her 30s who works as a nurse, commented that the way Dusuns talked to her seemed more polite than the Kadazans:

Yeah, yeah... Kadazans and Dusuns are very different... Dusuns are more humble. Kadazans are more arrogant, to me *lab*⁹¹, I find, cos I am a Kadazan, I know. I find that maybe because they [the Kadazans] feel they are more superior compared to Dusuns... Dusuns are just more humble, more respectful compared to Kadazans... Dusuns are more polite whenever they speak...⁹²

When Kadazan informants were asked to comment on other’s perceptions of them, some claimed that this sort of superior behaviour or arrogance only came from ‘elitist Kadazans’, considered by other Kadazans to have a false sense of pride and entitlement, causing them to distance themselves socially. The terms *au’ kasaamo* (unable to bring oneself to mingle) and *akakat* (possessing ‘high pride’) were used to describe them. Some claimed that the behaviour of elitist Kadazans negatively affected the perception of Kadazans more broadly. Other Kadazan informants said that while they could agree with the general comment about Kadazans having ‘high pride’, those Kadazans with even higher pride were simply competitive and wanted to be the ‘better Kadazan’. ‘These are the ones who have land, cash and are educated. People naturally look up to them because they are the “better Kadazan”’, said Aloysius, a 70-year old Kadazan man.

⁹¹ Malay emphatic marker commonly used among Sabahans.

⁹² Verbatim translation by the author.

While some Kadazans are critical of the dichotomous thinking behind the Kadazan-Dusun opposition, other Kadazans attempt to justify Kadazan identity and reinforce the idea of Kadazan-Dusun difference, that is, Kadazans are modernistic while Dusuns are not. Crispin, a Kadazan man, aged in his late 50s, a civil service retiree, said:

You know, it really should be about comparing city versus *kampung* people. Because you see, everyone is so exposed to modern things these days. How can you say, one is Kadazan, because he is modern, and the Dusun is the one still in the *kampung*? This is not true. You can't prove anything this way, because nowadays, the Kadazans will always find anything bucolic as 'primitive', backwards and unmodernised, since they are not used to extreme village surroundings. And then Dusuns will say, you see, the Kadazans don't like us because they see that we are from the *kampung*. So, whether Kadazan or Dusun, the question should be framed instead as those who live in the city versus those who live in the village, because the latter will tend to keep to traditional practices and not tend to mix and become influenced by others.

References to Dusun thus continue to bring discomfort to some Kadazans who simply do not want their identity associated or compared to the Dusuns. In an interview with Margaret, a Kadazan in her late 30s, and her mother Catherine, in her 70s, Margaret became visibly upset when Catherine referred to her father as having 'come down' from the Dusun-speaking hills of Penampang, which the Tagas are perceived to occupy. Unhappy that her Kadazan identity might be tainted by Dusun proximity, Margaret kept asking her mother whether she was sure that it was a Dusun-speaking village that her grandfather had come from:

Margaret: Are you sure, Mom? Are you really sure? Didn't *toing* [grandfather] say that we had all come from Telipok? [an area outside of Penampang]

Catherine: Yes, we did come through from there and then we came back to the Penampang area. But his own father was originally from village X [a village from the Dusun-speaking hills of Penampang].

Margaret: But are you very sure, Mom? We are Kadazan, not Dusun.

Catherine: Well, if you don't believe me, ask your Auntie Vera. She knows this too.

Margaret: Hmm, I don't know about this... [showing reluctance as her face visibly changed]

In a similar case, Inai⁹³ Lubi, an elderly woman in her 80s who identified as Kadazan, claimed that her parents were 'Tagas'; however, her son strongly denied this connection.

Inai Lubi said, 'Yes, my parents were Tagas. They came from the *dudan* [a generic term for the innermost parts of a jungle]. All of their neighbours there were the Tagas'.

However, her son, James, in his late 60s, said:

Even though my mother says that he [grandfather] was a Tagas, I recall that he only spoke Tangaa [the Kadazan language]. So, my mother also only knows to speak Tangaa, and we, her children, also, know only Tangaa. So, you see, as Tangaa people, we are of the Kadazan group. Maybe she is thinking this to mean that her parents were people who had nothing or knew nothing, or something like that.

Meanwhile, tension between Kadazans and Dusuns may still be present. Isabella, a Kadazan woman in her 20s, recounted how she went shopping with her mother and aunt, both Kadazans, in a popular shopping mall in the city. They entered a clothing boutique, with a view to trying on some clothes. Approaching the proprietor, Isabella started a conversation in Malay. She recalled:

She [the proprietor] seem friendly and said that she was a Dusun and asked me whether I was a Dusun. When I said, 'Kadazan', she gave us all a nasty look and walked away! My mother, my auntie and I were taken aback and we just stared at each other for a while wondering what had happened, and then we left the shop. We thought it was rude of her but it got me thinking that this labelling thing was still sensitive for some people. Maybe that's why the owner of the shop got upset. What else could be the reason?

⁹³ An honorific for 'female elder' or 'aunt' in Kadazan.

'If you are Kadazan, then speak Kadazan!'

Today, a movement to encourage Kadazans to use the Kadazan language indicates that the local dialect that one speaks continues to play an important role in defining identity. At present, the primary concern among many Kadazans—particularly the older generation which tends to be purist in this regard—is how to maintain Kadazan language use and project a clear Kadazan identity given diffused identities. As seen in previous chapters, Kadazans are multilingual with a strong desire to learn Chinese while Malay, that is Sabah Malay, is the primary language for overall communication. Elders and language advocates also have a strong concern about attitudinal changes. In some cases, Kadazans were more incline to acquire Dusun instead of Kadazan.

Contemporary Kadazans have shifted markedly to the Malay language. A 1980s mother tongue use survey showed that while 50 per cent of Kadazan parents spoke Kadazan to their children, 40 per cent mixed their languages and the remainder had shifted fully to the Malay language (Lasimbang, Miller & Otigil, 1992). A recent study by Jane Wong, a linguist from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), shows that urban youth, which include Kadazans, are likely to be monolingual in Sabah Malay. Wong (2000) shows that 50 per cent of urban respondents claim Sabah Malay as their mother tongue, while 30 per cent admit to speaking a 'mixed language' (*bahasa campur-campur*).⁹⁴ Meanwhile, only 20 per cent said they spoke Kadazan or a Native language at home. The stark difference in Kadazan language use in the 1980s and in the present confirms what some Kadazan elders feared: that the majority of Kadazans—"80 per cent of Kadazans"—no longer speak, know how to, or want to speak in the Kadazan language.

⁹⁴ The evidence of 'mixed language' or code mixing among Kadazans shows that, while Kadazan is used for the purpose of vocabulary, the grammatical form draws on the Malay language structure. This insight was drawn from my discussions with Jane Wong. See also Wong's 2000 publication, *The Sabah Malay Dialect: Phonological Structures and Social Functions*.

The Kadazan preference for using the Malay language points to their overall use of Sabah Malay (a Bazaar Malay variety). Many Kadazans view Sabah Malay positively: it is the *lingua franca* in Sabah, which means that all ethnic groups know to speak it. It is commonplace in Sabah, for instance, to find that daily interactions—at the shops, outdoor markets, over the counter in government offices— are being conducted in the *lingua franca* Sabah Malay. To many Sabahans, the fact that most, if not all Sabahans, speak in Sabah Malay to each other, shows that the Sabah Malay language embodies the spirit of their multicultural Sabahan identity. Thus, many Kadazans say that Sabah Malay is a necessity not only for socio-economic mobility and wider communication, like (standard) Malay and English but for inter-ethnic camaraderie and relations. The use of Sabah Malay for inter-cultural social interaction and in multimedia (radio, television, and cinema) in the present time has further enhanced its status.

One of the primary reasons for the decline in Kadazan language use is attributed to how many Kadazan parents rely on passive language learning strategies. For instance, some informants told me that they were confident that their children would eventually pick up the Kadazan language when they got older. Some believed that when their children become exposed to other Kadazans who want to learn the language, they would be influenced to do the same. Some Kadazan parents also said to me that, given neither they nor their children know how to speak Kadazan fluently, knowing and using just a few Kadazan words (*'sikit-sikit'*) is sufficient for them. What is meant by *'sikit-sikit'* here is the grasp of basic words and vocabulary, which do not require embedding in a fully formed sentence utilising Kadazan grammar.

Carolyn Miller, a language specialist from the USA who lived among the Kadazans in the 70s and 80s to study their language and culture, found that Kadazan children were more likely to adopt the mixed language (*bahasa campur-campur*) of their peers. Miller (1988) also stated that many Kadazan children lacked confidence in constructing full sentences in Kadazan because often their parents were themselves products of language shift. Jeannet Stephen, a university lecturer at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah, found that the competency of Kadazan children who were 'passive bilinguals' did not advance beyond listening. Passive bilingualism was exhibited in Kadazan families where parents would attempt to speak to their children in Kadazan, but their children would or could only respond in Malay or English (Stephen, 1999).

Several Kadazan informants, aged in their 20s and 30s, said that while they would have liked to learn Kadazan when younger but they had not learned it from their parents at home. Hoping to acquire Kadazan when older, these soon realised that there was very little opportunity for practise. These informants said that there was no one to hold a conversation with, as none of their fellow Kadazan friends and/or relatives were sufficiently competent in Kadazan. One informant told me that, out of her desire to acquire the Kadazan language, she attended all of her relatives' gatherings (weddings and birthday parties) so that she might practise speaking in Kadazan to elders in attendance.

Many Kadazan language advocates and elders now try to create awareness in the Kadazan community by claiming that the Kadazan culture and identity would die without the Kadazan language. Some Kadazan language advocates tend to place the whole blame of language decline on Kadazan parents who permit use of multiple and non-Kadazan languages in the home domain. Many Kadazan parents (who do not practice Kadazan language at home or elsewhere) disagree with this view that

competency in Kadazan underscores Kadazan identity. Maria, in her early 30s, a Sino-Kadazan, said, 'Just because I do not speak Kadazan does not mean that I am not a Kadazan'.

However, when speaking to Angeline, a Kadazan woman in her late 60s, who considers herself a true Kadazan because she still spoke the Kadazan language, I found that there are staunch views against *laissez-faire* attitudes. As Angeline told me, 'If they do not speak Kadazan then I will not speak to them'. Angeline explained:

I went to this coffee shop. I knew the proprietors there. They are Sino-Kadazans fluent in Kadazan. But the daughter or granddaughter, I am not sure, was serving the coffee. I spoke to her in Kadazan, something like, 'Hi, how are you, where are your folks today?' And she replied to me in Malay. I said, 'Speak Kadazan-bah; you're Kadazan'. Can you imagine this? She was so rude. She said, 'I don't speak Kadazan—so what?' Well, I just got into it and lectured her. I told her that she should speak Kadazan since her parents and grandparents know how to speak it. Her face became so glum and she was not friendly after that.

I asked Angeline, 'Do you consider that girl a Kadazan still?' Angeline replied:

Well, no, and I don't care anymore. These young people don't want to speak Kadazan, even when they understand the language. So, if I speak to them in Kadazan, and they don't answer me in Kadazan, I will not continue speaking to them. To me, they do not want to be Kadazan. So, they are not Kadazan.

Grandparents of Kadazan children also place pressure on their grown children to 'save the mother tongue'. Lawrence, a Kadazan man, is married to a Murut woman with whom he has three children. His oldest two children are enrolled in a public school where the majority of the children are Chinese and Malay. Lawrence and his wife were considering having their youngest child (newborn at the time of the interview) attend a Chinese school in her primary years. Lawrence explained:

Every time I visit my parents on the weekends with the kids, I get a lecture from my mother about my not teaching the kids Kadazan. You see, I grew up in a fluent Kadazan-speaking family, where all my [nine] siblings spoke it. So, people may ask how come we didn't pass down this tradition to our own children. My mother has been influenced lately, I think, by her friends from neighbouring villages. She will say things like, 'You know so-and-so's daughter/son? Well, now they speak Kadazan in their family and my goodness, it was so delightful to hear their young children, even those aged three or so, speaking in Kadazan'. And then very quickly, she will add, 'Now, why don't you do that? Because if you don't, you might regret not doing so in the future, when your kids don't want to care about these sort of things [about Kadazan language and culture]'. But I don't want to respond to her on this topic, because it's not that easy. She doesn't understand what it's really like out there.

He continued:

... And yes, of course, I feel guilty when she talks like this, but you see, my wife and I already speak English between ourselves, and we intersperse Malay with English with the kids. Sometimes at home, I think of what my mother has said, and then I attempt to say a few short and simple sentences with my oldest two. Well, they say things like, 'Daddy, you sound funny when you talk Kadazan!' [...]

So at the end of it all, I think I will just follow my older sister on this one. She had much success teaching her kids Kadazan when they were young. They're older now and have still retained the language. But that was a long time ago, and she said to me recently that the Kadazan language is actually only useful with family and Kadazan people, and that there is a whole big world out there and things are changing so fast with technology and all. She said that my kids would be disadvantaged when they grow up, if we do not expose them to other languages [Malay, English] starting now.

Maintenance apart from loyalty plays a significant role in mother tongue transmission and language maintenance (Fasold, 1992), and as such, more conversations with Kadazans regarding language attitudes revealed their resoluteness around multilingualism and cosmopolitan identities. I spoke with Kadazan families living in the city, whose children spoke mainly English at home; these parents also had little

enthusiasm for learning the Kadazan language at home. My discussions with these families showed that many parents questioned the relevance of the Kadazan language in a world where learning Malay, English and, especially Chinese, are seen as necessary for future economic success. These parents placed a high premium on multilingualism and resisted their children learning and speaking Kadazan, as such practice did not match their cosmopolitan identity—a key to their future success.

Meanwhile, other informants claimed that, given the blending by Kadazans into the broader Sabahan society through intermarriage with other groups, the use of Kadazan is simply impractical. Patricia is a Kadazan woman in her 40s married to a fellow Kadazan with whom she has three teenage children. Patricia had a traditional Kadazan upbringing in the village and spoke Kadazan exclusively in the home. Over the years, her values had changed, and she preferred that her children attend Chinese schooling. As a result, her teenage children conversed in Chinese whenever they wanted to prevent Patricia from knowing what they were talking about. As for their home language, Patricia and her husband used to speak to their children in Kadazan but they slowly shifted to Malay, and now Malay is the main language spoken at home.

Patricia claimed that her family still attempted to speak Kadazan at home but admitted that it was sporadic and cumbersome. She found herself translating instructions she had uttered in Malay into Kadazan, and her children found this irritating. Patricia said that her children nevertheless still somehow learned about their ethnicity and understood that as Kadazans they were different from their Chinese friends at school. Patricia admitted that she did not think her children strongly identified as Kadazan but still believed that a sense for Kadazan identity would come, as they grew older.

How the concerns of the younger Kadazan generation differ from those of their elders is elaborated in the next example. Three Kadazan young women, Mia, Carmen and Serena, cousins in their early to mid-20s, told me about the pressure they felt to converse in Kadazan. They were conscious of their poor mastery of Kadazan and limited exposure to and knowledge of Kadazan traditions. However, their orientation in life was clearly directed at being multicultural and multilingual and the trio's defiance was discernible during the interview, as they attempted to justify their lifestyle choices without Kadazan language or identity. Serena began:⁹⁵

I asked my dad this, 'why did you speak to us in English?' because they [Serena's parents] were fluent in Kadazan. We understand a bit of what they [parents] say to us in Kadazan, we get the gist of it, but we can't answer back in rolls of Kadazan words. So, if you try and speak it, and people laugh at you [...] That's the thing for me. [...] Then, if you don't speak, you can't join in the conversation because you can't express yourself fully.

Mia piped up and asked, 'As how you experienced doing the MC [Master of Ceremonies] thing the other day?'. Serena acted as MC for a social event and had been asked to use Kadazan in order to relate to the older Kadazans in the crowd. According to Serena, although an older relative who was fluent in the language wrote Serena's MC script, the audience gave her blank stares. While Serena said she felt that she pronounced the words correctly, Mia claimed that Serena's intonation was off. Serena said:

Yeah, even Fanny and Alvin [two older cousins in their 30s and 40s] asked who wrote the script I was reading, because even the words used were quite deep. We couldn't really understand. I said, 'Was it how I said it?' 'No, no, the words were deep', they said. But I just read it, I didn't even understand it. One thing I was proud of was that people said I pronounced it quite well, haha...

⁹⁵ Verbatim translation by the author.

A dialogue then ensued about using Kadazan in a church setting:

Carmen: Like going to Kadazan mass, for instance. I don't like going to Kadazan mass. I don't understand it! I look at the people around me and I say to myself, I don't belong here.

Serena: But Car, can you say the Our Father and Hail Mary in Kadazan?

Carmen: Yes.

Serena: Do you feel that you are praying more if you are saying it in English?

Carmen: Yeah, it means something, because I can understand.

Serena: Yeah, I can say it in Kadazan after years of going to the October thing of the rosary. But when I say it in English it means more.

Mia, the quietest of the three cousins, then intervened:

Here's the question, would you even think of... thinking about Kadazan language or culture in times of need when you don't have Kadazan to begin with? [All girls vehemently said, 'No!']. It's the same with religion, how can you pray if you don't believe in anything? So, I think we are all practising Kadazan every day without realising. And for me that's why I feel that I am Kadazan.

Serena, the most vocal of the cousins, responded, 'But I still feel you don't need to speak Kadazan to be Kadazan. I can't control how other people see me'.

Mia: So is that it, where's that element of Kadazan in us then? In the name only?

Serena: No, I think it's in the culture.

Mia: But we're talking about Carmen here... What does she do that symbolises her [being] Kadazan?

Carmen: It's only in the name. I already teach English at school.

Serena: But culture wise, I still identify myself as Kadazan.

Mia: What do you do that's Kadazan? We eat Peking Duck
[iconic Chinese dish].

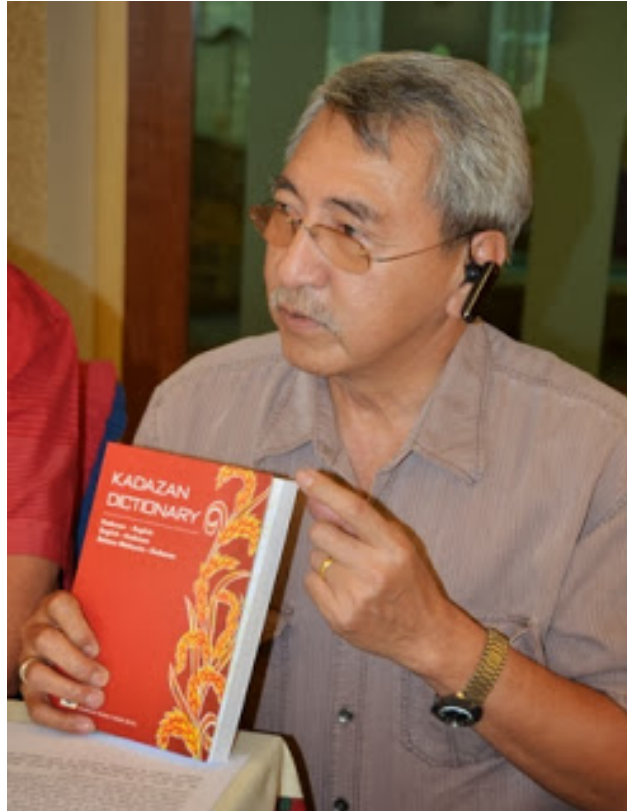
Serena and Carmen fell silent. Mia then said:

See, that's why. The only thing I have that is 'Kadazan' is my name. I don't want to say that I am Kadazan sometimes, because you have to explain more, and then me myself I don't know, I don't understand, like how you were categorised, what Kadazan are you...the sort of Kadazan that is stupid/hopeless because they do not know how to speak Kadazan [*yang Kadazan buduh, tidak pandai cakap*].

Meanwhile, I observed that even as many Kadazans would say that the Kadazans continue to be distinguished from the Dusuns by their language, I found that Kadazans overall appear to have become more inclusive over time towards the Dusun language. For instance, many Kadazans are well versed with the contemporary Dusun songs played on the radio and through *karaoke*. These Kadazans claimed Dusun songs to be entertaining: evoking a bucolic *kampung* or village scene, recounting unrequited love and love-gone-wrong and occasionally poking fun at classism (rich and poor) in Kadazandusun society. Many Kadazans have also become heavily exposed to Dusun singers and songs through the popularity of Dusun singers in the mainstream media. In the past decade or so, many distinguished Dusun singers and entertainers, primarily from other parts of Sabah, perform on radio and TV. Some have accomplished high rankings on musical reality shows. For example, Stracie (Stacy) Angie Anam from Penampang (a Kadazandusun) became a season winner on *Akademi Fantasia*, a Malay language series broadcast on national TV. Felix Agus was another famous contemporary Dusun singer named by informants; while the late John Gaisah said to be the 'Tom Jones' of his time was another famous Dusun singer, according to older informants.

Some younger Kadazans, who are not familiar with Kadazan songs, said to me that Kadazan songs tend to be the ‘oldies’ to them, since only their parents or grandparents’ generations favoured them. The word *songkotoun* (evergreen) was used to refer to Kadazan songs, whereby those created in the 1960s and 1970s, have simpler veneers with uncomplicated subject matters. Yet, some Kadazans said that while Dusun songs may be plentiful and popular, they still preferred songs in their own Kadazan language. Some claimed they could not relate to the songs in Dusun as the lyrical content was unsophisticated and encouraged a preoccupation with provincial life.

As the topic of mother tongue preservation was a major one among my Kadazan informants, one of the subjects of trenchant criticism by purist Kadazans is the Kadazandusun language teaching in school. The similarity in sound between Kadazandusun and the Dusun dialect caused some critics to fear that Kadazan children were being Dusunised. These reject the Kadazandusun language and some also reject the Kadazandusun label in the process. I will now discuss the Kadazans’ views towards the Kadazandusun language and label in greater detail in the following and final core chapter.



Mr. Sylvester Disimon, Deputy President of Kadazan Society Sabah (KSS) introduces the KSS's first Kadazan Dictionary, 20 December 2013. Source: <http://sabahevents.blogspot.com.au/2013/12/kadazan-society-sabah-launched-its.html>

Chapter 6: Kadazandusun and Kadazan

At one point in time, Dusuns (including Kadazans) in Penampang may have look back to the hills as their original home (Glyn-Jones, 1953: 13) but today, I found that few Kadazan informants claim to have descended from the 'hills'. Contemporary Kadazans are more incline to claim plural identities owing to extensive intermarriages in their families, whether with groups from Sabah, Malaysia more generally, or from other countries.

Similarly, the place of Penampang, while retaining the image as the Kadazans' homeland, has also changed dynamically in relation to Dusuns and Kadazandusuns at large. For instance, many Dusuns in Penampang come from elsewhere in Sabah and choose to reside in Penampang for convenience's sake, as it is the closest district or area to Kota Kinabalu city, where they work. Some also find Penampang to be an appealing place to live in not only because of how it is heavily populated with Kadazandusuns, but because it is highly urbanised but at the same time, there is still a lot of focus on culture and traditions owing to the work of advocates such as KDCA and the Kadazandusun Language Foundation (KLF). As one informant said, 'It is nice to be able to go to the weekly *tamu* in Donggongon'. Another said, 'If I want to learn about what's going on in terms of culture and politics, I just take a look at Penampang because people (Kadazandusuns) there are on-trend'.

Given the scenario above, I found that some Kadazans are struggling with the idea of the broader indigenous grouping identity in Kadazandusun, as these generally seek to locate their identities more locally. Some Kadazans are especially against the formulation of Kadazandusun in the first place. While Penampang Dusun speakers who have both

Kadazan and Dusun parents say that these did not mind calling themselves as ‘Kadazan-Dusun’ or ‘Dusun-Kadazan’, these monikers are not the same as the now official Kadazandusun label, which has override the Kadazan and Dusun labels in official records, particularly in census and in the political arena. Many Kadazans as well as Dusuns may use the label Kadazandusun following their leaders, but the label and the formation of the Kadazandusun identity on the whole are marked with contention.

In 1997, the two prominent cultural associations, KDCA and USDA, representing Kadazan and Dusun, respectively, agreed to the use of a single ethnic label ‘Kadazandusun’, which first came to light through projects to save ‘the mother tongue’, a reference to the native languages and dialects of Kadazans and Dusuns. In 1989, KDCA, which was then called Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA), endeavoured to create a mother tongue education plan but tension ensued between Kadazan and Dusun leaders, as both groups wished to see their own dialects become taught as standard languages. In a language symposium organised by KDCA, its president, Pairin Kitingan, stated that Dusuns disputed the Kadazan standard language plan ‘with scepticism and at times blind resentment’ (Yee, 1991: 467). Pairin said:

The development of a standard Kadazan language suffered a serious setback during British rule simply because the British Government found it difficult to obtain the consensus of the other Kadazan communities to have one of the dialects taught in our schools. Had it not been for this impediment, I believe the Kadazan Language would have been taught in our schools today. While we quarreled among ourselves, our Iban friends managed to have their dialect taught at the primary and lower secondary level. Had we set our minds to work together among ourselves the past three decades could have produced volumes of useful reading materials for our children in the primary and perhaps secondary schools. Now, in the twilight of the 20th century, it is time we stopped being parochial and, instead, made a serious effort to standardise the Kadazan dialects.

(Yee, 1991: 467)

Kadazan leaders tried to urge Dusun leaders to once again adopt the Kadazan label, promoted in the 1960s by Donald Stephens, but Dusun leaders resisted. To prevent Dusuns from becoming subsumed under the Kadazan identity, USDA conducted a separate Kaamatan celebration in May 1989 to protest against the statements made by Pairin Kitingan. Although USDA leaders did not amalgamate with the then Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA) despite KCA's appeal for USDA to do so, the KCA eventually went on to be renamed the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (KDCA) in 1991 as an attempt at rapprochement. Raymond Tombung, the deputy president of the USDA, reiterated the position of the USDA in demanding equal respect in label choice. Tombung said:

From the community's standpoint, we have accepted a compromise due to history and events in the generation that followed the 1961 decision [referring to the adoption of 'Kadazan' over 'Dusun']. While others in the community have succeeded in promoting the word Kadazan, we have succeeded in retaining the word Dusun.⁹⁶

However, Dusun leaders began to acquiesce to Kadazan influence, when Kadazan leaders' application for permission from the Malaysian Ministry of Education for the teaching of the Kadazan language in schools was granted in 1997.⁹⁷ Dusun leaders decided to enter an agreement with Kadazan leaders for a share in the development of a standard language. Given their previous conflict over labels, to avoid ensuing debate, Dusun leaders agreed to combine the Dusun label with 'Kadazan' to form 'Kadazandusun' as the name of the standard language. Kadazan leaders, on the other hand, agreed to the Dusun dialect (called Bunduliwan) as the base of the Kadazandusun

⁹⁶ See "Wrangle over a label", 1994.

⁹⁷ The Kadazan language proposal was granted for teaching in Malaysian schools under the Pupil's Own Language (POL) provision, a proviso that typically applied to Chinese, Tamil and Iban (Sarawak) schools where the medium of instruction is the standard language of the particular ethnic group (Kua, 1998). Official acceptance of the Kadazandusun language as a POL in Malaysia is the first time since Independence in 1963 that a vernacular language from an indigenous group has been permitted in the public school curriculum.

language, given that Dusun speakers outnumbered Kadazan speakers. See Appendix B for a copy (in Malay) of the Bunduliwan and Kadazandusun language agreements with English translations.

Today, the term 'Kadazandusun' is commonplace and refers not just to the Kadazandusun language but more so to the sense of a broader grouping among Kadazans and Dusuns. Kadazan and Dusun leaders' resolve on labelling issues has since influenced the authorities to adopt Kadazandusun as a new grouping label and to ratify the ethnic classification of the Kadazans and Dusuns. For instance, in the 1999 census, the Kadazan and Dusun groups were listed in two separate columns, but since the 2003 census they have been merged under the single heading, 'Kadazan Dusun'.

However, there continues to be issues among Kadazans, and Dusuns for that matter, in their acceptance for the Kadazandusun label and language. When the Kadazandusun label was first introduced in the late 1990s, many Kadazans and Dusuns protested as the Kadazandusun label suggested that they could be both Kadazan and Dusun, which seemed inconceivable to many. Most Kadazans and Dusuns saw themselves as either 'Kadazan' or 'Dusun' with the possible exception of those individuals who had both Kadazan and Dusun parents. Those who rejected, and continue to reject, the term protested by using punctuation marks, such as dashes, hyphens and slashes, to show that the two groups were distinct. For example, Kadazandusun was often written as 'Kadazan/Dusun', 'Dusun/Kadazan', 'Kadazan-Dusun' or 'Dusun-Kadazan', 'Dusunkadazan' or 'DusunKadazan', among other variations. Among researchers of the Kadazans and Dusuns as well, there was and continues to be a tendency to keep the two labels separate so as to 'avoid taking sides' (Reid, 2011).

Tombung had earlier stated that the Kadazan label promotion had caused many Dusuns to become defensive because of how Kadazan proponents had implied that Dusuns were '*dungu, kotor, tidak berpelajaran, miskin, dan tidak bertamadun* (in Malay)' ('yokel, dirty, uneducated, poor, and uncivilised') (1992: 88). Tombung cited several proposed terms arising from Kadazans and Dusuns, such as 'Kadus' and 'Duska', abbreviation of Kadazan-Dusun and Dusun-Kadazan, respectively, that were not being considered by Kadazan leaders. Meanwhile, James (1983) had proposed 'Kadusun' to resolve the choice of either Dusun or Kadazan and Majihi (1979) had also raised the possibility of the term 'Pasok Momogun' (original inhabitant), a label attributed as the idea of G. S. Sundang, leader of Dusuns.

The negative view towards the Kadazandusun label became exacerbated when many Kadazandusun politicians further created alternatives to the Kadazandusun label. These politicians did not view the Kadazandusun label as uniquely inclusive as dating back to the 1960s, the 'Kadazan' label had been promoted to the Dusun group as well as other indigenous groups such as the Murut group. Some politicians began addressing this problem by changing the term 'Kadazandusun' to 'KadazanDusunMurut' or KDM and 'KadazanDusunMurutPaitan' (KDMP), and these alternate labels circulated quickly. The term 'Paitan' in this case referred to indigenes in Sabah's outlying, northeastern parts.

Jeannet Stephen (2000) studied the use of the KDM and KDMP labels and argued that, in creating such labels, the Kadazandusun leadership was unnecessarily creating disputation. Stephen found that the label 'KadazandusunMurut' had no clear criteria to distinguish it from 'Kadazandusun' and whether it meant a new language or a new identity. Stephen further argued that the KDM label was causing emotional distress:

... the sudden and unannounced appearance of the label 'KadazandusunMurut' is adding another strain to the already blurred and chequered history of the Kadazandusun in terms of labels, which brings further social and psychological effects on the ethnic identity of the Kadazandusun. It is however unknown whether the organisations representing the Kadazandusun language and culture are doing anything concrete on addressing the matter of the new ethnic label. ... The ethnic label 'KadazandusunMurut' should be duly explained and defined or it should stop be used because of the confusion that it brings to the already agreed label 'Kadazandusun'.

Should this be a redefinition of the ethnic label 'Kadazandusun' then a consensus would probably be the best way to approach it and document it so that the future generations of the communities concerned has a definitive answer when asked by other people on the difference between 'Dusun', 'Kadazan', 'Kadazandusun' and 'KadazandusunMurut'.

(Stephen, 2000: 17 & 21)

Perhaps the problem could have been avoided, as some informants suggest, if people had been given the opportunity to vote for or against the Kadazandusun label. But such voting would almost certainly have shown that Kadazans and Dusuns each wanted to use their own label. For instance, Peter, a Dusun man aged in his 40s from Tambunan, a Dusun-speaking district, was unwilling to say that he is a Kadazandusun and told me:

I just can't bring myself to say, 'I am Kadazandusun', because you see, I am a Dusun [from] Tambunan. I speak Dusun and I grew up in a Dusun area. I don't know anything about Kadazan [language]. I don't even speak it. So, why should I even claim that I am it, or even part of it?

In another example, the 'Kadazandusun' label was seen as curbing the freedom of Kadazan and Dusun individuals to choose their ethnic label, as they had done since the 1960s. Roger, a Rungus man from Kudat, aged in his 50s, believed in determining his own identity and had chosen 'Kadazan' over 'Dusun'. He said:

For me, personally, I prefer to call myself Kadazan even though I am a Rungus. Yes, most Rungus do call themselves Dusun because our area in Kudat is closer to Dusun areas than to Kadazan areas. But for me, Kadazan is far superior to being Dusun, socially and politically. And being Rungus is even less superior to being Dusun. So, for me, I prefer to call myself Kadazan.

However, in the course of 20 years, despite the anger, confusion and disappointment among some Kadazans and Dusuns, many others have resigned to the Kadazandusun concept, and to the change of label and identity overall. The KDCA has also since reformulated the identity of Kadazan and Dusun groups. In KDCA's list of Kadazandusun groups below, groups are now referred to according to the name of their dialects. For instance, what used to be Kadazan is now referred to as 'Tangara' (or Tangaa in the Kadazan dialect) while the 'Bundu' and 'Liwana' referring to downstream and upstream Dusun dialect communities, respectively, are typically associated with Dusun. Note that members of other groups stated in the list would have been recorded as being either Kadazan or Dusun in census in the past, according to their preference. Further note that in addition to Kadazan and Dusun groups, KDCA also recognises groups from other indigenous Bornean categories, that is, Murut and Other Indigenous, to be part of the Kadazandusun category, and some of these groups are found in the KDCA Kadazandusun grouping list on the following page.

Table 2: Kadazandusun groups according to KDCA

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|
| The Kadazandusun Cultural Association's (KDCA) constitution Article 6 (1) defines Kadazandusuns as the definitive indigenous peoples of Sabah comprising the following dialectical ethnic groups: | | | |
| Bisaya | Kuijau | Murut | Sungei |
| Bonggi | Lingkabau | Nabai | Tatana |
| Bundu | Liwan | Paitan | Tangara |
| Dumpas | Lobu | Pingas | Tidong |
| Gana | Lotud | Rumanau | Tindal |
| Garo | Lundayo | Rungus | Tobilung |
| Ida'an | Makiang | Sinobu | Tolinting |
| Kadayan | Malapi | Sinorupu | Tombonuo |
| Kimaragang | Mangkaak | Sonsogon | Tuhawon |
| Kolobuan | Minokok | Sukang | Tutung |
| Source: http://kdca.org.my/kadazandusun | | | |

Overall, the Kadazandusun label appears generally accepted, as some Kadazans and Dusuns are open to the Kadazandusun label and the reconfiguration of Kadazan and Dusun groups, because of how the label primarily functions as a cover term for all indigenes primarily from the non-Muslim Bumiputera groups. For instance, there are some Kadazans who relinquish the Kadazan label in favour of 'Kadazandusun'. For example, Lucia, a Kadazan from Penampang, aged in her 40s, said 'Why shouldn't Murut people or whoever call themselves Kadazandusun? If it works for me, it should work for them, too. I can't tell them what to call themselves'.

However, while there were a few informants like Lucia above, I noted that Kadazans and Dusuns, in their teens, 20s and 30s, appear to use the term Kadazandusun without much reservation, while older Kadazans and Dusuns were generally more cautious and

would seek to argue the distinctions between the two labels in question. Many younger Kadazans and Dusuns view the term 'Kadazandusun' positively because they are unaware of the tension between Kadazans and Dusuns. In particular, the term 'Kadazandusun' is used, as it is convenient and provides a quick way to introduce oneself. Imelda, a Dusun woman from Papar in her mid-20s, said:

It's too hard to explain to people, especially people who are not from Sabah, just what I am. If I say that I am Kadazan, then I also have to explain why I don't think I am Dusun. I don't understand all these things myself. So, I just call myself Kadazandusun. Then, no one asks me further. End of story [Tutup cerita].

Several informants said to me that if they were grievances, the rejection of the Kadazandusun label should not be overemphasised because of the potential conflict that can arise. These informants cautioned against talking about labels in general because the topic is seen as dividing non-Muslim Bumiputera groups from one another, in the face of the more tightly knit Muslim Bumiputera groups. The Muslim Bumiputera groups are perceived to be more united because of their shared identity as Muslims. As some informants said: 'They [the Malays] are strong because they have something to unite them. We have nothing that can truly unite us and we should remind ourselves of this instead of going on and on about labels'.

The emphasis from their leaders on cohesion and unity has done much to soften the stance of some Kadazans and Dusuns. In political speeches by Kadazan and Dusun leaders, for instance, use of the 'Kadazandusun' label is justified through discussion of cultural similarities, rather than differences, among the Dusuns and Kadazans. The slogan '*Iso ii ngaavi tokou*' or 'We are all the same' is used not only to engender a sense of collective identity but also to curb any discussion on socio-cultural differences, as had

occurred in the past. In political rallies, in the 1990s and 2000s, PBS would also create a similar slogan '*Misompuru tokou vagu*' ('We will unite again'), which resonated with the call to focus on similarities. Thus, while Kadazandusun as a label was largely devoid of meaning to most Kadazans and Dusuns on the ground, politicians used the term to refer to any non-Muslim Bumiputera and so allude to the idea of an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1989), where members are all perceived to adhere to the same identity and to want the same outcomes.

However, some Kadazans and Dusuns also criticise the creation of the Kadazandusun language. Since the Kadazandusun language program in schools began in 1997, it has reached over 30,000 students at the primary school level. Today, it is taught at the secondary school level as an elective in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) exam (Malaysian Education Certificate), the basic secondary school qualification in Malaysia. The Kadazandusun language is also taught as an elective at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), which recognised it as a foreign language program. It is mandatory for medical students, for instance, to acquire mastery in Kadazandusun language prior to their residencies in hospitals. As such, the teaching and expansion of the Kadazandusun language has the financial, moral and technical support of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education, the Sabah Education Department, KDCA, USDA and KLF, and other volunteers and donation sponsors.

Stephen and Atin (2004) reported that the Rungus feared that they were being 'Kadazandusunised' by cultural associations KDCA and USDA through the teaching of the Kadazandusun language in their schools. The Rungus pointed out that the language campaign was akin to how they were 'Kadazanised' in the 1960s through the promotion of the Kadazan label. Rungus speakers criticised the Kadazandusun language as bearing

little, if any, resemblance to their own dialects. At the same time, Rungus parents wondered why their own language could not be taught in schools in their own neighbourhood, as almost everyone spoke Rungus and not the major dialects of Kadazan or Dusun. Atin (2004) reported that the number of schools offering the Kadazandusun language is declining because there is not enough demand from parents to keep classes open.⁹⁸

Based on my own calculations, the Coastal Kadazan (Tangaa) dialect in the Penampang district and the Central Dusun (Bundu) dialect in Tambunan district are mutually intelligible with more than 90 per cent shared cognates (Tangit, 2005). In contrast, the Rungus dialect in the Kudat district to the north is less intelligible to the Coastal Kadazan and Central Dusun dialect speakers, and vice-versa, with intelligibility cross-tests resulting in less than 50 per cent intelligibility (King & King, 1984; Stephen & Atin, 2004). According to Banker and Banker (1984), linguistic groups within the Dusunic language family form a dialect-chain with mutual intelligibility determined according to where speakers are located on the chain.

Despite the higher rate of mutual intelligibility between Kadazan and Dusun speakers, among Kadazans, purists were critical of the Kadazandusun language and felt that it was detracting from their campaign to save the Kadazan language from erosion. In particular, Kadazan purists criticised in the first instance the lackadaisical attitude of many parents in transmitting the Kadazan language to their children, and in the second instance, the openness of many Kadazan parents towards the Kadazandusun language.

⁹⁸ See Stephen & Atin (2004), Atin (2004), and Tangit (2005).

Kelly and her husband, in their 30s, are both fluent Kadazan speakers but speak Malay at home to their three children. With her children taking Kadazandusun at school, Kelly and her husband attempted to speak some Dusun with their children to provide them with some practice. Both Kelly and her husband knew some Dusun through learning it from friends in the workplace. The couple spoke some Kadazan with their parents and Kadazan relatives but most of the time the conversations were peppered with Malay and English words. Kelly worried that she would be seen as ‘spoiling’ the Kadazan identity through her actions. Kelly told me:

Yes, I know it’s [Kadazandusun’s] Dusun, but it’s okay with my husband and me. Otherwise, the kids would just know to speak in Malay at home. Oh, how I suffer when certain relatives come to visit. There is this one aunt of mine; she says I am turning my back on my own Kadazan people. ‘To think that you yourself actually know how to speak in Kadazan [*Gazangan no do apandai ko moboos Kadazan*], she will say, implying that I should teach them Kadazan but instead am letting my children learn Dusun. It’s like I have spoiled my children’s Kadazan identity by allowing them to learn Kadazandusun. I just ignore her when she gets into this sort of talk. Finally, when she feels like I’ve completely given her the shove, she’ll say, ‘For goodness sake, if you’re Kadazan then speak Kadazan!’

Not all Kadazans are against the Kadazandusun language and saw things positively, but there are mixed perspectives on the matter. Kadazan informants who had children taking the Kadazandusun language in school generally spoke positively about the program. Kadazan student, Patricia, an 18-year old recent high school graduate had completed six years of Kadazandusun instruction at school. With both her parents being fluent Kadazan speakers, Patricia claimed that she was also fluent in Kadazan. Patricia told me:

I never truly realised that Kadazan and Dusun people were different when I was young. I also did not realise that their languages were different. Only when I entered secondary school, did I begin to see for myself that those who spoke Kadazan were in one group, and those speaking Dusun were

together in another group. As for learning Kadazandusun, my parents never told me that this was not actually their language, or a language that they liked or did not like. In fact, they would send me to an aunt who would help us with our Kadazandusun homework. [Patricia's aunt is also a Kadazan who has some understanding of the Dusun language.] For me, it was a language for all Kadazandusuns.

Other young Kadazans I spoke with, who learnt the language in school, also viewed the Kadazandusun language positively. Due to it being taught in the school domain, a place of prestige, these young people saw the Kadazan language as a status symbol and this sentiment became transferred to other young Kadazans who had never taken the class at school. Overall, promotion of the Kadazandusun language was viewed as an honour or tribute bestowed upon the Kadazan community. Some Kadazan youth likened the Kadazandusun language program to Kaamatan, which is also heavily funded by the government. Both were considered as recognising the Kadazandusuns as a distinct ethnic grouping. Now, the youths said, we feel on a par with the Malays, Chinese and Indians, as these groups also have their language and cultural holidays recognised and supported by the authorities.

Nevertheless, some Kadazan parents felt ambivalent and/or confused about the Kadazandusun language itself. Some thought that the teaching of the standard would involve the learning of the Kadazan language, while other parents thought that because of the label 'Kadazandusun', the language would consist of a number of distinctly Kadazan words: a vocabulary composed equally of Kadazan and Dusun words. But when it became evident that this was not the case, parents said they became disappointed because their children would come home speaking to them in Dusun instead of Kadazan.

Other parents, while initially confused, had changed their viewpoint. These parents said that what the Kadazandusun language entailed had initially surprised them but, later on, they had convinced themselves and their children to treat Kadazandusun not as a standard but as a new dialect. Mary, a Kadazan mother of six children, of whom three were attending Kadazandusun language classes at the time of the interview, said:

For me, it's okay to take Kadazandusun. I tell my children to think of it as learning a new dialect, not Kadazan, but Dusun. I also tell them that they should be proud that they are learning a language that at least represents the indigenous groups in Sabah.

I observed that while Kadazan and Dusun children can learn the Kadazandusun language in school, it is not mandatory for them or any other Kadazandusun to do so. There is also no pressure for Kadazandusuns to learn or use the Kadazandusun language elsewhere. For instance, during Kaamatan, the Unduk Ngadau (literal translation: 'zenith of the sun') pageant, a beauty contest, is organised. In this popular program, a question and answer portion require contestants to speak in the 'mother tongue' and all attempted to do so in their respective dialects. However, none spoke in or claimed to have spoken in the standard Kadazandusun language. Meanwhile, in the newspapers and on the radio, Kadazan and Dusun columns and programs remain separate, as was the practice prior to the introduction of the Kadazandusun language in 1997. In the day-to-day, multilingualism is maintained: many Kadazans and Dusuns, young or old, speak to one another exclusively in Sabah Malay and/or English.

Meanwhile, KDCA and partners such as the Kadazandusun Language Foundation (KLF), Sabah Department of Education and Sabah Library and Sabah Museum provide state-sponsored programs to encourage the use of the Kadazandusun language. For instance, the *Minggu Galakan Membaca Bahasa Kadazandusun* (MGMBK) (Kadazandusun

Language Reading Week) is organised yearly since 1997. Some of the activities that are conducted are the *monusuzan* (folk tale), *monudodoi/ monugandoi* (sung poem), *magandai* (lullaby) and *piboi'an mananong* (story telling competition). Typically, primary school students from throughout Sabah are invited through their Kadazandusun language teachers to participate. This program is aimed at supporting the Kadazandusun language teaching in schools and to increase the proficiency of students taking part. Many Kadazan and Dusun parents who are exposed to the MGMBK program are happy for their children to take part, as they see the program as helping to promote mother tongue use in children, whether or not the 'Kadazandusun language' in question mirrors the dialect of their respective groups.⁹⁹

Today, Kadazandusun leaders describe Kadazandusuns in ethnolinguistic terms by referring to them as 'dialectal ethnic' groups without referring to past categories in Kadazan and Dusun. Despite the lack of response towards the Kadazandusun label and language in some Kadazans and Dusuns, many welcome the reference to their linguistic relation, and do not appear to mind the overall presence, use and promotion of the Kadazandusun label and language. To these informants, the term 'Kadazandusun' is regarded as a political convention created by their leaders for the sake of having a common label to refer to the indeterminate groups among them. People were also keenly aware that being classified as Kadazandusun at the broader level did not change their affinity with their cultural group.

Overall, Kadazandusun groups today give the semblance of being united in solidarity and sharing a common political struggle. To advance this image, the Kadazandusun elites are using the Kaamatan 'as a rallying point for uniting the KD [Kadazan and

⁹⁹ See "Minggu Galakan Membaca Bahasa Kadazandusun dan Sambutan Ulang Tahun Ke-10 [Kadazandusun Language Week and 10th anniversary celebration]", 2006.

Dusun] in order to obtain certain political goals' (Barlocco, 2011) and to simultaneously promote 'Kadazandusun culture' as a national culture. The Kaamatan is used extensively to carry out this objective.

The Kaamatan is based on a pre-colonial practice, which seeks to honour the rice spirit (Bambaazon) for a bountiful harvest. The Bambaazon is invited to rest after taking care of the rice fields and the *bobobizan* performs chants.¹⁰⁰ In the colonial period, the Kaamatan or 'Harvest Festival' took shape as an outdoor entertainment and local festival based on the Tamu Besar (Big Outdoor Market) and the harvest festival held in the interior districts of Keningau and Tambunan, where the British government inaugurated a three-day holiday for Natives (Yamamoto, 2011). Some of the activities were beauty contests, football games and a display of traditional costumes staged by young Kadazan and Dusun women (Uedo, 2009).

Today, the official Kaamatan takes place yearly at the end of May and Sabahan and Malaysian authorities continue to recognise it as a three-day public holiday for Natives. While the contemporary Kaamatan program continues to include outdoor sports, such as, the traditional sport of *tarik tali* (tug-of-war), the traditional costume component has been reinvented as Unduk Ngadau, the popular beauty pageant that takes place as the program finale. In more recent years, the Buvazoi Kaamatan (Young Man of Kaamatan) program similar to Unduk Ngadau has become popular.

Throughout Sabah, among predominantly non-Muslim Bumiputera communities, Kaamatan celebrations at the local levels can occur directly preceding and following the official Kaamatan holiday at the end of May. The official Kaamatan holiday celebration

¹⁰⁰ For references on the *bobobizan* and rituals, see Pugh-Kitingan et al (2011); Lasimbang & Kinajil (2005).

is conducted by the KDCA in the building and compound of its headquarters in Penampang. This event represents the official state-level Kaamatan. It receives substantial sponsorship from the state and is incorporated into the tourism program of the Sabah government and widely advertised to attract mass tourism.

As a politically charged event, the KDCA promotes the Kadazandusuns as ‘the definitive peoples of Sabah’ in order to reinforce the sense of a single identity among non-Muslim indigenes. Speeches take up most of the first day of the program, drawing the presence of VIPs such as sponsors, politicians and government heads and officials. In their speeches, organisers emphasise inclusiveness and uphold Kadazandusun as one of the national cultures of Malaysia—on a par with, Malay, Indian and Chinese cultures—by comparing Kaamatan to the Chinese New Year, Thaipusam (an Indian holiday), Gawai (an indigenous Iban festival in Sarawak), Aidilfitri or Idul Fitri (a Muslim holiday) and Christmas (a Christian holiday).

The Kaamatan is also heavily utilised as a political stage on which Kadazandusun actors demonstrate their clout. For instance, at the local level, a VIP, the district officer or their representative, is invited to grace the occasion and declare the Kaamatan celebration officially open in the area. Village leaders typically accompany the VIP at the local-level Kaamatan. The KDCA Kaamatan, the main state-sponsored program, is a hot political event because only Kadazan and Dusun politicians who align with the central or federal government attend the KDCA Kaamatan. Those that do not attend are likely to be Opposition politicians who create their own Kaamatan events within their political parties. Many Kadazandusun leaders thus attend the KDCA Kaamatan to foster solidarity and to demonstrate loyalty to their leaders as well as out of a fear that their absence would be noticed.

Through Kaamatan, Kadazandusun leaders use the opportunity to modernise the image of Sabah's Bornean indigenes. An example relates to alcohol consumption, which is commonplace during Kaamatan, since Kadazans and Dusuns brew rice wine, beer and spirits for ritual occasions. Copious amounts of rice wine, in particular, are traditionally consumed to aid merry making. However, drinking alcohol, especially in great quantities, is considered coarse and embarrassing in the present day (Barlocco, 2011). To counter the image of coarseness, Kadazan and Dusun leaders have sought to mask the images of alcohol routinely displayed at the official Kaamatan premises by contracting Nestle to sell and display instant coffee. Nescafe. This can be seen at the state-level Kaamatan, where the banners of sponsors such as Maggi (Nestle) and Digi (a mobile service provider) are placed in prominent areas, while the Carlsberg (beer) banner is placed in a secondary and relatively out of sight spot.

KDCA also attempts to balance traditional and modern elements in the Kaamatan. In one example, the Kadazan myth of Huminodun, the legendary daughter of Kinoingan (the Creator) is used and perpetuated by the KDCA to show Kadazandusuns that they possess a truth that can unlock the secret of their origin. Huminodun, according to the origin myth, sacrificed herself to stop a famine. A magical growth of various edible plants followed her death and these sustained the Kadazans.¹⁰¹ The story of Huminodun is clearly associated with the Unduk Ngadau competition, where participants are female. The Unduk Ngadau competition has become heavily commercialised over time. Winners typically receive scholarships, makeup and grooming vouchers, airline tickets, hotel stays, mobile phones, food hampers, among other prizes. Prizes are normally shared with the winners' makeup artists, personal groomer, hairstylist, costume designer and whoever had had a role in preparing the candidate for the pageant.

¹⁰¹ See KDCA's website for more information on Huminodun – <https://www.kdca.org.my>.

In another example, KDCA highlights the *bobohizan* during Kaamatan to acknowledge the significance of rituals in traditional culture. Traditionally, a Kadazan community undergoes purification and blessing in the *Moginakan* ritual, the climactic ritual in the Kadazan rice culture. Seven Chief Bobohizan (Bohungkitas) conduct rituals and chanting that last a week and at the end, a grand feast is prepared, which signals the harvest festival or Kaamatan. In the KDCA Kaamatan, only the Mangambai or 'ritual dancing' is given focus, a precursory Kaamatan ritual. Several Kadazan men and women dance in a circular procession while 'chanting' to venerate the rice spirit, Bambaazon. As many elders do not know *bobohizan* chants, these chants may be improvised in part. By tradition, it is taboo to recite these chants if one is not a *bobohizan* for fear that incorrect utterances may invoke malevolent spirits.

Changes in the traditional costumes of Kadazandusun groups provide another example, as KDCA leaders also seek to monitor how many costumes are being embellished with modern material such as velvet, suede and the use of machine-stitched embroidery, while accoutrements such as the *tangkong* (silver link belt) and *himpogot* (hip brass ring belt) may remain traditional. These are changes that become keenly criticised by some Kadazandusuns as not patterning closely to the traditional garments of their groups, for instance, what comes into question are the design of clothes and colours of stitching, whether red or gold (Uedo, 2009).

Yet there are major differences between the Kaamatan organised at the state level and at the community or village level, and these are telling of the attempts by Kadazandusun leaders to inculcate a single identity at the broader level. Speeches by village heads or district officers target only the Kadazan or Dusun group concerned in the areas and do not reference the amalgamation of indigenous groups according to the political

narrative. Speeches at this level can be more forthcoming and exposes a problem in the Kaamatan when discussing how Kaamatan is now more about fostering relations in their communities, as the fact is most do not plant rice or harvest at all but work in offices and such (Uedo, 2009: 52-53). At the state level, Kadazan and Dusun leaders restrict the rhetoric of Kaamatan to thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, whereas at the village level, no harvesting aspect is discussed.

Further, while the KDCA has created a new tradition to establish the supposed history and hierarchy of the Kadazandusuns, this is not entirely congruent to held beliefs on the ground. KDCA claims that the ethnogenesis of the Kadazandusun groups occurred at Tampias village in Ranau, a Dusun enclave in the inland northeast of Sabah. In the village of Tampias, lies a memorial hall in the shape of a tree trunk sponsored by KDCA. A hollow space within the memorial acts as a meeting place that can hold 25 or so people; visitors can also enter and read the history of the Kadazandusuns displayed in panels in the inner walls of this building. During the Kaamatan festival, the Nunuk Ragang centre is open to Kadazandusuns and the public to undertake a pilgrimage to their supposed site of origin.

According to the KDCA narrative, Kadazandusun groups had inhabited a huge banyan tree called Nunuk Ragang (meaning 'Red Banyan Tree') by the Liwagu River in the distant past. Banyan trees in the Kadazan and Dusun belief relates to the dwelling of forest spirits. It is believed that the Nunuk Ragang hosted the predecessors of the Kadazandusun groups, who lived peacefully and happily but when a great flood occurred, these groups dispersed throughout Sabah into the places where their descendants now live.¹⁰² However, the Nunuk Ragang tradition has been criticised for

¹⁰² See "Pesta Moginakan Nunuk Ragang 2011".

spreading untruths about Kadazan and Dusun peoples' histories and for undermining the origin stories of individual groups. For instance, the migration of the Tobilung group towards the northern and western areas of Sabah ties them to Chinese ancestors from Brunei (Shim, 2000); while the Bisayas claim direct links to the Visayas in the Visayan Islands of the southern Philippines (Harrison & Harrison, 1971: 9).

In Penampang, Glyn-Jones stated that the Nunuk Ragang (or Nunukaragan) legend is followed and Kadazans and Dusuns typically regard all other groups coming from Nunuk Ragang as their own people (1953: 117). However, note that among contemporary Kadazans I spoke with, many were less inclined to claim the Nunuk Ragang as legend and thought it as a nice myth or story to know. Some older Kadazans sought to narrate their 'origin' story as being that of how the world began and the folktale on the *pampang* (huge rock), the namesake of Penampang, was told to me. The *pampang* tale speaks of the first Kadazan man and woman born as babies whom emerged out a huge rock, when it split open (Lasimbang, 1999; Luping, 2009).

There are also alternative versions involving the Nunuk Ragang that are promoted by other than KDCA, which further illustrate the differing views from the ground. For instance, the Sabah Tourism Board seeks to promote "Papakang: The Odyssey of Seven Brothers" as migration folklore. The Nunuk Ragang in Ranau is taken as the site of dispersal of seven brothers, who fought each other to possess a *papakang* (tree back beater in a shape of a stone) that had magical powers and uses. The father of these brothers intervened and broke the stone. Each brother took one piece of the stone

before leaving Nunuk Ragang. These brothers would then travel to all parts in Sabah and come to recognise each other when each started to reveal their heirloom stone.¹⁰³

Another tradition that is causing some Kadazandusuns to remain tentative towards adopting the Kadazandusun identity is a traditional blessing ceremony for the Huguan Siou, meaning brave paramount leader, which is now conducted for over 30 years. The ceremony is conducted by the *bobolian* in the Nunuk Ragang monument and during the Kaamatan period as a means to increase the supernatural power of the Huguan Siou. However, there is criticism of the Huguan Siou blessing ceremony: some informants say that Pairin Kitingan, the current Huguan Siou, ought to refrain from engaging in ritualistic traditions because he is a Christian.¹⁰⁴ To create a hierarchical structure in their leadership, the KDCA's executive council had adopted the Huguan Siou tradition in the 1970s. It originally existed, as a Kadazan practice to honour the most feared warrior among them. Prior to Pairin Kitingan, the first Huguan Siou was Donald Stephens. The Huguan Siou traditions cease momentarily after Stephen's death to resume in 1984 with the installation of Pairin Kitingan.

Given all of the above, the Kadazandusun identity cannot be said to have resulted so far in convincing all Kadazandusuns to align only to the Kadazandusun label, language and traditions. Conversely, by allowing Kadazans and Dusuns to remain affiliated to

¹⁰³ See "Papakang: The Odyssey of Seven Brothers".

¹⁰⁴ Note that some Kadazans may continue to hold contradicting belief systems. For instance, Kadazans have traditionally worshipped the spirit of massive stones or megaliths, which were used as boundary stones in the Kadazan areas (Phelan, 1997). Kadazans also believed in the keeping of the head of one's enemy, as the spirit dwelling in the skull is believed to protect one from invaders. In the past, Kadazan families who had such skulls were seen as influential in the community, because this meant that their ancestors had been headhunters, typically the warriors in traditional Kadazan villages. Some Kadazans thus may continue to keep skulls. Further, some of my informants told me that although they are Christians, they consult with Kadazan psychics in order to *mokiintong* (ask to see into one's future or problem by communicating with spirits). Some may also consult Buddhist or Taoist mediums or the Muslim *bomob* (Malay shaman). See "St. Aloysius Church Limbanak Penampang 1910-2010".

their respective ethnic groups and traditions while under Kadazandusun alliance, Kadazandusun leaders must contend with how the loose arrangement prevents a single culture and identity—as Kadazandusun—to transpire in order to augment the political idea of Kadazandusun. As we look further into the Kaamatan, there are evidences of the persistent heterogeneity among them.

To conduct the state-level Kaamatan program, KDCA invites indigenous groups, mainly non-Muslim Bumiputera, from throughout Sabah to participate and represent their cultural groups. In the KDCA compound, groups would live in replicas of their traditional houses made for them by the KDCA. Representatives dress in the traditional costumes of their groups and bring their traditional musical instruments and other materials, such as baskets, beads, clothing and other paraphernalia that depict their traditional cultures. These entertain the throng of visitors that have come to see what Kadazandusun culture is like, while in the main KDCA building, speeches and the Unduk Ngadau pageant take place.

For the entire three-day Kaamatan, these KDCA representatives of the various indigenous cultures reenact their traditional cultures through dance, food and music, while the public comes to visit each house to sample the various cultures being represented. For newcomers to the KDCA Kaamatan, the first impression upon entering the site is the sound of merriment everywhere, with traditional gong beats and people in costumes performing traditional dances. There appears to be no overt hegemon among the groups represented and the sense of merriment and of Kadazandusun as an eclectic grouping is palpable.

Throughout the KDCA compound, I note the heavy references to rice planting and harvest offer homage to the traditional occupation of the non-Muslim indigenes and symbolise the agricultural identity of all Kadazandusuns. Various small booths in which government agencies promote their services, merchants sell merchandise and Kadazandusun singers sell their CDs, among other booths, dot the periphery of the KDCA compound. The term Kadazandusun is visible in banners announcing the Kaamatan, in Kaamatan program books and in the banners of merchandise sponsors.

At the side of the main KDCA building, there are also numerous food stalls and fellowship take place among family members and friends, who come together to eat, drink and have a good time irrespective of whether they take part in the more official day events of the Kaamatan, and their commensality encourages *aramaiti* ('being many together', from the Malay root word *ramai*, 'many'), a popular term used when drinking (Barlocco 2011). The scene reminds how Kaamatan is not practiced to represent Kadazandusun culture but rather to deepen friendship and relationship within a local community. As Uedo states, "It [Kaamatan] is an opportunity to have commensality and to meet with friends, neighbours and family members" (2008: 53).

The so-called Kadazandusun community in this regard is ever representative of the broader Sabahan community, whenever Sabahans would tell me that they have no qualms sitting together with each other to have a meal, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims. Many Kadazandusun groups may continue to participate in the KDCA Kaamatan therefore to experience and encourage the bond or fellowship between their group and others, while at the same time allowing for their participation to help reify a culture and identity (passed off as Kadazandusun) but otherwise may not bear much resemblance to their lived realities.

However, I further note that perhaps many Kadazandusuns are inclined to support the Kadazandusun concept seeing as to how they are also being exposed and encouraged to further expand their indigenous identity. For instance, KDCA periodically hosts the International Indigenous Peoples' Day, an event that is initiated by the UN and heavily attended by activists.¹⁰⁵ Through Indigenous People activism, Kadazandusun leaders foster the idea of Kadazandusuns as being the Orang Asal (Indigenous People) in Sabah and in Malaysia. The move is decidedly political because Kadazandusun leaders are seeking out a pan-indigenous identity that can unite them also with indigenous groups throughout Malaysia. Several Orang Asli groups on the Malaysian Peninsula have since pledged membership to UPKO, the United Pasok Kadazandusun Organisation, the largest Kadazandusun political party in Sabah.¹⁰⁶ These Peninsula-based groups are linked to Partners of Community Organisations Sabah (PACOS) through 'Jaringan Orang Asli SeMalaysia' (JOAS) (The Indigenous People's Network of Malaysia), the umbrella network for Indigenous-focused NGOs in Malaysia, which has or has had many Sabahan leaders at the helm.¹⁰⁷

Note that the origin of the Indigenous People's movement in Sabah most likely stemmed from social justice groups in the 1970s and 1980s, which mainly comprised non-Muslim Bumiputera university students. According to informants, many of the Christian students from Sabah and Sarawak attending Universiti Malaya (UM) and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM) in the towns of Bangsar and Serdang on the Malaysian Peninsula, formed a group amongst themselves to undertake outreach to rural areas in Sabah and Sarawak. These students were Catholic and came mainly from

¹⁰⁵ Note that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples promulgates the term 'Indigenous'. This term is not used in formal Malaysian contexts.

¹⁰⁶ See "UPKO sets up four branches in Perak", 2009.

¹⁰⁷ See JOAS website - <https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/partner/jaringan-orang-asal-semalaysia-joas-indigenous-peoples-network-malaysia>.

Kadazandusun groups in Sabah, although indigenous groups from Sarawak were also represented. The ‘Students of Sabah and Sarawak Action Group’ (SASSAG) was formed and, in every university semester break, SASSAG members would commit to voluntary missions to improve the living conditions in remote areas of Sabah and Sarawak.

Some of the leaders of SASSAG went on to become well-known political leaders and to serve in past and current Sabah governments. In the mid-1980s, several university graduates affiliated with SASSAG formed non-government organisations (NGOs) in Sabah dedicated to helping minority communities. Established by ex-SASSAG members is PACOS, an NGO at the front of activism behind the Indigenous People movement aforementioned.¹⁰⁸

However, not all Kadazandusuns I spoke to are aware of the Indigenous People identity, and some even contest it. City-based indigenes, according to some informants, do not strongly identify as ‘indigenous’ per se, since they do not need this identity in order to advance socio-economically, in contrast to marginalised indigenous villagers in rural areas whom they read about in the news. Many indigenous groups in rural villages have benefitted from the assistance of PACOS, especially in land-grab issues. PACOS helps them to unite as a larger collective—as ‘Indigenous People’ or ‘Orang Asal’—rather than in their individual ethnic groups, to protest land claims by outsiders, whether corporations or government. Nevertheless, by participating in KDCA’s broader reindigenising program, it can be said that Kadazandusuns would not only acquire a firm identity as a political indigenous group in Sabah but also then go on to become

¹⁰⁸ PACOS liaises with indigenous groups throughout Sabah and Malaysia to promote social justice for rural communities. Indigenous villagers in remote places in Sabah are often embroiled in land-grab issues and PACOS helps them to unite as a larger collective—as ‘Indigenous People’ or ‘Orang Asal’—rather than in their individual ethnic groups, to protest land claims by outsiders, whether corporations or government.

more knowledgeable and savvy about indigenous affairs at national and international fronts. Meanwhile, KDCA continues to offer a variety of activities to continue to engage Kadazandusuns throughout the year.¹⁰⁹

Today, it can be said that those who do not take part in any of the above KDCA-led Kaamatan and Indigenous People events are removing themselves from the sphere of Kadazandusunising influences. In 2007, a group of Kadazans tendered their letter of exit from the Kadazandusun group to the *Huguan Sion* of KDCA. These Kadazans went on to reestablish the Kadazan Society of Sabah or KSS. According to KSS leaders, the goal of the KSS is to reinstate the Kadazan label to prevent the Kadazan identity from disappearing under the Kadazandusun framework (KSS Inauguration book, 2007). KSS spokespersons stated that a major motivation for their decision to reject the Kadazandusun label was the change, in 1989, of the name of the Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA) to the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (KDCA). In 1953, the Society of Kadazans Penampang (SOCP) was registered to cater for the Kadazans' needs. In 1966, the founders of the SOCP established the Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA) with which the SOCP merged.

The president of KSS, Marcel Leiking, expressed concern that Kadazan cultural identity was being lost as a result of Kadazans having relinquished control over the running of the KDCA. In his inaugural address at the opening of the KSS, Leiking said:

In this millennium, our hearts are worried because there are now many cultural associations such as USDA, Murut, Rungus, Bisaya, Lundayo and many more. Where is the Kadazan cultural association? See, KDCA is for the perpetuation of the tradition and celebration of the Kadazan Harvest Festival [Kaamatan], which is translated as *Pesta Menuai*. Meanwhile, the Kadazan

¹⁰⁹ See KDCA website – <http://kdca.org.my/event/events>.

people worry in their hearts thinking as to what will become of them and the *Kadazan name* [emphasis Leiking] if there is no cultural association for us.

(KSS Inauguration book, 2007:15)

Further, the Chairman of KSS Trustees, Clarence Malakun, decried the decision of the name change to the Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA). Malakun said:

When the name of the Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA) was changed to the Kadazandusun Cultural Association (KDCA) on 5th November 1989 during the KCA Delegates Conference, I was quite sad but I went along with the resolution at the time in the name of ‘cooperation and unity’ amongst our beloved people. However, with the change, little did we realise that at one stroke of the pen, the Kadazans disappeared to become overnight the ‘Kadazandusuns’, whilst the Dusuns continued to exist as a separate entity and with no change within the United Sabah Dusun Association (USDA). The USDA was correct. The KCA was sacrificed. And, either we are a Kadazan or a Dusun. There is no such race called ‘Kadazandusun’ in the first instance. By agreeing to the new terminology, the Kadazan ceased to exist from the face of the earth, or they had become only half a race, whilst the Dusuns not only remain 100% intact, but in fact gained half more within the ‘Kadazandusun’ name.

(KSS Inauguration book, 2007: 14)

The KSS also stated their concern over the Kadazandusun language program stating their grievance towards the language itself. Malakun above stated that the Kadazandusun language neither resembled the Kadazan or the Dusun language, as used currently in the media (radio) but a fusion of ‘just a little bit of Kadazan and largely the so-called Bunduliwan dialect as commonly used in the District of Tambunan’ and that Kadazan words contributed only 20% to the Kadazandusun language with the remainder being Dusun words. Malakun further said:

It should have been the other way round or at least on a 50:50% basis since the Kadazan language was already widely used and understood by listeners through the Pangaan Kadazan [Kadazan Section] radio Sabah Broadcast since the early 1960s. The decision to sideline Kadazan was made without much regard and consultation since the President of USDA at the time, and the President of KDCA are both pure Dusuns. In the meantime, there has been a proliferation of other ethnic Cultural Associations throughout Sabah, with tacit approval from KDCA officials.

(KSS Inauguration book, 2007: 15)

The current relationship between KSS and KDCA is unclear. There has been no formal response to the Kadazans' departure from KDCA and, since 2007, a group of Tatana people left the Kadazandusun group in 2013, also citing cultural dilution as the reason. The Sabah Tatana Cultural Association (STCA)'s primary concern is to be recognised officially by the NRD. STCA spokesperson, Monih Epin, stated that the Tatana have been denied the right to be formally identified as such because the ethnic 'Tatana' does not appear in the NRD's list of races. The STCA claims that there are about 15,000 Tatana in Sabah who feel forced to choose between Dusun or Kadazan as official identity and cite the case of the Kelabits in Sarawak, who are able to register themselves Kelabit under the Orang Ulu group despite numbering less than the Tatanas. STCA assured that they were not intending to rival KDCA but rather to complement the work of KDCA by insuring that STCA looks at researching and document Tatana culture and language.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, KSS influence has grown among the Kadazans in Penampang, the enclave from where most of my respondents were drawn. Several Kadazan informants said that since the KSS came into being, a sense of cultural purity had developed among the Kadazans and a renewed concern for the Kadazan label. As KSS is also concerned

¹¹⁰ See "Association wants Tatana to be officially known as race by NRD", 2013.

about language maintenance, Kadazans who support KSS are likely to strictly monitor the use of the Kadazan language in Kadazan families, and in their own families. KSS conducts regular meetings and has since renamed itself the 'Kadazan Society Association' with the mission statement, 'to preserve, maintain and to uphold the dignity of the Kadazan race as an indigenous ethnic [group] in Sabah'. The KSS also conducts its own Kaamatan event called KSS Hontog Kaamatan.

The appearance of KSS may well be part of the reasons why there is a lack of participation from Kadazans in KDCA and/or during the KDCA Kaamatan that I attended in 2011. However, I kept returning to the theme of dichotomous relationship between Kadazan and Dusun and find that this too is responsible for influencing some Kadazans to move away from Kadazandusun as identity. Further discussions with ordinary Kadazans revealed that many are choosing to forego Kaamatan activities for various reasons. Some informants told me that they avoid going to KDCA during Kaamatan because of the heat (or rain) and massive overcrowding that can occur at the Kaamatan venues, as well as because of the lack of proper car parks. Some said that they prefer to take the three-day holiday outside of the country with their friends and family. Others said that if they go to the KDCA Kaamatan at all, it is only to catch a glimpse of the beauty queens vying for the Unduk Ngadau trophy and for the entertainment programs, such as the free nightly concerts by Kadazan and Dusun popular singers. However, still other respondents told me that they do not bother celebrating Kaamatan because it is simply not meaningful to them. Charlie, a Kadazan man, aged in his mid-20s, and working as a waiter at an up-market restaurant said:

I just stay home. It's a chance for me to catch up on my sleep. After all, there are just too many people there at KDCA. And it's more like a show for tourists and VIPs than an actual celebration to respect our [Kadazan] culture.

During the KDCA Kaamatan in 2011, I observed that alternative Kadazan-run Kaamatan events around Penampang were taking place concurrently. Away from the KDCA building, in nearby Kadazan villages, several banners hanging from the sides of buildings, posted by the roadsides and tied onto peoples' homes advertised Kaamatan family days. Different from the KDCA Kaamatan, the family Kaamatan is a closed event meant to serve only kin and clan members. Some Kadazan informants said that these family events bring kin closer together, in line with the current trend to archive family histories and especially to trace lineage and build family trees. But other informants said that the trend for a family-run Kaamatan is fairly new and because the event is heavily sponsored by prominent families with political connections, often the patriarch of these families give speeches during the lunch or dinner to spread their political ideas.

I also sensed an underlying tension when many Dusun spectators appeared to disapprove that the Penampang Kadazan candidate won the Unduk Ngadau competition. When pressed on the Unduk Ngadau competition, some informants said that many people did not want the Penampang Kadazan candidate to win, as candidates from Penampang routinely won the competition, making people feel as though the competition was for Kadazans only. Some Dusun informants told me that the competition must have been rigged and that the judges were biased. One informant said:

This is unfair. The Kadazan 'look' is too common now because the Kadazans are mixed with Chinese, so they look more like the Chinese. The judges should allow other girls from other districts to win so we can see what their beauty is like from those parts [in Sabah].

Some of my Kadazan informants told me that Kadazans have seemed to go out of fashion. One informant said, 'It is no longer popular to be Kadazan given that Dusun leaders are now more prominent'. 'They [Dusuns] don't care about us anymore, even though we (Kadazans) have helped them to come up [politically]', said another informant. Another said that the Kadazans' influence upon Dusuns had waned in the face of stronger Dusun influences. As I went from one traditional house to another at the KDCA Kaamatan grounds and observed how excited the participants and guests were, a contrastive and telling picture emerged. At the Dusun Ranau House, two Muslim Dusun ladies in their *tudung* danced to the Malay *joget* accompanied by modified tunes on traditional Dusun gongs. A crowd cheered them on and applauded joyously when they had finished. Beside this scene was the Kadazan Penampang House, and the mood could not have been more different: a subdued-looking solo guitarist accompanied by his keyboardist casually played 'Blue Spanish Eyes' to one or two guests in attendance, who appeared oblivious to the din next door.

Many Kadazans today may be reindigenising into Kadazandusun therefore because of their support for indigenous identity overall; and their desire to be united and to have a community and group that is filled with a sense of belonging; or simply because they feel that it is the right thing to do. Yet, other Kadazans are contesting—and even rejecting—Kadazandusun while some have returned to the idea of Kadazan as ethnic group and identity. These continue to struggle with the incongruity generated by yoking together, under one composite term, two dissimilar groups of people. As one informant said, the juxtaposition of the two labels Kadazan and Dusun into a single term only serves, ironically, as a reminder that while all can belong as 'Kadazandusun' (the official category), for as long as Kadazans and Dusuns seek to identify as one or the other, 'no one is really a Kadazandusun'.



Pairin Kitingan walking on sacred gongs (*tagung*).
Taken in June 2011 at the Nunuk Ragang Memorial, Tampias, Ranau.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

At the start of the thesis, I set out to survey the diverse ethnic labels that Kadazans today identify with as a result of a range of factors including intermarriage with other groups, changes in religion, desire for a business identity, and desire for a broader indigenous identity. We saw how through the influx of new migrants, Sabahan demography has changed dramatically since Independence in 1963. PTIs today constitute the largest group with far reaching consequences for Sabahan society and politics. They also influence ethnic classification, with both the Sabah Native status and especially the Bumiputera status being susceptible to abuse. These categories do not distinguish between Sabahans from Bornean groups and those from other groups with roots in the wider Malaysian-Philippine-Indonesian archipelago.

As non-Muslim Kadazans grapple with the influx of PTIs, they must also contend with the growth of Malay and Muslim influences. Despite a high tolerance for cultural and religious differences between non-Muslims and Muslims, Kadazans in general are concerned about their possible absorption into the Malay grouping through factors including conversion, Malayanisation of their lifestyle, decreasing economic opportunities and the imposition of the Malay label. Many non-Muslim Kadazans fear not only a drastic change of lifestyle upon becoming Muslim but also the subsumption of a distinctive Kadazan identity under the more dominant Malay identity. These look upon permissive ethnic label use among Muslim Kadazans—for instance, switching back and forth between Malay and Kadazan labels—as evidence of Kadazan acquiescence to Malay power.

Meanwhile, many Kadazans seek to acquire Chineseness, through language and education, for instance. Inter-marriage between Kadazans and Chinese, which has given rise to those who think of themselves as Sino-Kadazans, particularly means that Chinese influence on the Kadazans is strong. However, while some Kadazans believe that identification as Sino can provide them with an alternative to competing in the Bumiputera world, others are reluctant to give up the benefits that flow from participation in the Sabah Native and Bumiputera programs. Some thus still choose to identify officially as Kadazan while for others, owning a mixed identity is more appealing, and in this context, this is what the 'Sino' signifies.

We have also seen that Kadazans and Dusuns are historically, politically and culturally related and that members of both groups use both the Kadazan and the Dusun labels. However, while Kadazan and Dusun identities may be intertwined, in my fieldwork site of Penampang Kadazan identity is distinguished from Dusun identity on the basis of language, the identification of Kadazans with modernity, and the higher degree of Chinese inter-marriage with Kadazans relative to Dusuns. However, the Kadazans' lack of language loyalty has prevented a solid boundary from forming between them and Dusuns: against the wishes of purist Kadazans, many Kadazans are multilingual in line with their cosmopolitan identities. Self-consciousness as a result of the Dusun view that Kadazans are elitist also prevents some Kadazans from using the Kadazan label more openly. As a result many Kadazans today are falling back into the old practice of identifying through the use of place names.

In spite of the official combination of the Kadazan and Dusun labels into 'Kadazandusun', we have seen that in many areas of life—as exemplified in major events such as the Kaamatan—a single Kadazandusun identity and culture has not emerged. Nevertheless, many of those within the broader Kadazandusun grouping desire to foster camaraderie and a sense of community with one another, while their leaders continue to promote the image of a cohesive group. While many Kadazans remain open to the idea of being reindigenised as 'Kadazandusun', a growing number of Kadazan purists are abandoning this broader identity. These have rejected the Kadazandusun label, language and identity, and have gone on to (re)establish the Kadazan Society, an association exclusively for Kadazans.

In summary, we have seen that non-Muslim Bumiputeras in Sabah today must contend with a world in which they are not the main actors. The Malay label is seen as anathema to the majority of Kadazans, and many Muslim Kadazans seek to use the Kadazan label to avoid derision. The subjective character of Kadazan identification is further evident among Sino-Kadazans, many of whom vacillate between Kadazan, Chinese and Sino-Kadazan as formal identities. Many Kadazans also move fluidly between Kadazan and Dusun identities, while some Kadazans are open to a combined indigenous group identity. Yet others continue to desire contrast between the Kadazans on the one hand, and other indigenous groups including the Dusun, on the other. In other words, contemporary Kadazans are selective in their choice of ethnic labels, giving rise to a highly complex ethnic landscape. Kadazandusun, despite being their official ethnic category, is rejected by many.

In conclusion, Kadazan ethnicity today continues to demonstrate fluidity even as some Kadazan individuals attempt to fix Kadazan identity to certain labels or criteria. In particular, the increasing openness to the Sino-Kadazan label reflects the desire of some Kadazans to assert the legitimacy of mixed identities. The phenomenon of mixed identities, demonstrating a similar tendency towards maintaining fluidity is also found in other parts of Borneo, as cited at the start of this thesis. In this respect the case of the Kadazans is reminiscent of that of the Bidayuh in Sarawak, as outlined by Chua (2007). Chua notes that many Bidayuh seek to maintain ‘a certain freedom of movement’, which they associate with being Bidayuh. As she sees it, the concept of Bidayuh involves a constant effort towards fluidity:

Rather than trying to ‘preserve’ or ‘construct’ a distinctive ‘Bidayuh identity’, I would argue that my informants are more interested in maintaining a certain freedom of movement which they associate with being Bidayuh — but which does not necessarily have to culminate in the formation of Bidayuh identity.

(Chua, 2007: 262)

I would suggest that like the Bidayuh, we can see in Kadazans’ engagement with their identity a desire for freedom and choice that is a direct response to the (Malay-dominated) Malaysian ethnic system, where ‘Malay-ness is marked by an inescapable fixity which stifles a fluidity that they value as intrinsic to Bidayuh-ness’ (Chua, 2007: 262).

Given this, it may well be that the Kadazans’ relationship to the Dusuns, the Bumiputera group that they are often compared to, may never be completely signifiable through an ethnic label given the repeated reconstruction of Kadazan-Dusun identity. Yet, in the past year or so, as a result of apparent increased political unity, several Kadazan and Dusun leaders have proposed the renaming of ‘Kadazandusun’ to

‘Momogun’, meaning ‘an inhabitant’ in both the Kadazan and Dusun dialects (it is also the autonym of the Rungus group). The proposal is presented as a way to be rid of the awkward juxtaposition between the Kadazan and Dusun labels, and so to expunge the label ‘Kadazandusun’ from official records. As this is a very recent development, I have not been able to discuss it in the thesis. However, based on some of the news reports I have seen, many Kadazan and Dusun leaders do not agree with such a renaming, and argue that ‘Kadazan’ and ‘Dusun’ are proper names of original groups while ‘Momogun’ is simply a noun and hence should not be elevated to a group name. It will be important to review this proposed change in follow-up studies.

Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>adat</i> | customary law and practices |
| <i>anak negeri</i> | Native |
| <i>angpow</i> | traditional Chinese envelopes typically red in colour containing money |
| <i>amah</i> | house-help |
| <i>arak</i> (or <i>arrack</i>) | term in Malay referring to alcoholic drink |
| <i>bahasa campur-campur</i> | mixed language |
| <i>bobohizan</i> | a traditional ritual priest/priestess (also known as <i>bobolian</i> or <i>tantagas</i>) |
| <i>bomoh</i> | a traditional Muslim/Malay shaman |
| <i>bosou</i> | fermented vegetables and/or meat in cooked rice (Dusun) |
| <i>buang siang</i> | to throw away the Chinese surname |
| <i>cabutan</i> | a lottery system |
| <i>datu</i> | Malay term for ruler and/or nobility |
| <i>pinggan</i> | galvanised tin plates |
| <i>halal</i> | food preparations according to Muslim code |
| <i>hiing</i> (or <i>libing</i>) | a Kadazan alcohol made from fermented rice |
| <i>himpogot</i> | hip-belts made of brass rings (Kadazan) |
| <i>hivan</i> | inland |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>inai</i> | an honorific term for Kadazan female elders (usually an aunt) |
| <i>kafir</i> | person who is not Muslim (used chiefly by Muslims) |
| <i>kampung</i> | a village |
| <i>kinoing</i> | salted fish (Kadazan) |
| <i>joget</i> | traditional Malay dance |
| <i>libing</i> | see <i>hiing</i> |
| <i>lokek</i> | parsimonious, close-fisted or stingy (Chinese) |
| <i>mamai</i> | an honorific term for Kadazan male elders |
| <i>mokiintong</i> | ask to see into one's future or problem by communicating with spirits |
| <i>montoku</i> | Kadazan distilled wine |
| <i>mufti</i> | senior Muslim official (scholar and expert) |
| <i>murtad</i> | apostate (Muslim) |
| <i>nonsom</i> | fermented vegetables and/or meat in cooked rice (Kadazan) |
| <i>orang tua</i> | Kadazan or Dusun term for elder |
| <i>pangeran</i> | Brunei term for ruler |
| <i>pangi</i> | a preserving agent, (pangium edule) |
| <i>pasok</i> | indigene |
| <i>pinaasakan</i> | traditional Kadazan stewed fish |
| <i>poco-poco</i> | a popular line dance originating from Sulawesi |
| <i>rumah terbuka</i> | 'open house', a feast open to the public |
| <i>rumpun</i> | referring to stock (people) |
| <i>uztaʒ</i> | Islamic teacher |
| <i>saman malu</i> | defamation summon (traditional based on <i>adat</i>) |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>sampan</i> | small boat with oars at the stern |
| <i>seluar puntung</i> | cropped pants that ended at the calves (female wear) |
| <i>semenanjung</i> | meaning ‘peninsula’, a colloquial reference to no particular state on the Malaysian Peninsula |
| <i>siang</i> | Chinese surname |
| <i>sigah</i> | traditional headgear |
| <i>sogit</i> | Kadazan <i>adat</i> -based fine typically paid in the form of livestock |
| <i>sokid</i> | up-hill, referring to things or people |
| <i>sumazau</i> | traditional Kadazan dance |
| <i>tagaas</i> | bumpkin |
| <i>tagung</i> | an ensemble of brass gongs |
| <i>talak</i> | see <i>arak</i> |
| <i>tamu</i> | traditional outdoor market, site of barter trading in the past |
| <i>tangkong</i> | silver link belt worn at the waist (Kadazan) |
| <i>towkay</i> | Chinese for head of a household or business |
| <i>tudung (or hijab)</i> | head scarf, covering or veil worn by Muslim females |

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Appendix A

Contents:

1. Kadazan and Dusun sound correspondences with examples – pages 11 & 12
2. Application of Kadazandusun language with example – pages 97 & 98

Ref: Tangit, Trixie. 2005. Planning Kadazandusun: Labels, language and identity. MA thesis. University of Hawaii, Manoa. Unpublished manuscript, 11-12; 97-98

Note:

1. Page 11 – some explanation & a comparison of Kadazan and Dusun vowels and consonants and sound correspondences
2. Page 12 – some explanation & examples of sound correspondences in shared cognates
3. Page 97 – some explanation and English test sample
4. Page 98 – test samples showing an application of the Kadazandusun language – compare Kadazan, Dusun and Kadazandusun texts

1.1.3.2.1 Similarities and differences between the Kadazan and Dusun dialects

In terms of phonology, stress, pitch, and length are important features among the Kadazan and Dusun dialects (Lees and Lees n.d.; Miller 1993). However, many native speakers are wont to say that the only major difference—that is, on the surface—between the Kadazan and Dusun dialects is in the matter of accent or ‘lagu’ (it can mean “song”, “rhythm”, or “tone” in the Malay language).⁸ This native intuition often prompt native speakers, such as myself, to view that on the whole, the Kadazan and Dusun dialects can be said to be “more or less” similar to one another.

Table 1: Kadazan and Dusun vowels and consonants

| | Dusun | Kadazan |
|------------|---|--|
| Vowels | a, i, o, u, (e) | a, i, o, u |
| Consonants | p, t, k, ʔ b, d, g s, h, m, n, ŋ l, r w, y | p, t, k, ʔ b, b̆, d, d̆, g v, s, z, h, m, n, ŋ l |

(Ref. Miller 1993;

KDME dictionary

1995)

In fact, there are sound correspondences between the Kadazan and Dusun dialects, such as follows: (Note: Kadazan (K); Dusun (D)).

Table 2: Sound correspondences in Kadazan and Dusun

| | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| K /v/ | : | D /w/ |
| K /z/ | : | D /y/ |
| K /l/ | : | D /r/ |
| K /h/ | : | D /l/ |

⁸ According to Evelyn Annol, from the Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sabah (JPNS) (Sabah state education department), accent is the only difference she finds among her language teachers. These language teachers are required to be fluent in their respective Kadazan/Dusun mother tongue, before they can qualify to teach the Kadazandusun language in school.

Example 1: Sound correspondences

- a. Kadazan /v/: Dusun /w/
'good' avasi awasi
- b. Kadazan /z/: Dusun /y/
'big' agazo agayo
- c. Kadazan /l/: Dusun /r/
'road' lahan ralan
- d. Kadazan /h/: Dusun /l/
'song' hozou loyou
- e. Kadazan versus Dusun sentences featuring all sound/phoneme correspondences above
- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | 'That road is big' | 'That song is good' |
| Kadazan: | Agazo lahan diti | Avasi hozou diti |
| Dusun: | Agayo ralan diti | Awasi loyou diti |

As seen in the Table 1 above, most of the consonants in the Kadazan and Dusun 'dialects are the same. However, several phonemes are unique to Kadazan but not to Dusun, and vice-versa. For instance, the consonants /v/ and /z/ occur in Kadazan but not in the Dusun dialect. Similarly, the consonants /w/ and /y/ are found in Dusun but not in the Kadazan dialect. However, these consonants, and others, show up as sound correspondences in shared cognates between the two dialects. Table 2 and cognate samples above show that consonants /v, z, l, h/ in Kadazan corresponds to the consonants /w, y, r, l/ in Dusun, respectively.

However, while the voiced bilabial and alveolar plosives, /b/ and /d/, and implosives, /ɓ/ and /ɗ/, and are found in the Kadazan dialect, they are not evident in the Dusun dialect. These implosive sounds, /ɓ/ and /ɗ/, have been described as being "lightly articulated and slightly preglottalized"; the glottalization being contrastive against voiced bilabial and alveolar stops (Miller 1993; Kroeger 1993). The implosive phonemes in

Dusun dialect to act as the main feature in the Kadazandusun language. However, while the Bunduliwan agreement explains the basis for the Dusun dialect as the main reference, the technical guidelines in the Bunduliwan are lacking. That is, the Bunduliwan agreement does not explain how the synthesis between the three dialects ought to be carried out.

5.1.1. A basic application of the Kadazandusun language

Following the Bunduliwan agreement, all language planners, KDCA, JPNS, and KLF, have seemed to adhere to the note that the Dusun dialect is the main reference (Bating 2001). What this means is that Dusun phonemes are used to represent the basic form of the Kadazandusun language. Therefore, Kadazan phonemes that are in correspondence to Dusun phonemes cannot be applied (c.f. Chapter 1 for a list of sound correspondences between Kadazan and Dusun). In general, at the Bunduliwan stage, the Kadazandusun language must first take the shape of the Dusun dialect. We see that in the Kadazandusun text sample below, the Kadazandusun follows the Dusun form except for some orthographical markings that appear in Kadazan. The Kadazandusun text below follows the application of the Bunduliwan by the JPNS and KLF. (The significance of orthographical markings will be discussed shortly).

(Ref. Excerpt from 'I Kondu om i manuk' [The Eagle and The Chicken] (2001). This reader was transferred from the Kadazan variant into the Kadazandusun language by Evelyn Annol).

English:

“Once upon a time, the chicken and the eagle got along really well together. Whatever that needed to be done, they would work with each other to accomplish it. If the chicken had a problem, the eagle would help. The chicken was like that too. If the eagle had a problem, the chicken would help it.”

Kadazan:

Di tinuu i ka, miunung kopizo i manuk om i kondiu. Oonu nopo kuukuamaon nga' pogitaatabangan dioho' do monguama'. Nung kikosusaan i manuk nga' tulongon di kondiu. I manuk nga' ingkaa nogi'. Nung kikosusaan i kondiu nga' tulongon dau.

Dusun:

Di tinuu i ka, miunung kopiyo i manuk om i kondiu. Oonu nopo kuukuamaon nga' pogitaatabangan diolo' do monguama'. Nung kikosusaan i manuk nga' tulongon di kondiu. I manuk nga' ingkaa nogi'. Nung kikosusaan i kondiu nga' tulongon dau.

Kadazandusun:

Di tinuu i ka, miunung kopio i manuk om i kondiu. Oonu nopo kuukuamaon nga' pogitaatabangan diolo' do monguama'. Nung kikosusaan i manuk nga' tulongon di kondiu. I manuk nga' ingkaa nogi'. Nung kikosusaan i kondiu nga' tulongon dau.

(Note: Kadazan translation mine. Dusun translation checked by native Dusun speakers, Wendell Gingging and Pamela Petrus.).

In recent years, the KDCA has sought to provide a technical guide for the applications in the Bunduliwan. The KDCA has specified that the process of synthesis in the Bunduliwan must follow two rules or requirements.⁵⁰ According to Bating (2001), the process of comparing words among the three dialects in the Bunduliwan must ensure that the “majority” and “minimal” rules are followed. In the majority rule, a word or contribution that appears in two dialects will be selected as the Bunduliwan form. However, words must appear identical in spelling. In the following example, for instance, we see that since Dusun Tambunan and Central Dusun are identical in the word for “below”, the word “siriba” is selected as the Bunduliwan form.

⁵⁰ The KDCA linguistic guidelines to the Kadazandusun language is published in a book called “Ejaan bahasa Kadazandusun dan aspek-aspek persoalan [Kadazandusun language spelling and aspects of inquiry]” by Henry Bating (2001). Henry Bating is a spokesperson of the KDCA.

Appendix B

Contents:

1. Bunduliwan agreement (my translation and original)
2. Kadazandusun language agreement (my translation and original)

Taken from: Tangit, Trixie. 2005. Planning Kadazandusun: Labels, language and identity. MA thesis. University of Hawaii, Manoa. Unpublished manuscript

Note:

1. English translation of the Bunduliwan agreement followed with a copy of the agreement in original Malay.

The Bunduliwan agreement pertains to the formulation of the basic code of the Kadazandusun language.

2. English translation of the Kadazandusun language agreement followed with a copy of the agreement in original Malay.

The Kadazandusun language agreement, which outlines the purpose and shared responsibilities between KDCA and USDA.

BUNDULIWAN AGREEMENT (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

Declaration of Agreement

Bunduliwan dialect as base dialect
Standardization and Pembakuan Kadazandusun language
between
Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association
And United Sabah Dusun Association

That the Kadazandusun language Consultative Council Committee – Jawatankuasa Majlis Perunding Bahasa Kadazandusun (MPBK), that has been formed between the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (KOISAAN) and Sabah Dusun Association (USDA), on 11th April, 1995 with this agree:-

- A. to use the Bunduliwan dialect as the base dialect for the standardization of the Kadazandusun language in the writing and speaking in the teaching and learning of the Student's mother tongue [Pupil's Own Language (POL)].
- B. The Bunduliwan dialect will continue to be enriched by other dialects that are found in the Kadazandusunic and Paitanic tree/group.
- C. In order to revise the development of the Kadazandusun language, a consultative body called the Kadazandusun language Consultative Council Committee – Jawatankuasa Majlis Perunding Bahasa Kadazandusun (MPBK) is formed, to function as a reference body in spelling aspects, use of standard words, the incorporation of words from other dialects in the Kadazandusunic, Paitanic group/tree and foreign languages into the Kadazandusun language.

This declaration of agreement is made based on the following factors:-

- A. In general, the Bunduliwan dialect, as the base dialect in the forming of the Kadazandusun language, received fewer objections, if compared with other dialects, from the representatives of main ethnic groups with the dialect Kadazandusunic and Paitanic, that were present at the symposium "Towards standardization of Kadazan Language" that was held at the Perkasa Hotel, Kundasang on the 13th of Januari, 1989.
- B. Bunduliwan dialect has been identified by linguistic research experts, specifically Summer Institute of Linguistic (SIL) as dialect that has the highest 'intelligibility' among the dialects that are found in the Kadazandusunic and Paitanic group.
- C. From a geographical angle, the Bunduliwan dialect is used and spoken with more wide spread by those multi-ethnic Kadazandusunic and Paitanic, if compared with other dialects, specifically in the Apin-Aprin, Bundu Tuhan, Inanam, Kota Belud, Kota Marudu, Keningau, Kinarut, Kiulu, Kundasang, Lingkabau, Menggatal, Paitan, Ranau, Sook, Tambunan, Tamparuli, Telipok, Telupid, Tongos, Tuaran, Ulu Kinabatangan, Ulu Penampang dan Ulu Papar.

The success of teaching and learning of the Kadazandusun language at schools as the Student's Mother tongue is dependent on the number of request (not less than 15 parents of students) so that the language may be taught in a/the school. Therefore, the use and speech in the Bunduliwan dialect that is more wide spread if compared with other dialects in the Kadazandusunic and Paitanic tree, at least will be able to help assure the success of the teaching and learning of the Kadazandusun language.

This declaration of agreement is made by KOISAAN and USDA and is witnessed by those signed below:

SIGNATURE PORTION

PERISYTIHARAN PERSETUJUAN

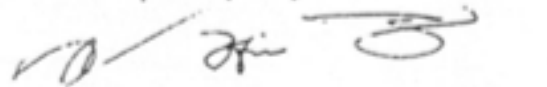
DIALEK BUNDULIWAN SEBAGAI DIALEK ASAS PEMIAWAIAN DAN PEMBAKUAN BAHASA KADAZANDUSUN

DI ANTARA

KADAZAN DUSUN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION DAN UNITED SABAH DUSUN ASSOCIATION

BAHAWASANYA Jawatankuasa Majlis Perunding Bahasa Kadazandusun (MPBK), yang telah dibentuk di antara Persatuan Kebudayaan Kadazan Dusun Sabah (KOISAAN) dan Persatuan Dusun Sabah (USDA), pada hari ini... *11/46*...bulan April, 1995 dengan ini bersetuju:-

- (A) Menggunakan Dialek BUNDULIWAN sebagai dialek asas pemiawaian dan pembakuan Bahasa Kadazandusun dalam penulisan dan pertuturan di dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Ibunda Pelajar [Pupil's Own Language (POL)].
- (B) Dialek BUNDULIWAN akan terus diperkayakan oleh dialek-dialek lain yang terdapat di dalam rumpun Bahasa KADAZANDUSUNIK dan PAITANIK.
- (C) Untuk mengemaskinikan perkembangan Bahasa KADAZANDUSUN, satu badan perunding yang dipanggil MAJLIS PERUNDING BAHASA KADAZANDUSUN SABAH (MPBK) dibentuk, berfungsi sebagai sebuah *Badan Rujukan* di dalam aspek-aspek ejaan.

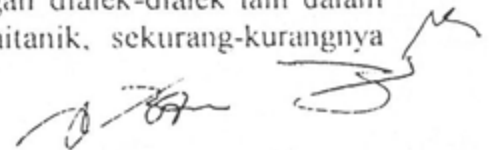


penggunaan perkataan yang piawai, penerapan perkataan-perkataan dari dialek-dialek lain di dalam rumpun Bahasa KADAZANDUSUNIK, PAITANIK dan bahasa-bahasa asing ke dalam Bahasa KADAZANDUSUN.

PERISYTIHARAN PERSETUJUAN ini dibuat berasaskan faktor-faktor berikut:-

- (A) Pada umumnya, dialek BUNDULIWAN, sebagai dialek asas dalam pembentukan Bahasa KADAZANDUSUN, menerima kurang bantahan, jika dibandingkan dengan dialek-dialek yang lain, dari wakil-wakil kumpulan utama etnik berdialek KADAZANDUSUNIK dan PAITANIK, yang hadir di dalam simposium “Towards standardisation of Kadazan Language” yang telah diadakan di Hotel Perkasa, Kundasang pada 13hb. Januari, 1989.
- (B) Dialek Bunduliwan telah dikenalpasti oleh pakar-pakar penyelidik Bahasa, khususnya Summer Institute of Linguistic(SIL) sebagai dialek yang mempunyai “Intelligibiliti” yang tertinggi di antara dialek-dialek yang terdapat di dalam rumpun Bahasa Kadazandusunik dan Paitanik.
- (C) Dari segi geografikal, dialek BUNDULIWAN diguna dan ditutur dengan lebih meluas oleh kalangan Multi-Etnik Kadazandusunik dan Paitanik, jika dibandingkan dengan dialek-dialek yang lain, khususnya di daerah Apin-Apin, Bundu Tuhan, Inanam, Kota Belud, Kota Marudu, Keningau, Kinarut, Kiulu, Kundasang, Lingkabau, Menggatal, Paitan, Ranau, Sook, Tambunan, Tamparuli, Telipok, Telupid, Tongod, Tuaran, Ulu Kinabatangan, Ulu Penampang dan Ulu Papar.

Kejayaan pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Kadazandusun di sekolah-sekolah sebagai Bahasa Ibunda Pelajar, adalah bergantung kepada banyaknya permohonan (tidak kurang lima belas ibubapa pelajar) supaya bahasa itu diajar di sesebuah sekolah. Oleh yang demikian, penggunaan dan pertuturan dialek BUNDULIWAN yang lebih menyeluruh jika dibandingkan dengan dialek-dialek lain dalam rumpun bahasa Kadazandusunik dan Paitanik, sekurang-kurangnya

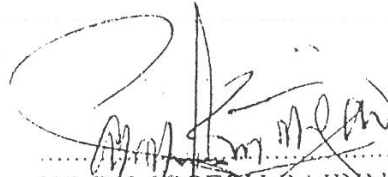


akan dapat membantu menjamin kejayaan pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Kadazandusun.

PERISYTIHARAN PERSETUJUAN ini dibuat oleh KOISAAN dan USDA dan disaksikan oleh mereka yang bertandatangan seperti di bawah ini:-

Ditandatangani oleh:

Presiden KOISAAN

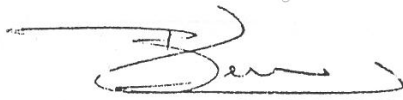


HS. DK. JOSEPH PAIRIN DK. KITINGAN

Tarikh:

11 April, 1995

Disaksikan oleh:



BENEDICT TOPIN
Setiausaha Agung KOISAAN

Ditandatangani oleh:

Presiden USDA

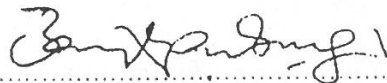


DK. MARK KODING

Tarikh:

11 April, 95

Disaksikan oleh:



RAYMOND BOIN TOMBUNG
Setiausaha Agung USDA

KADAZANDUSUN AGREEMENT (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

Declaration of Agreement

Kadazandusun language as Official Language

Between

Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association

And United Sabah Dusun Association

This Declaration of Agreement was made on the 24th of January, 1995 between the Highest Council Members of the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association and the Highest Council Members of the United Sabah Dusun Association, two associations that is respectively/each registered under the Association Act of 1966 that is Bil. Number SAB 356 addressed at Kilometre 6, Penampang Road, W.D.T. (Window Desk Transfer) No. 39, 89509 Penampang for the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (hereafter KDCA) as the first party and Bil. Number SAB 119 addressed at 1st Floor, Block A, Sinsuran Complex for United Sabah Dusun Association (hereafter USDA) as the second party.

That, KDCA and USDA, with full awareness and remorse/regret have agreed regarding the matters that are stated inside the Declaration of Agreement below:

1. KDCA and USDA are with this agrees that:
 - I. The Kadazandusun language is the official language for the two associations KDCA and USDA;
 - II. The Kadazandusun language is the language that is used in the writing and speaking in the teaching and learning of the mother tongue (POL) [Pupil's Own Language], and
 - III. The Kadazandusun language is the language that is used by all Kadazan Dusun ethnic without restriction to the use of other local dialects.

2. KDCA and USDA with this agree:
 - I. The Kadazandusun language is conserved and developed collectively for the benefit of all races in Malaysia that are interested in learning the Kadazandusun language.
 - II. Shared responsibility to develop the Kadazandusun language at the local, national and international levels, specifically for those that would like to learn and study/research the Kadazandusun language.

This declaration of agreement is made by KDCA and USDA and is witnessed by those that represent both parties, as those signed below:

SIGNATURE PORTION

KADAZANDUSUN LANGUAGE AGREEMENT

(ORIGINAL IN MALAY LANGUAGE) – page 1/

PERJANJIAN PERISYTIHARAN

BAHASA KADAZANDUSUN SEBAGAI BAHASA RASMI

DI ANTARA

KADAZAN DUSUN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
DAN UNITED SABAH DUSUN ASSOCIATION

PERJANJIAN PERISYTIHARAN ini dibuat pada ^{24/1} bulan JANUARI, tahun 1995 di antara Ahli Majlis Tertinggi KADAZAN DUSUN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION dan Ahli Majlis Tertinggi UNITED SABAH DUSUN ASSOCIATION, dua pertubuhan yang masing-masing didaftarkan di bawah Akta Pertubuhan 1966 iaitu Bil. SAB 356 beralamat di KM 6, Jalan Penampang, W.D.T. NO. 39, 89509 Penampang bagi Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (Selepas ini disebut KDCA) sebagai pihak pertama dan Bil. SAB 119 beralamat di Tingkat 1, Lot 7, Blok A, Sinsuran Complex bagi United Sabah Dusun Association (Selepas ini disebut USDA) sebagai pihak kedua.

Bahawasanya, KDCA dan USDA, dengan penuh sedar dan keinsafan telah bersetuju mengenai perkara-perkara yang tertera di dalam Perjanjian Perisytiharan di bawah ini:

1. KDCA dan USDA adalah dengan ini bersetuju bahawa:

- (I) Bahasa KADAZANDUSUN adalah bahasa rasmi bagi kedua-dua pertubuhan KDCA dan USDA;
- (II) Bahasa KADAZANDUSUN adalah bahasa yang dipakai dalam penulisan dan pertuturan di dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa ibunda (POL) tersebut, dan
- (III) Bahasa KADAZANDUSUN adalah bahasa yang dipakai oleh semua etnik Kadazan Dusun tanpa menyekat penggunaan dialek-dialek tempatan yang lain.



