

The strange case of recycled ICs in Sabah

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COMMENT Many of the problems uncovered thus far by the Malaysian Electoral Roll Analysis Project (Merap) are not directly attributable to the Election Commission (EC).

The responsibility of issuing identity cards and ensuring that as far as possible the holders of these cards are Malaysian citizens who live in valid residences is under the jurisdiction of the National Registration Department (NRD).

While it would be more reassuring if the EC were playing a more pro-active role by questioning the NRD regarding some of the problems identified, it would be unfair to blame the EC, for example, if NRD were giving out ICs to non-Malaysians, thereby allowing these people to be registered as voters.

In this article, I want to highlight a few major problems with the allocation of IC numbers by the NRD to voters in Sabah, a state where many cases of non-citizens being given ICs have been long documented under 'Project IC' or 'Project M' with the intention of wresting the state government back from Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) after it left the BN coalition just prior to the 1990 general elections.

These examples are especially troubling because it shows active complicity by the NRD in changing IC numbers, transferring IC numbers from one person to another and allowing more than one person to 'share' the same IC number.

My preliminary analysis, obtained by comparing voter details in the electoral roll used in Sabah in the 2008 general elections with the electoral roll updated to Quarter 3 (Q3) of 2011, revealed the following problems with regard to the IC numbers of voters in Sabah:

- 1) The same voter being given a new IC number
- 2) A voter's old IC number being given to another voter
- 3) Two voters sharing the same old IC number
- 4) Voters with the same name and same date of birth registered in the same constituency

Same voter given a new IC number

As far as I know, there are no specified procedures for a civilian holding a civilian identity card to change his or her IC number.

And yet, my preliminary investigation uncovered 63 cases in Sabah where the IC number of a

voter in the 2008 electoral roll was subsequently changed. (These are the same voters because the data shows them having the same old IC number).

And none of these cases involved a change in IC number because of these voters were allocated a number which did not match the voters' gender - ICs ending with an even number for 'females' and those ending with an odd number for 'males'.

Some cases involved minor tweaks, including changing the date of birth by one digit, perhaps because of an earlier data input error.

But there were also many cases where the date of birth of a voter was changed completely. The table below shows some examples.

For example, Janggok bin Danau's date of birth as indicated by his IC was changed from May 6, 1961 to Dec 31, 1951. Taib bin Ali's date of birth was changed from Nov 30, 1970 to March 21, 1959. Ahmad bin Kalanayakan's date of birth was changed from June 30, 1963 to Oct 9, 1949.

Even though the 2008 IC numbers for these voters are no longer on the electoral roll, this change in IC number is worrying because it could potentially be part of a much larger and systematic attempt to 'mask' the trail of giving out ICs to non-Malaysians as part of 'Project IC' in Sabah.

And if this can be done in Sabah, it could easily be replicated in other parts of Malaysia.

A voter's old IC number given to another voter

More worrying is the finding that the old IC numbers of some voters have been recycled and given to another voter.

My preliminary investigation uncovered 35 of such cases in Sabah. In all of these cases, the old IC numbers have been 'left out' in the details provided by the EC website.

For example, in 2008, Chui Vin Ming (male) with new IC number 390315125155 and old IC number H0269593, was a registered voter in Tawau. But according to the EC website, this old IC number now belongs to Misra binti Idris (new IC: 580614125662) who is also a registered voter in Tawau. (The most recent screenshots of the details of these two voters from the EC website is shown below).

How can the IC number of one voter be given to another?

In this particular case, how can it be that the old IC number of a Chinese male voter, who is born in 1939, is given to a female Malay voter, who is born in 1958?

In addition, why is the old IC number of the Chinese voter, Chui Vin Ming, excluded from his details in the EC website?

Screenshot of Chui Ving Ming (note that the old IC number is missing).

Screenshot showing Misra binti Idris having Chui Vin Ming's old IC number.

In another case, the old IC number of Amiri bin Sakka (new IC: 661014125831, old IC: H0534679) who is registered in Kinabatangan was given to Hartini binti Daud (new IC: 690118126030) who is a registered in Tawau.

Screenshot of Amiri bin Sakka (note that the old IC is missing).

Screenshot of Haritini Binti Daud having Amiri bin Sakka's old IC number.

In case someone considers the possibility that these could be old IC numbers being given to spouses (if this is indeed legally permissible), included among these cases are those where old IC numbers have been given from one male voter to another male voter and from one female voter to another female voter.

The table below shows the voter details of some of the cases uncovered.

These are cases where voters whose old ICs have been given to others, but still remains on the electoral roll. I also found cases of two voters who were deleted from the electoral roll after 'giving away' their old IC numbers.

For example, I found a voter by the name of Badariah binti Zabdi (new IC number: 610911125540, old IC number H0509518) who was registered in Tawau in the 2008 GE electoral roll.

In the Q3 2011 electoral roll, Badariah's new IC number was changed to 620112125842, but her date of birth in the EC records remained that of her old IC number, which was Sept 11, 1961.

(I was able to 'detect' this case because her date of birth in the EC records did not correspond with her IC number). However, according to latest check of the EC website, the IC number in question - 620112125842/H0509518 - now belongs to Norhayati binti Ismail, whose date of birth has been 'updated' to Jan 12, 1962.

Badariah binti Zabdi has now become Norhayati binti Ismail with a new IC number and date of birth. The only thing which unites them is the common old IC number. Badariah's former new IC number - 610911125540 - no longer exists in the EC database.

I also found another voter by the name of Zainal bin Sila (new IC: 59051560125447, old IC: H0664360) who was registered in Kimanis in the 2008 GE electoral roll.

In the Q3 2011 electoral roll, Zainal's new IC number was changed to 650422125431, but his date of birth in the EC records remained that of his old IC number which was May 15, 1959.

However, according to the latest check of the EC website, the IC number in question (650422125431/H0664360) now belongs to a Wasimin bin Mosuling, whose date of birth has

been 'updated' to April 22, 1965. Zainal bin Sila has now become Wasimin bin Mosuling with a new IC number and date of birth.

Unless both of these voters are part of a witness protection programme, which requires them to change their IC and identity, the changes highlighted look very suspicious.

Can old IC numbers be transferred from one voter to another? Are old IC numbers being 'recycled' and given to 'new' voters so as to make them less 'suspicious' on paper? These questions can only be answered by the NRD.

Two voters sharing the same old IC number

In my preliminary investigation, I also found 21 cases of two voters sharing the same old IC numbers.

Screenshot of Tawasil bin Omar and Hasdar bin Salem sharing the same old IC number (H0563747).

For example, I found Tawasil bin Omar (new IC: 430306125675, old IC: H0563747), a voter in Sepanggar, sharing the same old IC number as Hasdar bin Salem (new IC: 600625125479, old IC: H0563747), a voter in Putatan (see screenshot above).

Screenshot of Milah binti Abjah and Amin bin Sulaiman sharing the same old IC number: H0502359.

I also found another example of a male and female voter from different constituencies sharing the same old IC number - Milah binti Abjah (new IC: 680802126134, old IC: H0502359) who is registered in Sepanggar and Amin bin Sulaiman (new IC: 650101125801, old IC: H0502359) who is registered in Putatan.

A disturbing finding is that when these old IC numbers are keyed into the EC website, no entries are detected. Only when these old IC numbers are keyed in under the 'Semak Isi Rumah' function do the names belonging to these old IC numbers appear.

Voters with the same name and same date of birth registered in the same constituency

Here, I found three cases of voters who share the same name and same date of birth who are registered in the same constituency. While it is possible that people who are born in the same area on the same day may end up having the same name, the case of the two voters named Pentammah A/P Muthaloo stands out.

These two voters have the same name but different IC numbers (new IC: 541209045018, old IC 8139940 and new IC: 541209025682, old IC: H083889).

Both of them are born on the same day but in different states. One was born in Malacca (state code 04) and the other in Johor (02).

But by a great stroke of luck/coincidence, both of them happen to end up in Sabah and registered not only in the same parliamentary constituency of Sepanggar but also in the same state constituency, Karambunai, and in the same polling district of Kurol Melangi and the same locality of Kurol Melangi.

Screenshot of Pentammah A/P Muthaloo (same date of birth, same locality, same district).

Tip of the iceberg

The cases identified in this preliminary analysis in Sabah are not isolated cases. More than half of the problematic cases identified (71 out of 130 or 55%) fall into the range of 'dubious' IC numbers highlighted in Dr Chong Eng Leong's book 'Lest We Forget' - H288001 to H0384000 and H48001 to H0576000 (pg 21).

One cannot help but suspect that these cases are part of a much larger set of inter-related problems which arose because of the improper distribution of ICs to non-citizens.

The distribution of ICs to illegal immigrants in Sabah is not a new story. It is happening to this day as indicated by a recent news report that an NRD official was among the 19 people arrested for issuing fake MyKads.

If the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Illegal Immigrants in Sabah is one that should be taken seriously, its terms of reference must include an investigation into the issue of ICs which were issued to non-citizens and the number of these non-citizens who found their way into the electoral roll.

The cases identified here is but the tip of a much larger iceberg.

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