

**Disjuncture and Difference Across Borders:
Popular Discourse About Riau Malays in Singapore**

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Abstract

This paper examines some of the representations of the Riau Archipelago which circulate among Malay Singaporeans. It first explores the relationship between these popular representations and the current political situation in Indonesia, how political and economic developments are discussed and understood among Singaporeans who are related through kinship - consanguineous or fictive - to Malays living in Tanjung Pinang or Tanjung Balai Karimun. It will then discuss the impact these representations have on inter-personal relations across borders, how, for example, representations of social instability create an imaginary "Malay Other" who is becoming more and more Indonesian. The last section will discuss two case studies in which the fears generated by these representations have divided people who have been closely linked over many years or generations.