Chinese new migrants in Suriname: the inevitability of ethnic performing

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Chinese New Migrants in Suriname

The Inevitability of Ethnic Performing

Paul B. Tjon Sie Fat

This book covers various aspects of New Chinese Migration in Suriname in the 1990s and early 2000s. It is an ethnography of New Chinese Migrants in the context of South-South migration, but also a first ethnography of Chinese in Suriname, as well as an analysis of Surinamese ethnic discourse and ethnopolitics. Starting in the 1990s, renewed immigration from China changed the dynamics of the Surinamese Chinese community, which developed from a Hakka enclave to a culturally and linguistically diverse, modern Chinese migrant group. Local positioning strategies of Chinese had always depended on ethnic entrepreneurship and political participation, but were now complicated by anti-immigrant sentiments.
Chinese New Migrants in Suriname

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CHINESE NEW MIGRANTS IN SURINAME;
THE INEVITABILITY OF ETHNIC PERFORMING

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties ingestelde commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel
op donderdag 8 oktober 2009, te 12.00 uur

door

Paul Brendan Tjon Sie Fat

geboren te Paramaribo, Suriname
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I need to express my deepest appreciation to my promotor and copromotores, and WOTRO, the science division within the Netherlands Institute for Scientific Research (NWO) that provided the grant which made this project possible, and also AMIDSt for its help in the publication of this book. The idea for studying the Chinese of Suriname came from Ad de Bruijne, to whom I was introduced by Ivet Pieper during a presentation he gave on the Lebanese of Suriname at the Dutch embassy in Paramaribo. It took a while to find a suitable team, but eventually Ad de Bruijne, Leo Douw, and Michiel Baud formed a triad that could cover the different areas of Surinamese studies, modern Chinese migration, and transnationalism in the Caribbean Region, as well as successfully deal with the capriciousness of an older, foreign, and inexperienced PhD candidate.

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I had been warned that writing a thesis would be an extremely lonely experience as few people tend to show understanding or interest in what can easily appear to be an arcane subject. But the lack of formal
affiliation with an institute in Suriname and the Netherlands meant the absence of colleagues, networks, discussions, and, too often, inspiration. The people who made up for that isolation with critical conversation and sharp insights may not have known at the time how important they were and how very real their contributions to the way I have learnt to understand Surinamese society and issues of Chinese identity: Annette Tjon Sie Fat, Eithne Carlin, Sharda Ganga, Sikko Visscher, Hebe Verrest.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This study outlines the challenges to the socio-political position of the Chinese community in Suriname in the context of the immigration of new Chinese migrants in the last decades. The arrival of these ‘New Chinese’ has largely led to a process of (re)sinification in the 1990s and early 2000s and a repositioning of the Chinese community in Surinamese society. Politics in Suriname has long been characterized by a local tradition of ethnopolitical power-sharing and its associated clientelism. This system requires people in Suriname to identify themselves in ethnic terms in order to gain access to political and economic resources. This has also been true for the Chinese community which attained socio-political participation by constructing ‘Chineseness’ in the context of Suriname and forming a local Chinese identity. At the same time, this strategy made Chinese vulnerable to negative stereotypes and anti-Chinese sentiments within the Surinamese society. The new Chinese immigration since the early 1990s added a new element to this situation. It created a division within the Chinese community in Suriname between ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Chinese. At the same time it changed the national and international context of Chineseness in Suriname and in this way produced new stereotypes within Surinamese society along with new ethnic strategies within the Chinese community. In this book I will try to analyse these changes which were quite significant both for the Chinese subjects and other Surinamese.

The analysis of the positioning of Chinese migrants in Suriname often presupposes a clear approach to the issue of ethnicity and ethnic identity. It is usually assumed that the Chinese are seen by others and identify themselves as a separate ethnic group. However, this study also analyses Chinese ethnicity in Suriname on the basis of the two following clear suppositions: ethnic identities are instrumentally and often strategically produced, and therefore they undergo continuous changes. Thus, ethnic identities are multiple and situational, and are contingent on the particular agents articulating this identity, and the particular audience that is witness to this process of articulation. In analyzing the Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname, it is important to take into account Surinamese notions of Chinese ethnicity, notions of Chinese identity held by Chinese subjects, as well as the specific contexts where ethnicity is
generated and sustained instrumentally. These considerations produce insights that are crucial if we want to understand the repositioning of Chinese in Surinamese society in the last two decades and the concomitant changes in Chinese identities during that period. The repositioning of the Chinese in Suriname was a direct result of the debates and problems generated by the economic activities and strategies of Chinese migrants in Suriname during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This created new ethnic labels within Surinamese society, but it also led to intense internal debates on what it meant to be Chinese within the ‘Chinese community’.

Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname has never been analysed in a systematic way. Even when we look at the historical analysis of the Chinese presence in the Caribbean in general, we can only find a few studies. Even in those cases, the limited subset of Caribbean studies of Chinese focuses almost exclusively on nineteenth century indentured labour and Chinatown politics.1 In this context, the presence of Chinese in Suriname is primarily regarded as a historical phase.2 In this study we will focus on the present-day presence of Chinese in Suriname and look into the process of radical repositioning they have undergone. But before we turn to that theme, it is important to briefly outline the place of ethnicity and ethnic politics in Surinamese society.

1.1 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity in Suriname

There have been few attempts at explaining the structure of ethnicity and identity in Suriname.3 Ethnic identity, Chinese or otherwise, is obviously important in Surinamese society in view of the remarkably diversity which has developed there as a result of migration. Yet there are other levels beyond the day-to-day interactions between the insiders and the outsiders, the established and the newcomers, where ethnicity also emerges, such as, colonial racial heritage, economic segmentation, and ethnopolitics. Like the other post-colonial states of the Caribbean and Latin America, Suriname

3 Notable exceptions are: Van Lier (1977 [1949]), Hoetink (1962), who studied the structure of inter-ethnic relations based on his experiences in the Dutch Caribbean; Bilby (1996) who wrote on ethno-genesis among the Aluku Maroons; Whitehead (1996) who in the same volume wrote on the emergence of ‘Indian’ groups in early colonial history.
continues to struggle with the legacy of institutionalized racism through which the dominance of the colonial regime was upheld. The hegemonic discourse of White supremacy and Black inferiority still resonates in the Caribbean counter-discourse of Creolization or more directly in the consistent deprecation of anything associated with a darker complexion.

The straightforward Black-White continuum of Caribbean racial discourse, which was thought to match social stratification, was challenged by the introduction of East Indian indentured labour, but it became even more contested in Suriname due to the more varied nature of Asian indentureship. East Indian, Javanese, and Chinese indentured labourers were alien because they were completely new additions to the basically Black-White continuum of colonial Surinamese society, and they were in the literal sense of foreign nationals. Soon almost half of all people residing in Suriname were ‘alien’, which increasingly fostered a feeling of menace among the Creole majority. Moreover, in the 1960s the word ‘Surinamese’ (i.e. inhabitant of colonial Suriname) still often excluded ‘Asians’.

In any case, the basic principle of ethnic discourse in Suriname remains racial, and a ‘White’ phenotype continues to be desired as a marker of status and social success, while darker complexions continue to be associated with low socio-economic status. Local positioning of migrants means being colour-graded and actively participating in the colour-game of post-colonial Surinamese society. In the case of Chinese migrants, the former race relations have carried over into the post-colonial society, which means that Chinese migrants continue to be positioned in terms of late colonial Black-White-Asian contrasts. The inability of the Chinese migrants to speak Dutch signals their less than perfect ‘virtual whiteness’, while their relatively light complexion enhances their association with socio-economic success.

Stratification in late colonial Surinamese society mirrors the situation in the Anglophone Caribbean where the Black-White conti-

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4 Rex 1982: 208.
5 I use the term ‘East Indian’ to reflect native English-language labelling practices in Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana. The recognized Surinamese ethnic label Hindostaan is the product of national politics of recognition and internal identity politics and cannot be easily translated with ‘Hindustani’, which suggests Indian ethnic identity in relation to India. The e was dropped from the original Dutch term Hindoestaan (‘Hindustani’) to signal inclusion of East Indian Muslims and Christians. In this way Hindostaan does not suggest that Hindus (Dutch: Hindoes) were the only legitimate East Indians of Suriname.
6 Hoetink 1963.
nuum produced a middle class of civil servants, while Asian mi-
grants made up an entrepreneurial middle class as secondary trad-
ers, particularly in the Southern Caribbean. Racial and ethnic
stratification of colonial times came to be reflected in segmentation
of the economy and society of post-colonial Suriname. Entrepreneurship fostered the articulation of Chinese ethnic identity in Suri-
ame, as it has in the region and the rest of the world. Chinese
became synonymous with shopkeepers in the post-indentureship
period all over the Caribbean. Associating the Chinese with grocery
shops in Suriname was so prevalent that a polite term of address
for shopkeepers, oma (‘uncle’) acquired the secondary meaning of
‘Chinese’ and could be used to refer to any man who may be
labeled Chinese.

Light and Gold provide a conceptual framework to
approach the link between socio-economic position and Chinese
ethnic identity via the concept of the ethnic ownership economy,
which exists “...whenever any immigrant or ethnic group maintains
a private economic sector in which it has a controlling ownership
stake.” The size and use (heavy, average, or below-average) of
the ethnic ownership economy does not define it, nor does the
particular ethnic identity associated with it. The ethnic ownership
economy is a “rational response to job scarcity, and the fact that
the general labour market will probably never provide enough jobs
for coethnics to join mainstream”.

An ethnic ownership economy relies on ethnic resources,
not national origins. This means that the exact ethnic background
of those making up the economy is relevant, while ethnicity is
completely irrelevant with regard to customers and the language of
transactions. In the case of Chinese in Suriname the ethnic owner-
ship economy straddles both sectors, namely the formal (corner-
shops, supermarkets, goldsmiths, etc.) and the informal (migration
brokers, rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs), etc.).

9 Light & Gold 2000: 9. As an ethnic economy, the ethnic ownership economy does
not include coethnics, i.e., members of the same ethnic group, who work for wages
in the general economy (Light & Gold 2000: 4).
10 Ibid.
11 ROSCAs are basically groups of people who periodically meet in order to organize
informal micro-financing. ROSCAs are based on trust, and in their simplest form
participants contribute a fixed sum of money at each session, to be collected by one
member in a predetermined order at every meeting (hence ‘rotating’). Chinese
ROSCAs in Suriname are informal (savings and borrowing are untaxed and unregu-
lated by the government), but their transactions may involve substantial sums of
The Chinese ethnic economy in Suriname traditionally provided goods and services to low-income populations, in particular the Creoles. The semi-monopolistic control of the formal retail trade by ethnic Chinese combined with their use of family and migrant networks helps to produce the image of an ethnic Chinese conspiracy designed to cheat Surinamese citizens through unfair competition.

The role of ethnicity in an ethnic ownership economy is located in the particular ethnic resources of those making up the economy. According to Light and Gold, ethnic resources are “the features of a group that coethnics utilize in economic life or from which they derive economic benefit”. They include ethnically derived cultural and social capital, such as identifiable skills, organizational techniques, reactive solidarity, sojourning orientation, etc. based in group tradition and experience.\textsuperscript{12} The collective resources of an ethnic group help its members to overcome disadvantages of having the status of an outsider and they maximize the value of human and financial capital.\textsuperscript{13} Ethnic resources can be acquired (e.g. the Chinese in Suriname can improve their status by converting to Baptist Evangelicalism), and they can be costly (e.g. migrants can change their social position by setting up minority language schools and socio-cultural associations).

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foreign currency, and require record-keeping, guarantees for participants from external sponsors, and impartial referees. The ROSCAs organized in the Fuidung’on Hakka migrant organizations are ‘bidding associations’ (標會 biao hui), meaning that the order of loans is determined by a system of bidding. In the case of the Fuidung’on Hakka huiguan in Suriname, participants anonymously bid the highest ‘interest’ they can afford to be subtracted from the monthly contributions they would receive in total as a loan. The order of any equal bids is determined by chance.

\textsuperscript{12} Light & Gold 2000: 105-106. Ethnically derived cultural capital would be those occupationally relevant and supportive values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills transmitted generationally through socialization, within the context of a particular ethnic background. Ethnically derived social capital is those external human resources, which are acquired from and located in a particular ethnic background. Light & Gold stress that ethnic resources are generated as part of normal group life, and that class and ethnic resources are therefore virtually impossible to separate in the real world, as every social setting is characterized by both class position and ethnic membership.

\textsuperscript{13} Light & Gold 2000: 110. However, Light & Gold point out that ethnic ownership economies also present problems. Services are vulnerable to abuse by coethnics as they are provided on the basis of trust. Reciprocity in business deals is also a pressure that coethnics may wish to escape, as well as the pressure to employ (unskilled) coethnics. Finally, there is cannibalistic competition. Because ethnic entrepreneurs tend to rely on the same markets for supplies, capital, labour, consumers, on selling same type of goods and services, and using comparable business practices, the result is fierce competition and market saturation.
Concretely, membership in an ethnic group can produce financial capital (e.g. ROSCAs, and chain migration sponsoring which is repaid through work), and cultural capital (e.g. minority languages, cooking skills, music). This means that ethnic identification or membership in an ethnic group has an economic value. An orthodox interpretation of this economic value points towards an essentialist view of ethnicity by stressing the unique skills and outlooks shared by members of an ethnic group. According to this perspective, ethnicity provides a ‘tool kit’ of symbols, stories, rituals, and worldviews that people use to direct action and solve problems. If one recognizes that ethnicity is a social construct, one can also see that the economic value of membership in an ethnic group lies in the way a group establishes boundaries, and thus group cooperation and solidarity, as ‘...ethnicity is itself an ideology of solidarity.’

Because of its economic value, membership in an ethnic group, or the freedom of ethnic identification, needs to be managed. According to Light and Gold, there is a bounded solidarity among members in the ethnic group; “Upwardly mobile members understand that their own status is linked to the coethnic rank and file who are their customers, employees, and political constituents” while members further down the class ladder realize that their contacts with broader society are likely to be mediated by their co-ethnic elite. Ethnic ownership economies make the existence of ethnic communities likely; not only do they provide ethnic economies with labour, loan funds, and consumers, they also “establish and maintain notions of group culture, trust and solidarity that allow ethnic economies to exist, fill ethnic neighbourhoods and other social spaces, and grant status and legitimacy to major actors in ethnic economies.”

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14 From the viewpoint of ethnic economy theory, membership in the Chinese ethnic group clearly produces financial capital and human capital. ROSCAs are Chinese ethnically derived funds. Intended for business start-up, they are linked to savings, not formal loans. Human capital is produced by training chain migrants in the sponsor’s business. The sponsor profits as skilled workers from the mainstream economy are expensive. Chain migrants recognize that the ethnic ownership economy and ethnic barriers (e.g. language) also make certain skills unmarketable in mainstream economy (e.g. Chinese cooks).
16 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Ethnic ownership economy theory also helps to explain assimilation processes among the Chinese of Suriname. As many ethnic economies start out as migrant self-help strategies, generational conflicts may be expected to increase with the emergence of each new (non-migrant) generation.20 There are different possible reasons for the decline of self-employment within the ethnic group. One is segmental assimilation, when the offspring of marginalized immigrant assimilate into a racialized underclass, where “achievement is equated with rejection of racialized ethnicity.”21 Then again such offspring might attempt to escape migrant ethnicity by taking their peers in the local majority as reference group. Among the Chinese of Suriname, some migrants consciously strive to steer their offspring away from the family business and stress education as the gateway to other careers. In this strategy the generational conflict arises from the cultural assimilation to the host society, which is generally not welcomed by the migrant parents.

The theory of ethnic ownership economy helps to explain upward mobility among the Chinese migrants in Suriname in terms of resources and agency. The Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname produces a fairly stable and durable, albeit distinctly local and instrumental, Chinese ethnic identity. In this way the theory helps explain the image of a fundamental link between Chinese ethnicity and retail trade, and provides a framework for analyzing the development of Chinese communal activities and institutions. It could arguably be considered the most dominant force behind local positioning of Chinese migrants. Although it provides a framework for observing the production of ethnic resources that are necessary for political activity (particularly that which influences the economic position of the ethnic elite), it does not fully account for local positioning in terms of citizenship and political participation in Suriname, nor does it easily explain the positioning of New Chinese within the larger context of Chinese in Suriname.

In fact, ethnicity in Suriname is usually approached from a socio-political viewpoint; Surinamese society is described as ethnically fragmented, and the Surinamese state is seen as burdened by the very real issue of ethnic divisions and ethnic power-sharing.22 Van Lier, the first to seriously study ethnicity in Suriname, described colonial Suriname as a plural society in Furnivall’s basic sense of a segmented society where political power is concentrated in a

21 Ibid.
minority linked to the colonial metropole. He also argued that this is a historical explanation of why multiethnic Surinamese society lacked a single national culture.\textsuperscript{23} Ethnic variety has not decreased since Van Lier’s canonical study, and it is now euphemistically, though rather inaccurately, termed ‘multiculturalism’. But it is necessary to distinguish ‘multicultural’, an adjective describing the condition of distinctive ethnic identities in a particular society, from ‘multi-culturalism’, which is basically a State policy.\textsuperscript{24} First used in an ideological sense in the 1950s to describe Switzerland, the word ‘multiculturalism’ became the standard way to describe the institutionalized protection of Quebecois language and culture in Canada.\textsuperscript{25} ‘Multiculturalism’ in a normative sense is a conscious, top-down, political strategy to accommodate immigrants in (white, patriarchal, Christian) liberal democracies. Immigrants and minorities should preserve their cultures with the hope that different cultures will interact peacefully within a single State.

Multiculturalism as a recognized strategy to accommodate ethnic segments does not exist in Suriname; the Republic of Suriname is a liberal procedural democracy – an idea inherited from the 1960s Netherlands, where non-white, non-Christian immigration was not yet a hot political issue – with voter equality linked to uniform citizenship in a territorially defined state and where ethnic identity should thus be irrelevant. In what Eriksen calls the paradox of multiculturalism, unequal distribution of power in poly-ethnic societies means that it is the majority groups who determine inclusion and exclusion, so that minority groups may have no choice in differentiating themselves as an ethnic group or not doing so.\textsuperscript{26} Any migrant group in Suriname quickly finds that newcomers must learn to deal with the strongly informal nature of socio-economic life and the lack of strong institutions, which means building extensive personal networks rather than striving to acquire formal citizenship status. They also quickly realize that access to the state means acquiring influence through a share of political power, which means

\textsuperscript{23} Van Lier 1977 [1949]; Furnivall 1948. Dutch colonial policy-makers described Suriname as a country of colonization (volksplanting), which did not exist before colonization. That view remains basically uncontested in the national anthem, which says in the third line: \textit{wans ope tata komopo / hoe wij hier ook samen kwamen}: no matter where our ancestors came from / no matter how we came to be here together.

\textsuperscript{24} Tiryakian 2004: 4-12.

\textsuperscript{25} Taylor 1994.

\textsuperscript{26} Eriksen 1993: 145.
that they have often no choice but to adapt to the local reality of pluralism and the power of established elites.

This would specifically refer to the system of political power-sharing among elites of ethnic groups proposed by Jīnan Adhin in 1957 (see below), which Dew has defined as apanjaht consociationalism. Apanjaht consociationalism is “the practice of ethnically based political parties playing upon prejudice, fear, or communal interest to gain support”. According to Dew the political power-sharing tradition transplanted from the Dutch colonial metropole (consociational democracy, cf. Lijphart 1969) worked along ethno-racial lines in Suriname. He used the word apanjaht to refer to the Caribbean practice of “voting for your own race, your own kind”, that “feeds an ‘us-versus-them’ set of group identifications which is counterproductive to national identity and national development.” But this type of ethno-politics requires an ideological framework for the articulation of boundaries between pragmatic ethnic groups based on the idea of ethnic harmony providing a political balance: the idea of apanjaht ideology which was suggested by França (2004).

Multiculturalist practice and ideology cannot account for the full range of ethnic phenomena in Suriname. Ethnicity strongly intersects and even mirrors social distinctions of class and gender, making different analyses in terms of gendered individuals, elite brokers, or corporate agents possible. There are other narratives which are simultaneously invoked in Surinamese ethnic discourse, all of which impact positioning strategies of migrants in Suriname. However, most Surinamese ethnic narratives cannot be expressed as national narratives (in the sense that they guide the way the Surinamese Nation is imagined) and they do not provide pathways to political participation. I propose that public articulation of

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27 Apanjaht (or apan jāṭ in Sarnāmi orthography) is a phrase in Caribbean Hindustani (the largest dialect of which is Sarnāmi, spoken in Suriname) meaning ‘one’s own ethnic group’, from apan (‘my own’) and jāṭ (‘sub-caste / caste; ethnic group; race; lineage; tribe; community; nation’). According to Theo Damsteegt (formerly of Instituut Kern, Leiden University; personal communication) a Standard Hindi equivalent would be: अपनी जाति apnī jāti.

29 Dew 1988: 130.
30 There is neither a single ethnic majority nor a simple ethnic dichotomy in Suriname, so public racist attacks on minority or rival groups on a national scale are not a real option for ethnic power-brokers. In what I would call an ‘Adversarial Others’ narrative, for instance, ethnicity is articulated in overtly racist terms towards ingroup audiences. In this narrative the number of ethnic entities varies according to the viewpoint of the various ethnic agents; East Indians might see Afro-Surinamese
ethnic identities of immigrants in Suriname (with particular reference to Chinese ethnic identity) is determined by apnaajht multiculturalism in the double sense suggested above - apnaajht as consociational power-sharing and associated clientelism, and apnaajht as an ideology underpinning political power-sharing by determining who is to be included or excluded.

Apnaajht consociationalism and the ideology in which it is embedded represent a type of ethnopolitics: the mobilization and ideologization of ethnicity and ethnic identity by ethnic elites for political agendas which usually entail a challenge to states with a plural society. In ethnopolitics, ethnicity is instrumental, as ethnic divisions in everyday society are turned into corresponding divisions in political life, and ethnic identity becomes associated with political advantages and disadvantages. Writing in the context of democratization in post-colonial Africa, Kandeh points out that in ethnopolitics, ethnic mobilization and ethnic identity supersede all other political cleavages and that the ‘ethnic political agenda can be reduced to the instrumental and the personal ambitions of the leadership.’

Surinamese ethnopolitics – apnaajht – does not live up to the stereotype of ethnopolitics as a militant pursuit of group rights against the background of oppression. Rather it entails the sharing of political power between elites who claim to represent the interests of parallel ethnic groups. As in Malaysia and Guyana, ‘organized ethnic political competition is for control of the (apparatus of) central government, which thus necessarily depends on fixed, predictable, but segmental ethnic support’. Political elites in this system present diversity as a problem to be solved, and treat the nationalist ideal of the non-ethnic Surinamese State as fundamentally unachievable; apnaajht consociationalism is a way to

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as a monolithic group but they self-differentiate among East Indian religious groups (e.g. Arya Dewaker, Sanathan Dharm, Sunni, Ahmadiyya, Catholicism, the Moravian Church), while Creoles might likewise see East Indians as a single ethnicity but they self-differentiate along colour lines or geographical distribution (e.g. mulattoes, urban Creoles, creoles outside Paramaribo). Other patterns of differentiation are, of course, also possible: East Indian religion versus Christianity, different historical patterns (i.e. urban Creoles versus Maroons).

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33 Stereotypical ethnopolitics does occur in Suriname. Political participation of Maroon and Indigenous groups has included movements headed by coethnic intellectuals striving for equality within Surinamese society on the one hand, and recognition of tribal land rights on the other.
34 Rothschild 1981: 77.
manage diversity and thus legitimize elite dominance. It is elite power-sharing through clientelism at the level of ethnically defined political parties; it does not involve group representation for disadvantaged segments who are striving for political equality.

To explain Surinamese ethnopolitics, Dew applied Lijphart’s theory of consociationalism to pre-independence Suriname. Lijphart came up with the theory to describe political power-sharing in plural (multicultural, though not multiethnic) twentieth century Dutch society, but he did not believe that Dutch consociationalist grand coalitions were the model for ethnic power-sharing in Suriname. He noted that Surinamese politicians of the 1960s considered the Surinamese ethnic power-sharing system as a local development and a successful example for the rest of the world. Dew modified Lijphart’s term to ‘apanjaht consociationalism’ to describe the ethnic aspect of political power-sharing in Suriname. According to Lijphart the advantage of Surinamese consociationalism implied representation of particular ethnic groups. In any case, Dew concluded that Surinamese democracy could be typified as consociational, as most of Lijphart’s preconditions existed in Suriname, and the Surinamese power-sharing system showed many of the theoretical characteristics that are the preconditions of successful consociationalism.

The characteristics Dew identified in Suriname were the following. The Surinamese political elites – none of whom could rely on a clear majority – understood the dangers of political fragmentation and were committed to maintaining the power-sharing arrangement through grand coalitions in the multi-party democracy, but in so doing the elites were not able to transcend ethnic cleavages. Elites retained control of their followers through clientelism, though their ability to accommodate the divergent interests

35 Jaffe 2008. Surinamese politicians wield the example of ethnic violence in Guyana to legitimize the importance of managing ethnic diversity. Ethnic tensions did exist in the early post-war period when apanjaht consociationalism was established. In 1947 A Creole war veteran unsuccessfully attempted a coup d’état, as he was convinced that the Creoles were on the verge of being dominated by Asian aliens, an apparently fairly common view in Suriname at the time (Gobardhan-Rambocus 1993: 217). In the roughly twenty years Suriname was a self-governing Dutch dependency, between the granting of regional authority within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954 and independence in 1975, steadily increasing East Indian economic power and political representation did not result in ethnic violence. This is usually credited to apanjaht consociationalism and it is considered one of its achievements.

38 Lijphart 1977: 201.
and demands of various subgroups was limited. The system was characterized by a multi-polar balance of power (Creoles, East Indians and Javanese, rather than just two poles as in the neighbouring Guyana\textsuperscript{39}). Interests within each group were adequately articulated, and the system was legitimate in the eyes of the public. However, the various groups were not isolated from one another, the system had not existed for very long, fragmentation within each group was on-going, and the idea of an outside enemy (Guyana, following its 1969 invasion of the disputed territory in the south – the only invasion of Surinamese territory in modern times) was not particularly strong.\textsuperscript{40}

Ethnopoliticization – the mobilization of ethnic groups in ethnic political parties – is not a product of the post-colonial Surinamese state, as it was in the case of Sierra Leone as described by Kandeh.\textsuperscript{41} According to Dew, apanjah preceding consociationalism in Suriname; the introduction of general suffrage in 1948 was a precondition for the formation of political parties based on apanjaht politics. In colonial Surinamese society, class structure basically corresponded with racial stratification. Suffrage based on tax assessment (which lasted until the introduction of general suffrage in 1949) meant that Creoles (specifically of the lighter-skinned middle class) dominated the Koloniale Staten from its establishment in 1854. The seeds of ethnic power-sharing in Suriname were sown in the Second World War, when the Dutch colonial metropole was occupied by Nazi Germany. Possibilities for social mobility increased as a result of US influence in Suriname, which was vital to the Allied war effort as a source of natural resources and a military base, and the absence of direct rule stimulated the Surinamese middle-class to claim a more direct political role.\textsuperscript{42} Ledgister's suggestion that the Caribbean colonies lacked traditional hierarchies of authority which had existed in Africa and Asia and that the

\textsuperscript{39} The term ‘Creole’ in Suriname is linked to class. The middle classes of colonial Caribbean societies existed in a fairly straightforward chromotocracy; a limited white expat colonial elite dominated a class of local-born whites (the original meaning of ‘Creole’), mixed African-Europeans (the secondary meaning of ‘Creole’) and the majority of black African heritage. In colonial Suriname, ‘Creole’ implied a fairer skin in an urban context, and was contrasted with ‘Negro’. The politically correct ‘Afro-Surinamese’ is not popularly used as an ethnic label in Suriname.

\textsuperscript{40} Dew 1972: 51.

\textsuperscript{41} Kandeh 1992.

\textsuperscript{42} Gobardhan-Rambocus 1993.
middle classes filled this vacuum, is certainly applicable to Suriname.\textsuperscript{43}

Following the Second World War, democratization in Suriname gathered some pace. General suffrage was introduced in 1948, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands was reorganized to give the former colonies and overseas territories autonomy in domestic affairs under the pretence of equality with the European territory. In 1945 Dutch East India declared independence to become the Republic of Indonesia, and following its recognition by the Dutch in 1949 the Kingdom of the Netherlands was redefined as consisting of the Netherlands, Suriname and the six islands of the Netherlands Antilles, rather than the originally envisioned tripartite division of the Netherlands, East Indies and West Indies (i.e. Suriname and the Antilles). In 1954 the Surinamese colonial parliament, \textit{de Koloniale Staten}, was granted full powers as a parliament under the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (\textit{Statuut van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden}).

As in the Anglophone Caribbean, political parties in Suriname were democratic because of the requirement of a constituency, but none were class-based.\textsuperscript{44} Rather, the earliest post-war parties in Suriname reflected the main ethnic divisions: Creole (NPS, founded 1946), East Indian (VHP, founded 1949), Javanese (KTPI, founded 1949).\textsuperscript{45} The East Indian and Javanese parties represented ethnic groups, i.e. those that originated through migration, and they were initially considered marginal in relation to ‘Surinamese’, i.e. non-Asian, parties. But the pretense of marginality could not last, and by 1969 East Indians held 43% of the seats, up from 29% in 1949. With no ethnic party achieving a clear electoral majority, grand coalitions became necessary. Though the coalitions basically reflected a balancing act between the two largest ethnic groups of Creoles and East Indians, the balance of power was multi-polar. The Javanese elites were the wild card; they were virtually guaranteed a place in the grand coalitions by virtue of their position as representatives of the third largest ethnic group.

\textsuperscript{43} Ledgister 1998: 12. Amerindian traditional leaders were marginalized during colonial rule but were fully incorporated into Surinamese bureaucracy by the time of independence in 1975.
\textsuperscript{44} Ledgister 1998: 18.
\textsuperscript{45} The variety of ethnic parties was somewhat greater immediately following the Second World War. VHP was a combination of the Muslim Party (1946), the East Indian-Javanese Political Party (HJPP), and the Surinamese Hindu Party (1947). KTPI developed from the Persatuan Indonesia party (1946). NPS was not the only Creole party at that time; there was also the Progressive Surinamese People's Party (PSV), and the Social-Democratic Party (SDP).
It is important to point out that democratization in Suriname was not brought about by a nationalist and anti-colonial struggle but was imposed by the Dutch views of the modern nation-state, just as the independence of Suriname in 1975 was at least in part granted a Dutch move towards ‘decolonization’. Nationalism – in the sense of an ideology and discourse praising the idea of a Surinamese nation – had never been a focus of collective identity and imagination in Suriname. Immediately after the Second World War, Dutch colonial authorities feared an increase in anti-Dutch sentiments (among Creoles), deterioration of relations between Creoles and East Indians, and a real threat of violent coups. But by the 1950s, nationalist activism had been blunted by Dutch policies, Surinamese inter-ethnic competition, and local politics which worked to sideline Surinamese influence from the colonial metropole. The trajectory from pre-independence Creole ethnonationalism to post-colonial multicultural state in Suriname was shared by the two Caribbean states whose ethnic make-up most resemble that of Suriname, namely, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago. Different democratic systems inherited from Great Britain and the Netherlands, different ethnic mixes (Suriname was unique in having the Javanese as a third ethnic group balancing the Creole-East Indian dichotomy), and different economic constellations worked together to produce different types of ethnopolitics. In Guyana, ethnic parties emerged out of the fragmentation of the anti-colonial, multi-ethnic, nationalist movement that started in the 1950s (cf. Garner 2008). Ethnicity continues to dominate Guyanese politics in the form of Afro-Guyanese and Afro-Indian antagonism. In the case of Trinidad & Tobago the anti-colonial movement came to be dominated by the Afro-Trinidadian ethnonationalism of the PNM.

46 Meel 1999.
47 Meel 1999: 245.
48 Suriname became independent under the Den Uyl administration (1973-1977), which was dominated by the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA). Meel (1999: 326-339) places the decolonization drive of the PvdA in the context of UN Resolution 1514 (XV) which recognized the right of self-determination of all nations and the 1961 Round Table Conference (the only round of discussions between the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname since the proclamation of the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954) on increased autonomy for the Dutch overseas territories. The first Dutch analysis of Surinamese independence was presented in 1973 (Naar nieuwe verhoudingen; de staat-kundige toekomst van Suriname en de Nederlandse Antillen (Towards a new relationship; the political future of Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles), by a scientific committee of the ARP (Anti-Revolutionary Party), headed by Ad de Bruijne).
party, which resulted in the Trinidadian State being associated with ‘Africanness’.49

In the 1940s and 1950s apanjaht consociationalism was a source of ethnic emancipation, as it enabled participation of marginalized East Indian outsider groups in Guyana, Trinidad and Suriname, the three Caribbean countries with the largest East Indian populations.50 In Suriname Dr. Mr. Drs. Jñan Adhin, the crucial party ideologist of the East Indian VHP, put forward views and ideas which Dew was to call apanjaht, in response to the Creole-dominated nationalist view of assimilation in a presentation entitled ‘Eenheid in verscheidenheid’ (United in Diversity / Unity in Diversity) in 1957.51 He legitimized apanjaht as founded in the Rig Veda, and described it as a cultural synthesis, in which various traditions and religions live peacefully side by side, supported, however, by a deeper unity. The various ethnic groups would retain and develop their own languages, while Dutch would be the unifying language and there would be interlocking segments rather than hybridization or assimilation into a single entity. Nationalism in Suriname had started out as an anti-colonialist response to Asian (in particular East Indian) immigration, and in its early stages Creole nationalists strongly criticized Adhin’s apanjaht as pro-colonialist and anti-nationalist.52 The 1960s saw the first coalitions of apanjaht parties in Suriname, under the doctrine of verbroederingspolitiek (“politics of reconciliation”), which originated in the East Indian VHP. One could say that the Creole parties interpreted this pragmatic move to share power to mean eventual assimilation, while East Indian parties considered it to mean a sustained multiculturalism.53

Dew applied the term consociationalism to post-independence Suriname in its basic meaning of ‘a form of government for

49 In Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, the ethnic groups that would correspond to urban Surinamese ‘Creoles’ are termed ‘African’, versus the ‘Indian’ (i.e. East Indian) segments.
50 Dew 1988: 130.
51 Adhin 1957.
52 The liberal principle behind the Surinamese state more closely matches the assimilationist ideals of Surinamese nationalism. The official approach to cultural heterogeneity is assimilation. Immigrants maintain their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds while becoming Surinamese citizens. Cultural pluralism is considered a historical artefact, while modern immigration is ignored as an ongoing source of societal change. Surinamese nationalism as it originated with the cultural association Wie Eegie Sani in the 1950s, was a response to structural marginalization of Afro-Surinamese culture in Suriname, and it was not concerned with cultural pluralism. In the Afrocentric view of early Surinamese nationalists, authentic Surinamese culture was Creole (Meel 1999:196).
culturally plural societies in which the ethnic issue is addressed by means of proportionality and power-sharing’. He recognized that “it is an ad hoc, incrementalist, deal-striking kind of politics which, if not immobilized by its very mechanics, certainly looks like it is.”\(^{54}\) According to Dew the consociationalist power-sharing system in Suriname achieved its goal of stability because of the multipolar balance of power, relatively strong group cohesion, and the fact that the public accepted the system as valid. But not everything about consociationalism fits the Surinamese context. For instance, while there are grand coalitions made of the various elites because they recognize the dangers of non-cooperation, nevertheless mutuality in the decision-making process and proportional representation in government are far less obvious, while the various segments of Surinamese society represented in multi-party politics have very little institutional autonomy. Even so, ‘apanjaht consociationalism’ does work to describe the practices of ethnopolitics in Surinamese liberal democracy better than the understated Dutch term ‘etnische politiek’ (ethnic multi-party politics) which is commonly used in Suriname.

Apanjaht is the weakness of consociationalism in Suriname, as ethnic balancing leads to rampant clientelism to secure voter support and also to political deadlock which opened the door to military intervention in 1980 and 1990. The government sector in Suriname has been expanding ever since the beginning of apanjaht consociationalism, when local autonomy was granted under the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954, financed in part by Dutch assistance.\(^{55}\) At the beginning of the Millennium the government sector was estimated to be at about 18-27% of real GDP.\(^{56}\) Employment was concentrated in the central government and parastatals, peaking at 47% nationally in 1990 and in Paramaribo perhaps even reaching 60%. Clientelism, the pragmatic strategy of the political elites in apanjaht consociationalism to gather and bind a constituency by providing job security in the public sector, is the link between ethnicity and politics in Suriname, as it transforms ethnic identity into a resource. Elites need to become recognizable to their constituency as coethnics, and need to define their constituency in ethnic terms in negotiations with coalition partners. Individuals also need to present themselves as coethnics of the political elites from whom they want favours. Both

\(^{54}\) Dew 1988: 131  
\(^{55}\) Van Dijk 2001b: 16-17.  
\(^{56}\) Van Dijk 2001b: 16.
parties instrumentally (re)articulate their group identity vis-à-vis other groups who do the same, thus generating the image of distinct and competing ethnic groups.

Although it might appear to be a structural form of special representation based on pre-determined segments, the principles of apanjaht consociationalism have never been formally laid down and the practice was never formally recognized by the Surinamese State. By the time of Suriname’s independence in 1975, ethnic and linguistic diversity were viewed as potential barriers to the development of a unified Surinamese nation-state. The closest reference to ethnicity in the Surinamese constitution is found in Article 38, Paragraph 5: ‘The State shall promote the democratization of culture by promoting the enjoyment of culture and cultural creativity, and by guaranteeing the accessibility to those cultural creations to all citizens by means of cultural and recreational organisations, information media and other suitable channels.’57 The Surinamese State still considers ethnic variety a transient phase. This is clearly implied in the government policy statement for 2000-2005: ‘The Government will ensure that the process of acculturation can continue to develop spontaneously and freely in a context under which enduring respect can be had for all forms of culture in our multicultural society, and under which every Surinamese person can continue to practice his or her culture in complete freedom. In the context of intercultural communication, freedom, tolerance, and acceptance of equality of cultural expressions, will be encouraged.’58

Apanjaht consociationalism and ethnic identity in Suriname exist in a dialectical relationship; the workings of one are constantly reframed by changes in the other. Apanjaht does not account for all possible ethnic variety in Suriname, but it does provide a framework for instrumental ethnic identity. It is power-sharing framed in terms of ethnicity, not based on ethnic groups; it creates ethnic groups, by invoking them. New ethnic elites – i.e. the elites of different ethnic groups – are not automatically accommodated as they risk unbalancing the power-sharing system. As

57 The full text of the 1987 Constitution can be found at http://209.59.159.30/externe%20links/grondwet.htm. However, the Surinamese State inherited the racial categories from the colonial period. In public notices the Department of Criminal Investigation of the Surinamese Police Corps uses a fixed set of ‘races’ (Javanese, Bush Negro, Creole, Mixed, etc., sometimes euphemistically called bevolkingsgroepen, ‘segments of the population’) to describe wanted, missing or unidentified persons.
new ethnic groups that are too substantial to be ignored by the apanjaht parties are unlikely to arise unexpectedly, new elites really have only one realistic choice if they wish to participate, that is, they must move to one of the poles in the system.

A political career in an existing party for groups which are unable or unwilling to accede to the ethnicity inherent in that party is unrealistic. However, the main apanjaht parties in Suriname have party wings for members of smaller ethnic groups, where token representation is aimed at attracting the votes of particular minorities. The Creole NPS has had minority wings almost from its beginning; as a ‘Surinamese National Party’ needed to recognize that Surinamese nationalism is territorial, not ethnic. East Indian and Javanese parties took religious cleavages into account, but they did not have a tradition of minority wings. New elites have a better chance for a direct share of power if they organize their own political groups openly or obliquely on the basis of ethnicity and within a coalition at one of the consociational poles, since ethnic groups are equated with constituencies, and ethnic loyalty is assumed to be a given. A new party would only be profitable to a coalition if the new elite had resources to offer: funds, networks, or a sizeable constituency. Ethnicity thus becomes strategic and situational in the hands of political elites striving to secure an electoral power base.

Apanjaht consociationalism was probably inevitable in Suriname, which is a plural society in the shadow of the Dutch colonial metropole with its own version of multiculturalist power-sharing. Apanjaht consociationalism is utterly pragmatic. In the extreme separation of state and ethnicity in Suriname, ethnic minorities (peoples around whose presence the state grew, which in the case of Suriname is all Amerindian groups) or ethnic groups (immigrants and their descendents) have no special autonomy or rights; no ethnic group has self-rule, group-specific measures are not taken, and there are no special rights of representation. Though demographic representation is not the basis of power-

59 The verzuiling or ‘pillarization’ that Lijphart attempted to explain with consociationalism theory.
60 The traditional governance system of the Maroons is recognized with a limited measure of autonomy. However, neither the Maroons nor the Indians have land rights, making Suriname the only country in the New World where indigenous and tribal groups do not have land rights. Special language rights are not recognized in Suriname, but the official language, Dutch, is not promoted. Immigrants have no formal way of learning Dutch in Suriname, which makes accessing the structures of the state very difficult.
sharing negotiations, district boundaries have been redrawn in the past and censuses have been delayed with ethnic balance in mind.\footnote{The number of administrative divisions has ranged from 7 to 15 throughout Surinamese history. In 1983 the 8 Districts (Marowijne, Commewijne, Suriname, Saramacca, Para, Nickerie, Coronie, Brokopondo) were reorganized into ten new entities: Brokopondo, Commewijne, Coronie, Marowijne, Nickerie, Para, Paramaribo, Saramacca, Sipaliwini, Wanica (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1983 Nr. 24). Before that time administrative divisions reflected accessibility via the major river systems, and Districts only very roughly matched local concentrations of ethnic groups. Criteria for redrawing administrative boundaries were officially population density, potential for development, governability, existing infrastructure, and location of administrative centres, and so the new Districts more closely matched the distinction between the jungle hinterlands and the narrow coastal strip where the majority of the Surinamese population lives. However, the 1983 Districts mainly reflected demographic concerns, in particular with regard to the number of electoral districts within each new District and the degree of overlap with local ethnic majorities.}

Dew’s concept of apanjaht consociationalism explains why a multiethnic elite cartel has led to a relative ethnic harmony and political stagnation, but it does not adequately explain political developments in Suriname, especially since the resumption of democracy in 1991 after a decade of military rule.\footnote{Schalkwijk (2006) applied R.A. Dahl's and K.L. Remmer’s models of political evolution in the context of liberal democracy (neither of which explain the development of ethnic politics) to the Surinamese context, and tracked the development of democratization in the military and post-military years.} Dew does not explain how resistance to apanjaht consociationalism works in Suriname. The rise of apanjaht elite cartels was challenged by the left. Moreover labour movements and Surinamese nationalism were carried back home by Surinamese students from the colonial metropole, and in the Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s, both movements were branded unacceptable ‘leftist’ challenges to the colonial status quo.\footnote{Meel 1999; Lotens 2006.} By the 1970s labour movements had developed into powerful political forces in Suriname, but leftist political parties (all fundamentally non-ethnic and nationalistic) were never able to replace the old-boy network of apanjaht power brokers.

On 25 February 1980 smouldering discontent with the first post-colonial government erupted in an unexpected coup headed by sergeants of the Surinamese Army. After the coup leftist political parties such as RVP and PALU joined the military rulers in the Revolutionary Front. Soon many leftists became disillusioned with the military, particularly after the December Murders of 1982 when 15 prominent opponents of the military regime (most former suppor-
ters) were executed. However, military and leftists remained each other’s only alternative coalition partner; the leftists did not belong to the apanjaht establishment that the military had removed from power, and to the leftists the military presented the only hope for ending the political stagnation. Out of touch with the reality of social networks along lines of ethnicity and gender, and discredited by association with military rule, leftists parties failed to stay in power or change the power-sharing system. By the early 2000s, non-ethnic political parties included the following: DA91, NDP, DNP 2000, DOE, PALU, and SPA. PALU and NDP of former military strongman Desi Bouterse with links back to the period of military rule; DNP 2000 split off from the NDP in 2000. DA91 and DOE are not based on ethnic clientelism, but they are commonly associated with the light-skinned elite.

Challengers to apanjaht power-sharing, exemplified by the populist NDP, consider it the main obstacle to the creation of a unified Surinamese Nation. Jaffe approaches the NDP challenge in terms of hegemonic dissolution related to the person of NDP founder Desi Bouterse, whose military dictatorship is seen as a successful suspension of apanjaht consociationalism, and who is able to use his own mixed background to position himself as the leader of a trans-ethnic movement. Jaffe points out that support of the NDP reflects resistance to class dominance and apanjaht clientelism as a mechanism of social mobility, especially in NDP appeals to popular culture and the attraction of Bouterse’s hustler image. The NDP remains ambiguous with regard to ethnicity. It is trans-ethnic in that it bridges ethnic divisions exploited by apanjaht parties, and it is pan-ethnic in its attempts to access support from the widest possible range of ethnic segments. However, with regard to its ideal of the Surinamese Nation, it is not very clear if the NDP is mono-ethnic (everyone becoming ‘Surinamese’, implying some type of assimilation) or non-ethnic (mirroring the nationalism of the Surinamese State in which ethnicity is subversive).

As we will see in Chapter 9, ethnopoliticization of Chinese in Suriname - in the sense of mobilization of an ethnic Chinese con-

\[\text{\textsuperscript{64} Lotens 2006} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{65} DNP rejoined NDP in 2008.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{66} Jaffe 2008.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{67} Anti-Apanjaht parties and movements provide no single alternative national ideology. In the case of NDP, despite the fact that its party ideologues consistently and uniquely produce party programmes, NDP narratives are based on populist, patriotic rhetoric derived from leftist interpretations of Surinamese nationalism, and variations on ‘out with the rascals!’} \]
stituency concurrent with the articulation of Chinese ethnic identity and ethnic resources – was very weak up to the 2005 legislative elections. As a small ethnic minority, Chinese in Suriname had very little success with their own political parties; small numbers translated into a numerically weak constituency. Issues of representation in an ethnic Chinese group that was only as community-minded as their ethnic ownership economy would allow, and which was fragmented along lines of assimilation, also meant that it was very difficult to find candidates willing to stand for public office who were qualified as well as acceptable to all sides (Chinese as well as non-Chinese). In practice, the most successful ethnic Chinese bids for political power were orchestrated by elites who rose within the structures of Chinese adaptive organizations (see Chapter 8), and who in terms of collaboration with apanjaht parties stood a good chance of ruling. This, however, did not require articulation of Chinese ethnic identity. The fact that Chinese ethnicity, or for that matter any ethnic identity in Suriname, is articulated in the context of apanjaht politics needs to be explained in terms of ideology.

1.2 Apanjaht Ideology

As a form of ethnopolitics, apanjaht consociationalism is an important generator of ethnic group identity in Suriname. The concept of apanjaht is equal power-sharing among ethnic groups, but in practice power is not shared by minorities outside the original three (and now four) largest ethnic groups. Ethnicity may be the basis for apanjaht consociationalism, but elites wishing to participate still need to legitimize their ethnic representation to the general public and to what they perceive to be members of their ethnic group. The general public needs to recognize the constituency of the new elite as a legitimate ethnic group: tied to this place, authentic, ancient. Elites need to articulate this narrative of their ethnic identity to their constituency and position themselves to their constituency as representatives of the ethnic group striving for emancipation of their social group, against the hegemony of other political factions established in the political arena. In this way apanjaht consociationalism is not just the result of ethnic pluralism but also the

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68 Creoles, East Indians, Javanese, Maroons.
generator of ethnic identity; in other words in order to participate, one cannot but be ethnic.\(^{69}\)

However, at the same time apanjaht power-sharing discourages formal ethnic categorization and the development of sub-ethnic distinctions. Formal ethnic categories would imply quantification of ethnic constituencies, which would directly and constantly impact power-sharing negotiations and the stability of grand consociationalist coalitions. Sub-ethnic distinctions similarly disrupt power-sharing and fragment ethnic constituencies. Apanjaht ethnicities rely on a commonsensical belief in fixed ethnic or racial categories, but they do not actually require continuously and sharply defined ethnic boundaries. As apanjaht consociationalism is about carefully maintaining the balance of power, immigrants signal instability, as potential new ethnic groups or as extensions of existing groups.

In apanjaht consociationalism ethnic groups are articulated as primordial racial groups, and culture is heritage is viewed as linked to ancestry and threatened by hybridity, while the basic equality of human beings is shifted to the level of ethnic groups. Recognition of ethnic group identity is framed within the popular \textit{Mamio} (Sranantongo: ‘patchwork quilt’) stereotype noted by Meel in Suriname\(^{70}\). In the image of a multi-coloured checkerboard pattern \textit{mamio} patchwork, ethnic groups are like equally sized and spaced pieces of cloth stitched together into a larger whole. Ethnocultural variety in Suriname thus becomes a myth, a hegemonic public fantasy, and a collective narrative fiction. I would suggest that this \textit{Mamio} Myth, to use Meel’s term, is the most important Surinamese national myth, because it functions as the supreme narrative of the imagining of Suriname. In this sense, apanjaht ideology transcends ethnopolitics; the patchwork quilt image operates independently of politics power-sharing along ethnic lines.

The \textit{Mamio} patchwork image is the opposite of the more familiar US melting-pot metaphor, which suggests that ethnic minority cultures should mix and be amalgamated without state intervention.\(^{71}\) Apanjaht thinking appears to be an alternative to Natio-

\(^{69}\) Dew never really explored apanjaht ideology. He did note that ‘apanjahtism’ was a source of social liberation, by asserting identities “that usually had been scorned or abused by the earlier elites – the elites that now were being displaced” (Dew 1988: 130, referring to Dew 1978: 59-64).

\(^{70}\) Meel 1998.

\(^{71}\) Implicit in the Melting Pot metaphor is the idea that minority and immigrant groups should assimilate to majority white protestant European culture; the fire that melts and melds the various minorities is Western modernity and culture. The \textit{Mamio}
nalist ideologies and discourses of assimilation, so common in post-colonial Latin America and the Caribbean\textsuperscript{72}. ‘Apanjaht nationalism’ produced its own symbols, the most important of which is the flag of the autonomous territory of Suriname after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{73} França elaborates on this view of multicultural imagining in Suriname by comparing the concept of \textit{mestizaje} in the formation

\textsuperscript{72} Koonings \textit{et al} 1996.

\textsuperscript{73} The flag consisted of a white field with five stars joined by a thin black ellipse. According to the official text explaining the symbolism of the flag (\textit{Ontwerp voor een vlag van Suriname: Toelichtende memorie bij het ontwerp van de Surinaamse vlag} (A Design for a Surinamese Flag; Explanatory Memorandum on the Design of the Surinamese Flag), s.l., s.a.) The colours of the stars (clockwise from centre top: black, brown, yellow, red, white) symbolized different racial groups, while the ellipse symbolized \textit{eenheid in verscheidenheid} as well as modernity.
of Brazilian national identity with the multiculturalism underpinning political participation in the Surinamese state.\(^7^4\)

She concludes that apanjaht consociationalism transcends mere political strategy, but as an ideology of ‘\textit{eenheid in verscheidendenheid}’ (United in Diversity / Unity in Diversity) defines Surinamese national identity; Surinamese are Surinamese precisely because they imagine themselves as culturally varied within a territorially defined state, almost a ‘multicultural imagined community’.\(^7^5\) According to França the apanjaht narrative produces collective belonging, through different, simultaneous representations of Suriname. The question is not whether Suriname is actually a harmonious mix of different ethnic groups, but rather that multi-cultural is the way in which the community is imagined – a ‘style of imagining’ in Benjamin Anderson’s terms.\(^7^6\) That style of imagination is a national myth – Suriname as a Multicultural Paradise, a racial utopia – the \textit{Swit’ Sranan} (Sranantongo: ‘sweet Suriname’) myth as described by Wekker or the \textit{Mamio} myth of multiethnic harmony as described by Meel.\(^7^7\)

The \textit{mestizaje} ideology that França describes dominated Brazil between the 1930s and early 1990s. It was based on Gilberto Freyre’s concepts of hybridity as the true measure of Brazilian identity and the recognition of racial equality as ‘racial democracy’.\(^7^8\) Freyre believed that racism did not exist in Brazil, which, given his experience of US society in the 1920s, seemed perfectly reasonable. His idea of racial democracy gained academic support and was eventually promoted by the Brazilian state in the creation of a modern national identity. But it did not reflect the reality of systematic marginalization of non-whites by whites in Brazil, and ignored the ingrained class-equality along lines of skin colour.\(^7^9\) In fact, racial inequality has persisted precisely because acceptance of hybridity masked the problems of vertical social mobility of black Brazilians.\(^8^0\)

In the myth of ‘racial democracy’ which is common in much of Latin America, the nation-state is colour-blind, and race is not supposed to matter; racial discrimination is rephrased as class in-

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\(^{7^4}\) França 2004.

\(^{7^5}\) Stratton & Ang 1998.

\(^{7^6}\) Anderson 1991.

\(^{7^7}\) Wekker 2004; Meel 1998.

\(^{7^8}\) Telles 2004: 33.

\(^{7^9}\) Koonings \textit{et al} 1996: 35.

\(^{8^0}\) Telles 2004: 232.
equality and challenges to the myth are unpatriotic.\textsuperscript{81} The modern Surinamese State is also formally colour-blind, but in ‘apanjaht nationalism’ race does matter. Claims of racial discrimination are not necessarily unpatriotic, but they are dangerous if they imply ‘emancipation’ of whole ethnic segments and thus destabilization of ethnic harmony. In Suriname, apanjaht never developed into an official national ideology. Adhin’s \textit{eenheid in verscheidenheid} developed in the context of ethnic politics of recognition rather than being primarily designed as a social philosophy or a national ideology. It reflected traditional East Indian concerns about cultural survival, fears of Creole chromotocracy, resistance to racism inherent in colonial Caribbean societies, and Dutch pillarization consociationalism, but the ideas of the nation-state, modernity, and individuality were marginal to it. Diversity referred to an existing palette of primordial, albeit undefined, ethnic categories, not to freedom of individual variety and imagination.

\textit{Eenheid in verscheidenheid} was a political ideology to justify apanjaht consociationalism, and perhaps even an attempt to create the framework for a political culture. As it evolved as a social discourse guiding encounters between ethnic groups outside the political arena, apanjaht was concerned not only with how power should be shared, but also with how ethnic boundaries should be maintained. Apanjaht practice enables the creation and constant reaffirmation of ethnic groups as political projects, but at the same time it discourages formal ethnic categorization and the development of sub-ethnic distinctions. Formal ethnic categories would imply quantification of ethnic constituencies, which would directly and constantly impact power-sharing negotiations and the stability of grand consociationalist coalitions. Sub-ethnic distinctions similarly disrupt power-sharing and fragment ethnic constituencies. Apanjaht ethnicities are based on a common-sensical belief in primordial categories, but they do not actually require continuously and sharply defined ethnic boundaries.

Apanjaht thinking thus goes further than the \textit{Mamio} Myth, and becomes an ideology that guides the creation and negotiation of collective ethnic identities, and provides the pattern of political participation of newly formed ethnic groups. As the supreme national script it is used in lieu of a Surinamese national identity (which was never articulated as a common wish to live together as one people sharing a common language and cultural ideals) to focus the loyalty of Surinamese in the idea of a Surinamese national identity.

\textsuperscript{81} Wright 1990; Duno Gottberg 2003.
Figure 2: State-sponsored apanjaht imagery on the cover of a publication of the Surinamese Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, 2005. Note the ‘Chinese man’ in the foreground.
In apanjaht ideology the Surinamese state is established by fixing ethnicities. Apanjaht ideology underpins the inclusion or exclusion of new ethnic groups, i.e. new migrants. It does not readily accommodate modern immigrants in Suriname; the system evolved under the influence of migration to resist nationalist assimilation on the one hand and ensure political stability on the other, and immigration is considered a threat to the delicate balance of ethnic constituencies.  

How then are immigrants accommodated in the Surinamese state? According to Charles Taylor integration of immigrants in multiculturalism implies recognition of group rights, through a politics of recognition – discovering one’s own identity through open dialogue with others, and claiming equal recognition. In Surinamese apanjaht consociationalism, the (ethnic) identity of the elite that claims to represent and advance the interests of a particular group forms the political basis for apanjaht parties. This ethnic identity requires recognition. To join the system, immigrant elites would need to join the grand coalitions of apanjaht parties, and thus base their claims in terms of numbers (is their contribution relevant – in other words is the constituency big enough or do they have substantial resources?) and legitimacy (can the new elite position its constituency as an ethnic group – in other words, will this new constituency vote predictably along apanjaht lines?).

In this light, apanjaht ideology could be read as a reaction to politics of assimilation suggested by Surinamese territorial nationalism. At the same time apanjaht discourse can also be seen as embedded in the dominant discourse of Surinamese nationalism; it stresses the unity of the Surinamese state in terms of non-ethnicity or supraethnicity. Neither nationalism nor apanjaht became anything like a national project. Surinamese nationalism had started out as a politics of recognition by Creole intellectuals resisting assimilation into dominant Dutch culture. As a national project in a plural society, Surinamese nationalism had to become territorial, with a unified nation-state as a final goal. However, the meaning of ‘Surinamese’ remained strongly linked to Creole, and nationalism

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82 Ironically, all Surinamese, except the Amerindian people, may be considered migrants in apanjaht thinking. ‘Multiculturalism’ – apanjaht – becomes ‘ethnic variety’ in Suriname. This is considered an asset, something that makes Suriname unique in the eyes of foreigners, to be repeated as a cliché. At the level of the State, cultural diversity is also assumed to be a resource with regard to foreign relations – relying on a relationship of Surinamese ethnic groups and their ‘homelands’. In all these views, multiculturalism is about collective, primordial ethnic identity.

83 Taylor 1996.
thus was unable to transcend its Creole roots in the eyes of non-Creoles. Apanjaht thinking remained geared to consociational power-sharing, and so the political activity of various ethnic elites aspiring for a place in apanjaht coalitions in Suriname does not seek to carry recognition of ethnicity, religion or culture beyond self-recognition toward the level of a political framework to create a cohesive political force. Surinamese ethnic identities remain reactive (as elite responses to perceived inequality) and urban (focused on Paramaribo as the centre of political power), but in apanjaht discourse, ethnic constituencies are usually not portrayed as an oppressed group striving for self-determination, but rather as essential parts of the Surinamese multicultural state claiming a legitimate governance role. Separatism has never been articulated as a goal for any of the elites in Surinamese apanjaht consociationalism.

The narrative of the Mamio Myth provides apanjaht ideology with modular ethnicities, which include the following, usually in this order to reflect the period of their origin: Amerindians, Jews / Dutch, Creoles / Maroons, Portuguese, Chinese, East Indian, Javanese, Lebanese. The Myth also implies equality of ethnic groups, which means that each group must be comparable; all ethnic groups are supposed to have a unique ethnic language, dress, food, folklore, and histories. The existence of new groups, such as Brazilians, is easily recognized in everyday life, but these groups cannot emerge in the narrative unless they are able to produce the instruments that enable them to become agents of ethnic negotiation. Some kind of ‘birthday’ is required, a historical beginning of the group’s presence in Suriname, to reflect the primordial nature of the group. Another important element is the concept of an original homeland, which was introduced through the negotiations of the (immigrant) Asian groups, and is copied by Afro-Surinamese who now increasingly look to Ghana as an Afro-Surinamese homeland. Then there are markers such as items of emblematic

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84 St-Hilaire 2001.
85 The Surinamese Dutch word for these groups is bevolkingsgroep. The various Amerindian cultural and linguistic groups are not distinguished, though the public is aware of a distinction between Carib (Kari’ña) and Arawak groups of the coastal plain and the ‘Amazonian’ Indians of southern Suriname. Maroons are joined with Creoles as ‘Afro-Surinamese’ by Creole nationalists; the various cultural and linguistic groups are usually not distinguished. The Creole / Maroon pairing reflects the old bosneger / stadsneger (‘bush Negro’ / ‘town Negro’) distinction, which was euphemized as boslandcreool / stadscreool (‘Creole of the forest’ / ‘urban Creole’).
86 Ghanaian textile arts have come to symbolize African Diaspora identity since the 1960s and 1970s when they were used in the construction of African American
culture, including ethnic costumes, ethnic cuisine, ethnic language, etc.

The narrative of the Mamio Myth within apanjaht ideology thus provides the framework for performative ethnicity. The most essential ethnic markers generated by apanjaht ideology are memorials, because they are central to the ritualized performances of negotiation. According to França, placing markers (setting up memorials, renaming streets, proclaiming national days of remembrance) is the way to establish different, and at times complementary, interpretations of national history. Many, if not most, memorials in Suriname can be used in the Mamio Myth. Politics of recognition in Suriname is the recognition by the Surinamese State of the commemorative day and participation in the rituals surrounding the ethnic memorials. Ethnic nationalism in Suriname usually implies claiming a place, often literally by placing markers such as monuments. Different claims follow each other; once a group sets up a monument, another group will compensate with its own marker, mirroring the constant balancing of apanjaht consociationalism.87

Identity. Nii O. Quarcoopome notes with regard to the way Asante and Ewe kente strip-weave cloths are viewed by people from abroad: “Kente’s popularity as a symbol bespeaks a monolithic view of African culture, not unlike the idea of Black communal identity. Kente and other cultural tokens have come to broadly symbolize Africa, the Motherland. When coupled with buzz words like rich, cultural, heritage, roots, and pride, kente becomes a potent expression of Afrocentrism.” (Quarcoopome 1998: 194). No Chinese cultural marker in Suriname is comparably potent.

87 One example of such claims and counter-claims in apanjaht ideology is the statue of Mahatma Gandhi on the square near the Heiligenweg in Paramaribo where three men accused of arson where burnt at the stake in 1833. The monument to Mahatma Gandhi was erected in 1960 by an East Indian movement for unclear reasons. On 26 January 2000 the square consisting of the small piece of land on which the statue stood and the bus interchange behind it was renamed Kodjo Mentor en Present-pren (Kodjo, Mentor and Present Square) in a ceremony held by the Feydrasi fu Afrikan Srananman (Afro-Surinamese Federation), the (Creole) NAKS cultural association, and the then Minister of Physical Planning Yvonne Raveles-Resida. Kodjo, Mentor and Present were slaves who, fearing severe punishment for some minor transgression, fled to the forest surrounding Paramaribo in the 1830s. A fire they started during a robbery quickly destroyed a substantial part of the wooden town. They were sentenced to be burnt alive at the stake. According to the Feydrasi the three men were resistance heroes who attempted to start a revolt against slavery. The group claimed the square as the location of the execution of the three slaves. In 2002 the Feydrasi announced its intentions to erect a memorial to Kodjo, Mentor and Present on the square (De Ware Tijd, 22 January 2002: ‘Standbeeld Baron, Boni en Joli-Coeur’ (Statue of Baron, Boni and Joli-Coeur)). The monument to Mahatma Gandhi was restored after that, and when it was presented to the public in February 2004 the statue was substantially taller than before because of its extended and elevated base.
The positioning of collective identities within the larger narrative is quite literally articulated in public performances. According to Surinamese playwright Sharda Ganga, state-sponsored celebrations of Surinamese cultural variety are usually aimed at foreign officials and visitors or a broad domestic public, and follow a predictable pattern: the central theme is a display of the wealth of ethnicities; each group is depicted separately through cultural demonstrations; the event ends in a show of unity; the elements may be linked by a storyline, codified in a rudimentary script. In the events that link ethnicity to multiculturalism, collective ethnic identity (and associated gender identities) is reiterated and the audience is shown how and where to place their life scripts.88

Such events are about negotiating ethnic identity, and so audiences consist of members of the target group to be convinced of group belonging, the members of the general (multi-ethnic) public, and the representatives of the Surinamese state. Such events contain two main elements: ceremonies and receptions in which the highest representatives of the State are invited to participate, and presentations of the culture and history of the particular ethnic group. Cultural pride and authenticity figure strongly, but overt ethnic chauvinism is avoided. The Surinamese events resemble performances and ritual theatre which take place during festivals elsewhere in South America where agents of African descent conduct politics of identity and reposition Black ethnicity as a challenge to national myths of racial equality.89 But a closer parallel is the expression of the nation-without-ethnicity as a ‘mosaic of cultures’ performed in Mauritius during shows around Independence Day, where every main ethnic group presents a cultural cliché symbolizing its place in the mosaic metaphor. In Mauritius this view of multiculturalism is more institutionalized than the mamio metaphor in Suriname, with every group having their own media and being represented by courses in ‘ancestral languages’ in the educational system. As in Suriname, the unity of the Mauritian state is imagined as non-ethnic by polyethnic performance.90

Apanjaht ideology does not determine the individual’s articulation of ethnic identity in Suriname, merely the way group identities relate to one another. It is the particular path open to individuals in (re)negotiating their position within Surinamese society

88 Ganga 2004, and personal communication.
once they have agreed on a collective ethnic identity. Anthony Appiah speaks of life scripts, “narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories.”

Collective identities, such as ethnic and national identities, fit individual stories into a larger narrative. Appiah identifies five areas along which life scripts are formed: religion, gender, ethnicity, “race” and sexuality. In Suriname, religion, ethnicity and “race” are conflated, and are closely linked to gender and sexuality, as Wekker notes with regard to the nostalgic Swit’ Sranan (‘sweet Suriname’) myth that reproduces the image of an idyllic, harmonious homeland – where women are lighter-skinned, have straighter hair and are more Asian-looking than men. As the supreme myth, the Mamio Myth includes all other national myths in Suriname and places them in apanjaht ideology.

When apanjaht ideology is touted as an alternative to the impersonal (i.e. non-ethnic) territorial nationalism of the Surinamese State, one finds that it works through allocating culture. ‘Apanjaht nationalism’ seems to determine what appropriate national Surinamese culture is. National culture needs to include ‘your own’ culture, and minority cultures must come to be seen as progenitors rather than as adjuncts to the Surinamese Nation. Resistance to apanjaht ideology – and thus elite dominance – arises in the negotiation of ethnicity, when individuals refuse to self-identify as any particular ethnicity and oppose any ascribed ethnic identification. On the one hand, after centuries of integration and assimilation in many directions, ethnic identification is not very obvious or straightforward in Suriname. On the other hand, there are many reasons why Surinamese would attempt to escape ethnic labelling, like the wish to be modern and Western, a sincere belief in the nationalist ideal, or its opposite, a feeling of disenfranchisement.

It has been necessary for Chinese ethnic identity to be articulated in line with the narratives of apanjaht ideology. To be useful for ethnopoliticization, Chinese group identity would have to be fundamentally and very publicly performative. Chinese ethnicity was already allocated a niche in the national Mamio myth (quite literally sewn onto the old colonial flag as a yellow star), though this ethnic identity was performed through orientalist stereotypes and not in ways that signalled modernity, for example, either in terms of citizenship in the Republic of Suriname or in relation to the

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power of the Chinese homeland. Unlike Chinese ethnic resources in the Chinese ethnic ownership economy, which were defined within the community and generated by the requirements of Chinese migrants, Chinese identity in apanjah ideology would have to be articulated towards non-Chinese Surinamese as well as serve to define and mobilize an ethnic Chinese constituency of voters.

1.3 The book’s Purpose

It is primarily in this context of the practices and ideologies of Surinamese consociationalism that the development of Chinese identity and the recent repositioning of the Chinese in Suriname must be studied. The goal of this study is to trace the rearticulation of public and collective Chinese identity in Suriname between the late 1990s and the early 2000s. The aim here is not to define Chinese identity once and for all as the complexity of multiple, situational, strategic, and performative identity cannot be reduced to a single identification. Looking at Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname will be rather like illuminating the construction of a spider’s web of identifications during a particular period in time. There will be no answers to questions as to ‘who is / who isn’t’ or ‘what is’, nor will every possible identification available to actors in the field be mapped.

The formation and development of various webs of multiplicative identifications is best approached through discourse analysis, which requires close observation of events in Suriname in order to identify actors and audiences in the game of identity negotiation, and of narratives that signalled the articulation of various Chinese identities in Suriname found in written texts, speeches, conversations, gossip, images, advertisements, events, architecture, and performances. I combine the method of discourse analysis with that of fieldwork among Chinese and non-Chinese, migrant and non-migrant agents in the field, in order to understand the limits of public Chinese identities (in contrast to, for example, privately articulated or individually held identities).

Observation cannot be random or comprehensive, and so the following themes serve to frame the analysis of Chinese ethnic discourse and positioning in Suriname:
- Under what conditions does Chinese ethnic identification arise instrumentally in Suriname;
- What internal distinctions and cleavages exist among New Chinese with regard to regional and linguistic backgrounds, migration strategies, community organization, class, etc.;
- What linkages, intersections and divisions exist within the Chinese segment taken as a whole;
- How has increased heterogeneity among ethnic Chinese impacted apanjaht discourse and processes of Chinese identity formation, e.g. (re)articulation of ethnic identity, both as reflexive and ascribed identification;
- In which way is Chinese group identity intended as a political project and which stakeholders are involved, through China-twon politics and politics of recognition and identity;
- What was the political context for the mobilization of Chinese ethnicity in view of Chinese apanjaht participation in the 2005 legislative elections?

While conducting several fieldworks which spanned over five years I have used a variety of methodologies to enable me to answer these questions. Most of the fieldwork consisted of participatory observation in order to gain understanding of the performa-tivity of Chinese ethnicity in Suriname. Participatory observation was based on the researcher's presence at, membership of, involvement in, and commitment to locations, institutions and events which could be considered 'sources of Chineseness'. Locations and institutions included the Chinese Sunday Market, Dim Sum restaurants, Chinese business premises, the Chinese socio-cultural associations (Kong Njie Tong Sang and Chung Fa Foei Kon). Events included non-public celebrations at the Chinese associations and public festivities such as the Moon Festival and the Chinese Lunar New Year, but much of the research focused on the celebration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement in October 2003 and the presentation of the New Chinese Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui association (see Chapters 7 and 8).

The production of symbolic capital during the Commemoration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement was collected in photographs and texts, and discussed with research subjects. 'Objective' distance is not realistically achievable when one is identified as a member of a small segment of a small society, and so I observed the Commemoration event as a local-born, mixed Chinese participant - the most neutral position possible. This positioning was coded by my presentation of my 'Hakka pedigree' and 'ances-
tral village' in Dongguan (Guangdong Province, PRC), my links to established local Hakka personalities, my knowledge of general Chinese culture and specific Hakka folklore. The ‘hybrid’ identity could be abandoned quickly, if necessary, by speaking Putonghua (the Mandarin-based official language of the People’s Republic of China, here abbreviated as PTH) and displaying in-depth knowledge of the Chinese script.

Analysis of the ethnic discourse as it emerged in the Surinamese State and the media also entailed closely following as many regular media channels as possible, such as Dutch- and Chinese-language newspapers, radio and TV broadcasts. The most important of these was De Ware Tijd daily newspaper, the most widely read Surinamese newspaper at the time. New media provided a deterritorialized view of apanjaht discourse from within the Surinamese ‘diaspora’; the focus was on internet discussion forums such as www.dwtonline.com and www.waterkant.net/nl/. The polemic in the Chinese-language media leading up to the May 2005 legislative elections required close reading of all texts produced during that period in the two main Chinese-language newspapers, Xunnan Ribao and Zhonghua Ribao, published by the Kong Ngie Tong Sang and Chung Fa Foei Kon socio-cultural associations.

Quantitative data were obtained from the Surinamese General Bureau of Statistics in Paramaribo. These included traffic, economic, and demographic statistics; results of household surveys; and the results of the seven General Population and Housing Censuses. Raw data from the 1st and 2nd Censuses (1921 and 1950) were accessed via the Dutch National Archives in The Hague. Numbers of formal migrants (i.e. foreigners who have formally registered their settlement in Suriname) were obtained from the Central Registry Office in Paramaribo. The Surinamese government provided sources for various other statistics, such as the Surinamese Ministries of Labour and the Aliens Branch of the Ministry of Justice and Police.

The paucity of quantitave data on Chinese ethnicity is immediately apparent. Statistical data on Chinese in Suriname is hard to come by and rarely useful. The Surinamese State does not recognize ethnic groups as fixed categories, and various government bodies use different definitions of ethnicity. The General Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines an ethnic group as ‘a group of people who, mainly on the basis of shared socio-cultural identity,

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93 Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek, ABS.
94 Centraal Bureau Burgerzaken, CBB
consider themselves to be a distinct group within society, focus on survival of the group, and, as a result of the above, consciously distinguish themselves from others in society.’

Although self-identification has always been the basis for measuring ethnicity in Suriname, censuses in colonial times basically approached ethnicity through racial categories. The Surinamese State does not systematically compile migration data, nor in fact any social data on the basis of consistently defined ethnic categories. As a result the annual volume of Chinese migration can only be very roughly estimated, and flows of Chinese nationals from (and to) particular destinations in China and elsewhere are completely unknown.

Ethnographic data were gathered in Paramaribo where I lived, between 2001 and 2005, with three field trips to Nieuw Nickerie near the Guyanese border. Research subjects were approached on the basis of formal categorization (such as immigrants with a passport from the People’s Republic of China), self-identification (voluntarily self-identifying as ‘Chinese’ in any sense), third-party identification (leaving the interpretation of socio-cultural markers such as language, emblematic culture and stereotypes, to others), and in contexts where Chinese ethnicity was clearly performative. Interviews were all open, they were conducted in private if possible and otherwise in small groups. At an early stage a questionnaire in Chinese and Dutch was designed to gather data on migration networks, transnational practices and livelihoods, but only a handful of migrants ever returned these and the method was eventually abandoned. Focus group discussions were mainly with local-born (four occasions with two to six participants), only occasionally with established migrants (two occasions with no more than three participants), and impossible to organize with New Chinese.

Chinese research subjects in Suriname are notoriously inaccessible. Chinese migrants treat the anonymity unintentionally provided by the Surinamese State and produced by the informality of the Surinamese economy as a valuable asset. Research regularly touched on sensitive issues such as racism, crime, hidden discourses, and ethnic nationalism, which informants were very reticent to comment on. This hampered fieldwork, as everything had to be off the record; only a very small number of informants allowed interviews to be recorded. New Migrants were particularly unwilling to cooperate, especially since they were being targeted in the local media as illegal migrants and criminals. I was consistently identified

by local-born ethnic Chinese, older immigrants and New Migrants as a local (Surinamese, mixed, of Fuidung’on Hakka ancestry) which meant being identified as an outsider by migrants, particularly New Chinese. In the limited world of Chinese migrants in Suriname the news of an outsider asking difficult questions made reaching new research subjects increasingly hard. Tracing practices of transnational migrants (identifying individuals, following their networks to various bases and destinations, and measuring the directions and quantities of flows of goods, money and ideas) proved unfeasible.

One solution was to approach migrants via middlemen among the established migrant group, but the reputations of the go-between persons occasionally proved to be a hindrance. The earlier Hakka migrants did not have guaranteed access to recent migrants, while New Chinese only consented to interviews when approached through a social network. There were no fundamental language barriers in the contact with New Chinese, though they could often manipulate language barriers to limit the flow of information. Especially in the case of dialects which are in effect specific to particular immigrant cohorts, such as Wenzhounese, Hainanese and Fujianese dialects, respondents would switch to their native dialects to exclude interviewers; Mandarin could not be reliably used as a barrier as an intra-ethnic lingua franca.

Visiting research subjects along with non-Surinamese and/or non-Chinese go-betweens when it was possible, proved to be very productive where respondents were initially unwilling to cooperate; immigrants often communicated relatively freely with (white) foreign or local Creole friends I took along on fieldwork sessions, particularly if I asked them to initiate contact. Aside from such incidental help, three more permanent assistants were recruited. A local-born mixed Chinese friend with was available to do longer interviews with members of her extensive network of local-born Chinese completely independently and with a list of questions. Her Creole husband had good relations with New Chinese shopkeepers in his neighbourhood, and he too was recruited to make interviews. However, useful interviews with New Chinese required intercession of (migrant Hakka) go-between persons. The main Hakka middleman was a migrant who had been married to a local-born Hakka since the 1960s; unlike the other two assistants she was able to read and write Chinese and speak various dialects of Chinese as well as Sranantongo, Dutch and some English.
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<th>Immigrants</th>
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<td>Shandong Province: (city unknown): 33 y.o.</td>
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<td>Liaoning Province: Dalian: 32 y.o.</td>
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<td>Liaoning Province: 24 y.o.</td>
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<th>Suriname-born (all Chinese ancestors hark back to Dongguan, Huiyang and Bao’an in Guangdong Province)</th>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; gen.: 20, 19, 21 y.o.</td>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; / 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; gen.: 18, 52, 66 y.o.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; / 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; gen.: 41, 78 y.o.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; / 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; gen. mixed: 41, 78 y.o.</td>
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<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; gen.: 17, 31, 37, 41 y.o.</td>
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<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; gen.: 30 y.o.</td>
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TOTAL 75 | 38 | 37
Sessions were held with a total of 85 people, of which 75 eventually agreed to have their details recorded. Of these 75 respondents rather more than half were men (38), local-born (40), or over 30 years of age (41). All names have been obscured.

1.4 Structure of the Book

As a report of research into dynamics of ethnic identity, this book is organized around interrelated themes rather than sequences of historical events.

Chapter 2 elaborates upon the elements of Chinese ethnic discourse and local concepts relating to Chinese identification in Suriname that are necessary for a meaningful discussion of Chineness in Suriname.

Chapter 3 is a brief ethnographic description of the ‘Old Chinese’. It presents variables appropriate to an analysis of Chinese ethnicity as a social structure in Suriname, such as the historical development of chain migration and the main intra-ethnic cleavage between China-born migrants (tong’ap) and their local-born and/or locally raised offspring (laiap) who are gatekeepers and articulators of Chinese identity to the Surinamese State and of socio-economic positioning of Chinese migrants as ethnic entrepreneurs.

Chapter 4 introduces the New Chinese: why are they ‘new’, what are their regional and linguistic backgrounds. The link between New Chinese and Chinese globalization is viewed in terms of entrepreneurial chain migration: are New Chinese following the global spread of Chinese products, or is Chinese economic globalization following migration networks?

Chapter 5 explores the nature of Chinese globalization in Suriname, which provides a framework for the positioning of ethnic Chinese in Suriname. The relationship between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Suriname is placed in the context of Chinese foreign policy, in particular the One-China Policy and the logic of Peaceful Rising, along with Chinese technical cooperation projects and resource extraction projects in Suriname.

Chapter 6 is about the new embedding of Chinese ethnic identity in Surinamese society which is brought about by the presence of New Chinese. It will discuss the resurgence of an anti-Chinese discourse in the Surinamese media, its link to patriotic scripts of resistance against the State, the link between media hype and foreign and immigration policies, the dualistic nature of Chinese stereotypes as a structure for established migrant / New
Chinese boundary negotiations by local-born ethnic Chinese agents before a general non-ethnic Chinese audience in Suriname.

Chapter 7 describes politics of recognition of the established Fuidung’on Hakka for the purpose of participation in apanjeht consociationalism in view of the 2005 legislative elections. The narrative of local Chinese ethnicity that was articulated in the public Commemoration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement in October 2003, and the communication of universal Chinese identity in terms of essentialism, modernity and patriotism, are also analyzed.

Chapter 8 describes Chinatown politics as a route to participation of New Chinese elites, in the form of a New Chinese socio-cultural association (huiguan) to be recognized as a distinct representation by the State. Chinese associations are analysed as a strategy of ethnic Chinese middle classes to mobilize ethnic identity as a political resource, while manipulating ethnic coding to produce multiple categories depending on the intended audience: various Chinese constituencies or the Surinamese State.

Chapter 9 describes the mobilization of Chinese ethnic identity in the 2005 Surinamese legislative elections as a continuation of the overtures to the Surinamese State made by Established Fuidung’on Hakkas and New Chinese. The Chinese campaign for the ethnic vote developed into an emotional polemic, this was the first time that competing views of the legitimate role of Chinese in Suriname emerged in the Chinese-language media. The texts are analysed as negotiations of ethnic identity coding between ethnic Chinese Egos and Alters before ethnic Chinese Others.

Chapter 10 is a review of the construction of Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname as an aspect of local positioning of Chinese migrants, and a discussion of the main conclusions that can be drawn from observations of Chinese ethnic claims in relation to citizenship claims.
No one in Suriname will dispute the existence of a Chinese ethnic group in Suriname, but defining Chinese identity and ethnicity in Suriname is by no means simple. Despite the persistent presence of people everyone agrees to label ‘Chinese’, there are no studies to explain why a clear-cut ethnic Chinese segment should persist in the Caribbean. Cuba, for example, received the most Chinese labour migrants to the New World after Peru, but by the twentieth century the Chinese were largely assimilated. However, despite ongoing assimilation, a distinct but undefined ethnic Chinese group persists in Suriname. Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname is a collective phenomenon by default, and calling individual subjects ‘Chinese’ generalizes them as representatives of the Chinese group. Chinese become evident to Surinamese on specific occasions: when shopping, going out to eat, going to a doctor, and in certain places such as Chinese organizations and sports clubs. But it is debatable whether a unified Chinese ethnic group operating in Surinamese society as a corporate agent has ever really existed.

In order to understand the very real transformations that the Chinese in Suriname are undergoing during the last decades, one needs to appreciate the diversity that has always existed under the label of Chinese identity, as well as the reasons why Chinese ethnic identity is so easily depicted as monolithic and immutable. In this chapter we will explore the inescapable jargon associated with any study of Overseas Chinese and Chinese identity, the basic elements of native Chinese identity discourse, as well as local Surinamese concepts that inform constructions of Chinese identifications. These include: primordial and sinocentric Chinese ethnicity; the concept of Overseas Chinese (the huaqiao-qiaoxiang model); the hierarchy of migrant cohorts (sinkeh versus laokeh); Hakka identity; and assimilation (tong’ap and laiap).

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2.1 Primordialism and Sinocentrism

Moerman’s (1965) definition of ethnicity as an ‘emic category of ascription’ (i.e. culturally specific) does hold for Chinese ethnic identity, shaped as it is by primordialist Chinese cultural discourse. Current Chinese cultural discourse is derived from imperial cosmology, in which concentric realms surrounded China, with the Emperor at its centre. Barbarism decreased as one approached the compelling civilizational power of the Imperial centre. Some modern versions of this schema posit Overseas Chinese in the liminal realm where Imperial ideology would place the sinicized non-Han Chinese, and places foreign countries where the barbarians were positioned. ‘Chineseness’ is primordialist in this way, and kinship, race, culture, history, and territory all overlap to reproduce the idea of fundamental and unchanging unity.

Primordialism remains central to the way Chinese ethnic identity is experienced, and while it is legitimate and even necessary to recognize that people frame their ideas of Chinese identity in sinocentric terms, one should keep in mind that the social sciences have abandoned the idea of essential and primordial ethnicity. Instrumentalist approaches to Chinese ethnic identity can be found in studies of Chinese economic and political positioning overseas. Even so, Chinese writers rarely challenge this centralist view, and generally struggle to fit the problem of assimilation with primordialist Sinocentric ideas that tie ethnic Chinese abroad to a Chinese motherland. They will generally articulate the borders around Chinese ethnic identity very much as a liminal realm between civilization and barbarism, while ignoring the reality of local embedding of identity in China and abroad. The PRC view of Chinese identity is a dominant outside view among Chinese in Suriname. It strongly links Chineseness to territorial claims and (nominally) citizenship in PRC multiculturalism (the idea of 55 official ethnic minority groups next to the Han-Chinese majority), but sinocentrism (in the form of anti-minority bigotry) still remains a strong and visible element in it.

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2 Moerman 1965.
3 See graph in Pan 1999: 13.
4 Cf. Dikötter 1992 and 1997; Honig 1992; Chow 1997; Ang 2001; Song 2003; Brown 2004; etc.
6 E.g. Tu 1994, Pan 1999.
7 Mackerras 2004.
Written Chinese terms which are used to refer to ‘Chinese’ reflect primordialism. Zhongguoren (‘Chinese person; the Chinese people’) is ambiguous, as it can be an ethnic label as well as the normal word for ‘citizen of China’. Huaren-huayi (‘ethnic Chinese and people of Chinese descent’) does not explicitly signal political affiliation, and is commonly used as a label for a global ethnic Chinese category. In this way, Chineseness becomes undeniable and monolithic, and hybridity is subsumed in undifferentiated ‘diasporic identity’. Modern nationalism which comes from the People’s Republic of China brings a highly political interpretation to traditional cultural discourse. Differences between Han Chinese and distinctions between nationality and ethnicity become malleable in the face of national unity. In fact, this reflects three tendencies that have been observed in the articulation of Chinese identity: racializing of the other and insistence on ‘racial purity’; emphasizing of Chinese phenotype and biological descent; insisting that ethnic boundaries are absolute and non-negotiable.

To complicate matters, ethnicity is not the same as ethnic identity. Ethnicity is a type of social cleavage which intersects with others such as gender and class. Social constructionist theories of ethnicity deny its natural or objective existence, but treat it as a fluid social construct that allows for multiple situational identities, while at the same time limiting identity claims. Eriksen approaches ethnic identity as a socially constructed collective identity, although for him group identity in reference to ethnic categories that is central to an instrumentalist approach is not the issue. “Ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group.”

In the logic of instrumentally constructed ethnic identity (the professed membership of ethnic categories that offer access to such scarce resources) is a pragmatic strategy and ethnic categories are valid precisely because and as long as they enable subjects to successfully pursue their socioeconomic interests under conditions of unequal power relations, usually in terms of social networks and ethnic loyalty. At the micro level, ethnic identity is about how

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9 Listed in Tong & Chan 2001a: 363.
10 Primordialism has been largely discredited as a valid heuristic concept in mainstream social science. This view of ethnicity matches the popular notion, and makes ethnicity a social distinction based on natural, inherited categories, rather like biological gender, and describes ethnic identity in terms of fixed categories and immutable states of being.
11 Eriksen 1993: 12.
individual agents deal with sets of existing labels and with the limits to the claims one can realistically make. Nagel, for instance, argues that people use their ethnic ties and affiliations as resources in a variety of contexts, in response to current needs, or in terms of competition with outside groups: “Since ethnicity changes situationally, the individual carries a portfolio of ethnic identities that are more or less salient in various situations ad vis-à-vis various audiences. As audiences change, the socially-defined array of ethnic choices open to the individual changes.”

Constructionist approaches thus see ethnic identity as the process of identifying in terms of semiotics and boundary negotiation. Barth sees ethnicity in terms of group differentiation and boundary maintenance; ethnic identity is identification on the basis of ethnic categories, arising from continuous renegotiation of borders between competing groups, and particular ethnic identifications may persist even after individuals cross borders of identification. The structure of ethnic groups is produced in symbolic coding. Eder et al distinguish three fundamental ideal types of symbolic coding: primordial coding, which naturalizes ethnic borders; traditional coding, which links the borders to the social routines and traditions and infringements of these; and universalist coding, which links the collective subject to the sacred. With regard to agency, Eder et al stress the importance of situationality; one needs to track who exactly is manipulating codes and boundaries, who is excluded or included, and which audience is observing.

Labelling is central to the negotiation process leading to ethnic identity. This is implied by Bauman’s and Cooper’s statements that identities are (unconscious and imperative) identifications, and thus a relational phenomenon. With regard to the direction of the identification claims, one can expect to see individuals self-identifying (as Insider or Outsider), identifying other individuals, being identified by another individual, or being categorized

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14 In the Chinese context primordial coding would be reflected in the statement that Chinese ethnicity is a shared biological heritage. Traditional coding would then be about how Chinese ethnicity is based on canonical culture. An example of universalist coding would be the semi-religious cult of Chinese nationalism.
15 Eder et al (2002) promote the use of socio-psychological concepts such as Ego, Alter and Other in situational action theory. The Ego is the central agent who produces the claims about the ethnic boundary between the Ego’s and the Alter’s social groups. The fact that the claims are articulated in relation to a particular observing Other makes the negotiation process situational.
by something other than an individual, e.g. the State, and audiences that are either individuals or group subjects on either side of an ethnic border. This approach means that ethnic identity is never a single, absolute, and objective truth. It is an observation of an ongoing process in a particular setting over a particular period of time, which means that one should be mindful that the same ethnic label might mean different things in different locations at different times.

Having established that ethnicity is a social construct and ethnic identity is a situational and instrumental negotiation, we need to stress that ethnic groups and ethnic categories are therefore also not god-given. Writing of Guyana, a context closer to home, Garner stresses the difference between ethnicity as a State category and ethnicity ‘in the field’, which is imagined, multiple and situational and reflects unequal power relations through history. Garner warns against equating ethnicity in this sense with notions of ethnic groups and ethnic identity. Following Pierre Bourdieu’s views on identity, Brubaker stresses that ethnic categories are not the same as ethnic groups. In terms of analysis, ethnic groups are not bounded wholes, and ethnicity does not depend on the actual existence of groups – groups of real people communicating, responding to organization, and sharing common ideas.

Instead, ethnic groups – the shifting idea that groups of people exist ‘out there’, which Brubaker prefers to call ‘groupness’ – are brought into existence by the performative nature of ethnicity, much as Butler observes with regard to gender identities; identity is not about fixed categories, but arises in the performance of it by individual subjects. In her analysis of gender development, Butler sees performativity as the way in which identity is passed on or brought to life by discourse. Originally a concept from speech act theory, performativity is types of authoritative speech, with the power to frame objects which they are meant to describe. To Butler, gender is like a script which is made a reality by repeated performance. Gender is therefore an expression, not of what someone is but of one’s acts. This allows us to analyse ethnic ‘groups’ as

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17 Garner 2008. To Garner the State is more than the apparatus of the formal institute of the State, and includes its policies and the individuals operating and formulating the apparatus and policies.
19 Butler 1997.
events, and to distinguish between groups arising organically or as political projects of organizations which claim to represent ethnic interests.\footnote{Brubaker 2004: 11-13.}

In my own personal experience, instrumental, situational, and performative ethnic identity is not arcane theory. Born in Suriname of part-Chinese descent, with a Sino-Surinamese surname, I share the experience of inescapable ‘Chineseness’ with many Surinamese, of being placed in a universal, ubiquitous, self-evident Chinese category, without actually being an insider to the ‘Chinese community’ in any way. My personal experience was also of contingency, flexibility, and the reality of the local against the backdrop of essentialist ethnic labels. In the vaguely matrilineal White North-eastern Caribbean way, I could be Paul Brendan Tjon Sie Fat, child of Rita Imelda Carty, grandchild of Maria Petersen, and great-grandchild of Deborah Vlaun. Patriarchal Hakka tradition in Suriname makes me: 張承元, 張瑞鸫之子, 張悠俊之孫, 張本球之曾孫.\footnote{‘Zhang Chengyuan (Zong Sen’èn), son of Zhang Ruipeng (Zong Suipèn), grandson of Zhang Youjun (Zong Yuzun), great-grandson of Zhang Benqiu (Zong Bunkiu).’ Kejia pronunciation between brackets.}

Yet in Suriname I and my siblings were third generation bearers of the Sino-Surinamese surname Tjon Sie Fat, which hardly resembles monosyllabic 張 that legends link to the mythical Yellow Emperor. At that personal level, Chinese identity is just one of multiple self-concepts that individuals derive from perceived membership of social groups, relevant to positive self-esteem. In this psychological sense ‘Chineseness’ is dynamic, constantly adapting to provide consistency and guidance for the individual’s actions, but the ‘truth’ of one’s personal experience is irrelevant.\footnote{For a more extensive example of situational Chinese identity in Suriname, see Appendix 2.} Essential Chineseness may also enter analyses of Chinese identity through the back door. For instance, one should not automatically include terms such as ‘transnationalism’ or ‘diaspora identity’ in the structure of Chinese ethnicity in Suriname. The use of the word ‘diaspora’ is not neutral. With a capital D the term refers to the spread of Jews in the Hellenized world, and by extension the relation of Jewish identity with a lost (and reinvented) homeland. Without the initial capital, ‘diaspora’ can refer to any ethnic group that is identifiable in more than one location, whether or not a homeland actually exists. In any case the word is inherent-
ly emotive and affective, and involves its user in ethnic claims. When used in reference to Chinese outside of ‘China’, the word is often used as a synonym for ‘group’, ‘coethnics’, ‘ethnic network’, ‘language community’, etc., and suggests a uniformity where there is none.

Transnationalism refers to the effect of growing numbers of migrants living dual lives in their country of origin and their host countries: sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders of multiple nation-states, institutionalized to varying degrees. When the assumption of monolithic Chineseness – the popular idea that ethnic Chinese form a closed ‘Chinese community’ – merges with the idea of transnational communities, transnationalism simply becomes ethnicity. Faist warns against equating transnational communities with transnational social spaces, of which he distinguishes three types in an evolutionary order: transnational kinship groups; transnational circuits; and transnational communities.24 Up to the arrival of the New Chinese, the Chinese transnational field was a circuit, characterized by constant exchange of goods, people, and information between China and Suriname. Transnational communities, however, are typified by the mobilization of collective representations within symbolic ties, based on some form of collective identity (i.e. shared coding of ethnic borders) such as a diaspora; however, such group identities did not arise in Suriname.25

While I would try to avoid essentialism in my analysis of Chineseness (i.e. Chinese ethnic identity) in Suriname, I do appreciate that any discussion of sinocentrism in native Chinese ethnic discourse may cause offence to localized Chinese (who do not view the PRC as a Homeland) or may support anti-Chinese agendas that claim that all Chinese are China-oriented. The point is not that Chinese “are all inherently sinocentric”, but that Chinese ethnic discourse in Suriname is meaningless without the concept of primordial ethno-racial origins in a distant Homeland. No matter how this idea originated, it is required for social positioning in Surinamese society, where ethnic identity is strongly racialized and linked to

25 Huang’s (2008) survey among subscribers to the huiguan newspapers includes valuable data on qiaoxiang links. A fairly consistent average of 60% of his respondents owned property in China regardless of period of arrival in Suriname. However, initial weekly contact with relatives back home tapered off to incidental as period of residence in Suriname increased.
imaginary and fixed migrant homelands. One also needs to be aware that native Chinese ethnic discourse remains relevant in Suriname, as New Chinese migrants and the PRC have effectively reintroduced sino-centrism in the guise of ‘new Chinese nationalism’. This nationalism can be interpreted as a broad, audience and context specific civic discourse between the PRC and huaqiao, in which ideological differences are downplayed for pragmatic reasons, and which is worded in terms of essentialist, familial ties to the PRC as the zuguo (motherland, literally ‘ancestor country’) of all ethnic Chinese. To a non-Chinese audience, the discourse can easily appear to stress the image of the PRC as an indivisible superpower which incorporates all Chinese migrants and ethnic Chinese.

2.2 Huaqiao: Overseas Chinese

The sinocentric bias also becomes apparent in Chinese views of Chinese overseas migration. Chinese scholars connect and view indentured labour, Chinese ethnic entrepreneurship and chain migration, particularly in the context of Southeast Asia, as a historical trajectory of Chinese indentured labourers (huagong) leading to Chinese merchants (huashang) and then to Overseas Chinese (huaqiao). The term huaqiao may be translated as ‘sojourner from China’. The typical Chinese migrant ‘was supposed to be a sojourner who is due to return to his hometown, in order to visit his kin and friends, establish a business, enjoy a pleasant old age, or, particularly important to Chinese sojourners, be buried’. Qiaoxiang (‘sojourners’ native place’) is the homeland in this context of Chinese sojourners overseas, the place where the huajuan (dependents of Overseas Chinese) are. The huaqiao-qiaoxiang model describes the translocal or even transnational links and networks that connect Chinese migrants overseas to their homeland.

The specific huaqiao concept has always been a project of the Chinese State (Republican China and later the People’s Republic), to guide the loyalties of Overseas Chinese – hua being taken

26 East Indians = (Bollywood) India, which is not necessarily Bihar; Chinese = Hong Kong (up to 1990), PRC (since the 1990s), but not necessarily the exact ancestral villages of the migrants; Javanese = Java, but increasingly Indonesia (which is an abstract entity among ethnic Javanese in Suriname) under the influence of the Indonesian Embassy; Afro-Surinamese = ‘Africa’, often symbolized by Ghana; etc.
29 Douw 1999: 23.
very narrowly to mean ‘China’, so that *huaqiao* specifically means: ‘Chinese national residing abroad temporarily’. There is thus an ideological aspect to the trajectory of *huagong* and, or via, *huashang* to *huaqiao* and *huayi* (‘people of Chinese descent’, a euphemism for people of mixed Chinese ancestry). The mobilization politics of the Overseas Chinese (huaqiao-qiaoxiang) model makes it useful to explain the development of Chinese chain migration in Suriname. However, applying the trajectory of indentured labour to ‘people of Chinese descent’ (i.e. from huagong via huashang to huaqiao and huayi) directly to Suriname risks imposing Chinese cultural ideology on a local reality. Chinese indentured labourers in nineteenth century Suriname are unambiguously indentured labourers (i.e. huagong), but the entrepreneurial chain migration that followed is not simply a New World version of huagong. Trade was primarily an adaptive migration and survival strategy for post-indentureship migrants in Suriname, whereas it was the central goal of their counterparts in Southeast Asia. Overseas Chinese / huaqiao will be used here in a slightly different way, based on the huaqiao-qiaoxiang model: huaqiao are Chinese chain migrants in a transnational circuit whose identities are linked to their qiaoxiang and their economic niche in Suriname.

The labourer-merchant-sojourner model of Chinese migration to South-east Asia could be an example of Chinese ethnicity arising in response to changes through time and space in economic society. Indentured labourer (*huagong*) would then reflect the dominance of production capitalism, whereas Chinese merchants and sojourners (huashang and huaqiao) reflect a shift to the dominance of consumer capitalism. Leong approaches ethnogenesis in China from this angle, by explaining the marginalized Hakka and Pengmin groups as arising from economic migration centred on industrial heartlands in Southern China. In fact, the positioning of Chinese migrants in Suriname reflects this view of Chinese ethnicity; entrepreneurial chain migration was based on a Chinese ethnic economy in Suriname, which resulted in the strong association of Chinese ethnic identity with the retail trade.

It is important to point out that huaqiao or ‘Overseas Chinese’ should not be automatically equated with the idea of a ‘Chinese community’. The terms refer to a relationship between migrants and the state governing their homelands, and do not imply that such migrants necessarily constitute a bounded community. Community formation in Suriname is a response to local conditions.

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and the local requirements of migrants, and in many ways develops quite independently of the relationship they have with the homeland (i.e. the huaqiao-qiaoxiang link). Ethnic Chinese in Suriname – assimilated, local-born, established and recent migrants – are concentrated in Paramaribo as a result of their migration and economic strategies, but they do not cluster spatially in any way as to make group dynamics possible, so that a community in the sense of clear group behaviour and daily interactions independent of the Surinamese majority has never materialized.

2.3 Laokeh and Sinkeh

Although the terms huaqiao and huayi are used as ethnic labels by Chinese overseas, they are not particularly useful in analyzing Surinamese ethnic identities. Both terms suggest hybrid identities; Chinese observers treat huaqiao as a primordial category (the assumption being that huaqiao lineages can be traced directly back to China), while using huayi as a vague and strategic label (the strategy being inclusion of huayi among huaqiao). Rather than discussing the merits of huaqiao and related terms as valid heuristic tools, one should take them for what they are in Suriname: labels used locally in a process of identification by Chinese subjects to link notions of universal Chineseness to the reality of situational ethnic identity – basically an instance of glocalization. Moreover, concepts developed by Chinese migrants elsewhere to make sense of their local realities are unambiguous in Suriname, but they and are useful in linking migration history to the development of ethnic coding. Successive Chinese migrant generations in Southeast Asia are distinguished as sinkeh (literally ‘new guests’, meaning ‘new-comers’) and laokeh (literally ‘old guests’). The term sinkeh refers to any new migrant regardless of regional Chinese background, but will be also used narrowly here in the context of Suriname to refer to generational cleavages within migrant cohorts of a shared regional or linguistic background.

31 ‘Glocalization’ is a neologism that combines the concepts of ‘globalization’ (linking to the global, thinking and acting at a global scale) and ‘localization’ (adapting to local conditions, being or becoming local). Chineseness is glocal as it requires an actor who is articulating Chinese ethnic identity to refer to the imagining of a unified ethnic identity that spans the globe, while adapting to local conditions that limit or enable her or his choices.

32 Kejia-speakers in Suriname use the Kejia version of sinkeh in the same sense: sinhak.
2.4 Hakka Identity

Up to the late 1990s, ethnic Chinese in Suriname and other areas in the Caribbean (such as Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica) came from a Hakka-dominated area in the Eastern part of the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong Province (the Fuidung’on area), which is the reason why ‘Chinese’ and ‘Hakka’ are often used as near synonyms in Suriname.\(^{33}\) As the established Chinese segment in Suriname derives from Kejia-speaking chain migrants from the Fuidung’on region in Guangdong Province (People’s Republic of China), Chinese in Suriname are traditionally identified as Hakkas, and Hakkas have been so closely equated with Chineseness that ‘China’ meant the homelands of the Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants. As a result, to most Fuidung’on migrants in Suriname, particularly younger people, the question “are you Hakka?” simply means: “Do you speak the hometown dialect?” Though the question of whether Hakka identity is an ethnic identity is beyond the scope of this study, it is useful to distinguish the meaning of Hakka as an ethnonym from its meaning as a name of a dialect.\(^{34}\) ‘Hakka’ is used here loosely to refer to group identity; following current practice in Chinese linguistics the ‘Hakka dialect’ is here called ‘Kejia’. Hakka dialects (i.e. the languages spoken by people who identify or are identified as Hakka) and Hakka identity are easily conflated, often without sufficient basis.\(^{35}\) Hakka identity is a fundamental Han-Chinese identity in the Fuidung’on region. Without other contrasting Han groups or languages, being Hakka would not have any special meaning in Suriname for the immigrants. It is interesting to point out that the term ‘Hakka’ basically means ‘outsider’, and originated in nineteenth century Guangdong Province when local Yue (‘Cantonese’) speakers (labelled punti in Kejia: ‘of this place’, i.e. the established) were confronted with migrants from outside the province (Haakga, Cantonese: ‘guest households’, i.e. outsiders).\(^{36}\) It is also interes-

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\(^{33}\) Fuidung’on is an anagram of the Kejia pronunciation of the names of the three counties where the ‘Old Chinese’ migrant cohorts in Suriname come from: Fuiyong (PTH: Huiyang), Dunggon (PTH: Dongguan), and Baoon (PTH: Baoan). For the informants in Suriname the term referred to the 19th century districts of Dongguan, Huiyang and Xin’an in the Hong Kong periphery, currently corresponding to areas in Dongguan Municipality, Huiyang County, Baoan County, Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, and the New Territories in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

\(^{34}\) Hakkas are the exception to the Chinese rule of defining varieties of Han-Chinese culture as regional and linked to provinces. Because they are routinely described as without territory, Hakkas are sometimes compared to gypsies.

\(^{35}\) Lau 2003.

\(^{36}\) Cohen 1995.
ting to note that no speech communities were traditionally called ‘Kejia’ / ‘Hakka’; outsiders called the language ‘Guangdongese’, ‘language of the newcomers’, ‘language in which they say ngai for I’, etc.37 Hakka ethnic nationalism, invented by Hakka intellectuals at the turn of the nineteenth century, is no longer in favour among Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants, though a measure of chauvinism is still present among some Fuidung’on intellectuals in Suriname. In any case, Hakka ethnicity as a potential ethnonationalist movement does not have a place in the centralist Chinese cultural discourse in modern Chinese nationalism.

2.5 Tong’ap and Laiap

Ethnic Chinese in Suriname make a crucial distinction between migrants and local-born, which could be described in contrasting terms of laokeh versus sinkeh and huaren versus huayi. However, the distinction that the Kejia-speaking group from the Fuidung’on area - the ‘Old Chinese’ - make between immigrants and local-born has local relevance that goes further than the general meanings conveyed by the terms above. The main cleavage within the Fuidung’on Hakka group in Suriname is between local-born and those born in China. From a Surinamese point of view Chinese migrants were born in China, and are therefore called tong’ap. The word laiap refers to people born outside China / the Fuidung’on qiao-xiang, and therefore to Chinese people born in Suriname; since the late nineteenth century its original meaning of ‘mixed Chinese’ has extended to include all ‘local-born’. The Tong’ap / Laiap cleavage does not account for the intersections and overlap between identities in the field, but works well as an analytical tool to reveal details of networks and social and cultural capital, which would be less obvious if Fuidung’on migrants in Suriname were simply analysed as ‘Chinese’ versus ‘assimilated Chinese’. Tong’ap and Laiap are not ethnic categories or ethnic groups with distinct collective identities marked by symbolic codes, but are loosely defined ethnic labels.

Up to the Second World War polygyny was the norm among Fuidung’on Hakka sojourners in Suriname. Men often had a wife and also perhaps a concubine and children back in the village, or they would briefly return to China to marry. Chen Ta used the

term ‘dual family system’ with Chinese migrants in mind who were head of one ‘family’ separated into (at least) two units. In this view, the women were recognized in a Chinese hierarchy, with the main wife acting as head of the family unit in China, and secondary wives / concubines abroad. Chen stressed that many migrants may have been married when they left their hometown, but were strictly speaking not family heads yet, and that the dual family units reflected a division of property. In Suriname the migrant might marry a local woman, but more commonly he would take a common-law wife (Kejia: sepo).\(^{38}\) Migrants could send local-born sons to China to be educated in the care of the main wife (Kejia: taipo).\(^{39}\) Some local-born sons were sent away, but it is not clear what proportion of those educated in China returned to Suriname. As the Surinamese sepo were mostly Creole women, many local-born children of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants were of mixed heritage. The Surinamese authorities considered the children Chinese nationals if recognized by the father – which also strengthened their Chineseness, by virtue of a Sino-Surinamese surname.\(^{40}\)

Chain migration constantly refilled the pool of sinkeh in Suriname, so that there was always a substantial difference between local-born and those born in China among ethnic Chinese in Suriname.\(^{41}\) By the end of 1914, colonial authorities recorded a total of 961 ‘Chinese’, either born outside Suriname or born in Suriname of Chinese parents. About two-thirds (626 or 65.1%) lived in Paramaribo, and most were men (802 or 83.5%).\(^{42}\) The 1921 census (the first general census in Suriname) gives an idea of the proportion of Suriname-born among the ethnic Chinese. A random sample of the raw data suggests that 47.2% of Chinese in Suriname were born abroad; 57.9% of men and 22.2% of women.

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38 Tong’ap and Laiap informants use the Kejia word sepo slightly euphemistically. There are no indications that these Surinamese ‘sepo’ were recognized by the qiaoxiang, or that the relationship with the Chinese migrant was formalized through traditional ceremony.

39 Chen 1940: 120-137.

40 Chinese surnames were not recognized by Surinamese colonial law, and instead the full name registered by the immigrant was taken to be the surname of his descendents in Suriname (Man A Hing 1990).

41 By contrast, most ethnic Chinese in Guyana were local-born by the first quarter of the twentieth century, and assimilated into the colonial middle class (Kwok-Crawford 1989: 7). The difference between the Surinamese and Guyanese situation requires explanation. Apparently a transnational circuit persisted in Suriname but not in neighbouring Guyana, but it is not clear if that could be attributed to migrants having different qiaoxiang.

42 In 1914 Chinese made up 1.76% of the 35,530 residents of Paramaribo and 1.12% of the Surinamese population (85,536 people).
Sampling also gives some idea of the proportion of Suriname-born to migrants. Most men were single (67.1%), while only a minority (5.2%) had married a Chinese woman in Suriname. The rest (27.7%) either had a formal or common-law local wife. Local-born children of two Chinese parents were in the minority compared to local-born children of mixed Chinese descent: 18.1% versus 81.9%.

Children who grew up in Suriname were never really Chinese in the eyes of migrants, as Chineseness was firmly linked to the physical qiaoxiang. As a result, the main cleavage within the Fui-dung’on group in Suriname is between migrants and local-born. Local-born are called laiap (lit.: ‘Mud Duck’), which refers to people born outside China / the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang, and therefore to those born in Suriname. The word laiap is the name of an old duck breed in Guangdong Province, it is the offspring of a male fan’ap (lit.: ‘foreign duck), a large running duck that was introduced from Southeast Asia in Guangdong a few centuries ago (originally – ironically – from Central and South America) and a female of a local pond duck breed (sometimes referred to as tong’ap, ‘Chinese duck’, i.e. local duck breed). Laiap ducks are fairly large white birds with brown beaks with a red edge that are kept without the need for extensive ponds by farmers in Guangdong. As a metaphor for ‘human hybrids’, laiap is like ‘mulatto’, which is derived from Portuguese / Spanish mulatto (from mulo ‘mule’), meaning ‘baby mule’.

Due to the small numbers of Fuidung’on women immigrants in the first stages of the Chinese presence in Suriname, the first local-born children were mixed Chinese, usually from Creole mothers; local-born eventually became synonymous with mixed ancestry.

By analogy, migrants are called tong’ap (see above). The word is an adjective and noun referring to people born in the Fui-

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43 A random sample of 328 male migrants from China over the age of 20 and their children, according to marital status and religious affiliation. It was carried out by Ad de Bruijne in the 1960s, and it is unpublished data. Original data of the 1921 census are available at the Dutch National Archives in The Hague: 1921 census in Suriname 2.10.19.01.
44 Of the 91 cases in De Bruijne’s sample, 69 lived with Christian women, which suggests that they were Creoles, and 22 with Muslim women, which suggest that they were Javanese.
45 廣州市志 http://www.gzsdfz.org.cn/gzsz/09/ny/sz09ny020106.htm
46 Mulato originally referred to all mestizos, ‘mixed people’, but eventually came to specifically mean ‘having African blood’.
47 The tong in tong’ap derives from tongsan, literally: ‘Tang Mountain’. The name of the Tang dynasty (618-905AD) is used by speakers of Yue (Cantonese) and Kejia dialects to indicate Chinese ethnicity, in the same way the name of the Han dynasty (206BC-220AD) is used by speakers of Mandarin. ‘Tang Mountain’ – used as a noun.
dung’on homelands. The label was used by Laiap to identify themselves to migrants directly or as a public, and though not as disparaging as Laiap, the term is never positive.\(^{48}\) Here is an example taken from a focus group discussion with six middle and upper-middle-class men and women whom I thought were Dutch and Kejia-speaking Laiap, but who could all pass for ‘real Chinese’:

Interviewer: “So all of you were born here?”
Woman A: “Yes. They call us laiap, don’t they? Hahaha. You know about that, don’t you?”
Woman B: “I was born in China. My parents arrived here when I was four or five…”
Interviewer: “So then you are a Tong’ap…”
Woman B: “No, I’m not!”
Woman A: “Yes you are. You’re Laiap when born here. If you were born in China you’re not Laiap.”
Woman B: “Not at all, I don’t feel any link to those people. I have nothing to do with them. All my friends are Laiap.”

In itself the colloquial term laiap is negative – huayi is used as a euphemistic written equivalent – which is clear from the adjective si (Kejia: depending on the tone, “dead; shit; corpse”) which some Tong’ap place before it: “goddamned half-breed”. Tong’ap (and most Southern Chinese outside Suriname) fully understand the meaning of laiap, and are very reticent about using it loosely, sometimes even denying that such a word exists. Laiap are aware that it implies mongrelisation, but they can and do use it to mean ‘Surinamese Chinese’. As Fuidung’on migrants did not import poultry farming practices, most Laiap are not aware that laiap is the name of a duck breed, and take the word literally; a duck made of mud (i.e. a fake duck, or a hopeless duck, as it would dissolve in the pond it should be swimming in), a muddied duck (i.e. a tainted duck), or a duck fashioned from local clay (i.e. a local duck, not a duck from China – tong’ap). But being called Laiap by a Tong’ap is insulting to the extreme, as if one is being condemned to a limbo between real humans (i.e. ethnic Han Chinese, Kejia: tongnyin. Literally: “Tang dynasty person”) and sub-humans (all non-Han.

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\(^{48}\) Although some Chinese suggested it as a direct equivalent, the Sranantongo term lala Sneisi (literally: ‘raw Chinese’) is not fully synonymous with tong’ap; it refers to unassimilated Chinese in general and not specifically to recent immigrants.
Kejia: gui, “ghost, demon”; wugui, “black ghost”, i.e. someone with a dark skin; pakgui, “white ghost”, someone with a pale skin, etc.).

The term laiap is unique to the Caribbean end of the Fui-dong’on Hakka migrant network.\(^{49}\) As in Suriname the meaning of the term is shrouded from local-born Hakka:

“Lai-ap” is Hakka for the Chinese children born here. The literal translation of lai-ap means “sand-duck”, the connotation being a duck’s natural [sic] is the water (China) where it is so graceful. When it is in the sand (Trinidad), outside of its natural element it is awkward. (Johnson 2006: 148)

Christine Ho’s article on hybridity among Chinese in the three largest areas of the Anglophone Caribbean helps to put the issue of hybridity of Surinamese Fuidung’on Hakka in a regional context.\(^{50}\) A distinction between China-born and local-born existed in Guyana and Trinidad paralleling the Tong’ap-Laiap distinction in Suriname. The Guyana-born Chinese were culturally and linguistically identical to locals in the eyes of those born in China, while those born in China imported Chinese brides, newspapers, books, and foodstuffs. One main difference between the ethnic Chinese born in China who lived in Guyana and Trinidad and the Tong’ap in Suriname was the fact that the Chinese in Guyana and Trinidad were from two regional backgrounds: Cantonese and Hakka. Although the two groups had a history of violent competition in Guangdong Province and the Cantonese outnumbered the Hakka in Guyana, regional or linguistic background did not form the basis for the creation of migrant adaptive organizations there. This was the case in Trinidad, where there were five Cantonese organizations versus one Hakka organization. In a context where local-born far outnumbered those born in China, these organizations were more like upper-middle-class clubs than huiguan, with few members fluent in Chinese, and few distinctive cultural traits maintained. In Jamaica there was only one

\(^{49}\) For a discussion of ‘Creolization’ of Chinese in Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, and Jamaica, see Ho 1989.

The term laiap is restricted to the Caribbean, unlike Sarnami / Caribbean Hindi dogla (spelled dougla in Trinidad & Tobago), which is used in the same way for a ‘person of mixed East Indian and Afro-Caribbean descent’ in Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and the old colonial metropoles. Dogla, which originally meant ‘bastard; illegitimate’, will occasionally be used by Tong’ap speakers of Sranantongo as a direct equivalent of laiap. Sranantongo watra sneisi and its Dutch translation water-chinees (literally: ‘water Chinese’, meaning watered-down, diluted Chinese) is used by Laiap to describe their own hybridity.

\(^{50}\) Ho: 1989.
regional background, Hakka, but the distinction between local-born and those born in China was more outspoken, no doubt strengthened by a history of violent anti-Chinese sentiments. Proficiency in Hakka was a strong ethnic resource in the Chinese ethnic ownership economy, and ethnic distinctions became gendered as only sons (mixed Chinese or not) were sent to the qiaoxiang for a Chinese education, while local-born daughters were incorporated into Jamaican society. Ethnic Chinese were not exclusively urban in Guyana and Trinidad, whereas in Jamaica and Suriname they were concentrated in the capital cities.

Malaysian Fuidung’on Hakkas who are linked to Suriname via the old migration networks do not use the term. Mixed Chinese children would be called a-fan (‘foreigner’; ‘barbarian’). In Latin America the term tusan (from Cantonese tusang, literally ‘earth born’) refers to local-born ethnic Chinese, both ‘pure’ and mixed. The Kejia equivalent tusang is not used in Suriname, but it is used, for instance, by Tahiti-born Fuidung’on Hakkas. Laiap is pejorative, but it can also be taken up as a proud sobriquet. In the 1920s, one Tjong Soei Phen, the author of a Dutch-language article in Chung Hwa Hui Tsa Chih, the newsletter of the Chinese Chung Hwa Hui association, published in February 1928, stresses that the (pure) Chinese of Suriname are ‘Hakka Chinese’ that can be divided into two groups: immigrants and Suriname-born. The author goes on to say that as the Suriname-born are Westernized, do not speak Chinese or disregard it, the immigrants consider them ‘deniers of their race’ who are beyond the pale of civilization. A local-born himself, the author disregards mixed Chinese because they apparently tend to try and conceal their Chinese heritage. The resentment that is clear from this text is obliquely present in another Dutch-language text by doctor Ferdinand Siem Tjam, originally written sometime after the 1960s. Whereas Tjong Soei Phen is disappointed about the lack of educated Chinese professionals in Suriname, Siem Tjam is proud of the successful manifestation of precisely that sector in modern Suriname. In his view, Laiap include purebred as well as mixed Chinese, and he proudly interprets the word to mean ‘duck made of local mud’, which implies that they are proven citizens.

The Tong’ap-Laiap cleavage resembles the common distinction made in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia between the older

51 Hu-DeHart 1999: 258.
52 Tjong 1928.
53 Siem Tjam 1993.
generations of Chinese migrants and the assimilated and ‘hybridized’ Chinese, who are referred to totok and peranakan in Indonesia. Ang voices the common perception of the dichotomy: ‘The peranakans are people of Chinese descent who are born and bred in South-east Asia, in contrast to the totok Chinese, who arrived from China much later and generally have had much closer personal and cultural ties with the ancestral homeland.’ As Ang explains, totok is an Indonesian word meaning “pure blood foreigner”, while the term peranakan means “children of” (the root being anak, “child”). Ang argues that the construction of the Peranakan Chinese as a distinct ethnic group was strengthened by the Dutch ‘apartheid’ policies in their East Indian colony, which separated ‘foreign Orientals’ from Europeans and Eurasians, and the indigenous locals from one another. Peranakan Chinese had developed a thoroughly hybrid identity, and their own language (Baba Malay in Malaysia and Singapore, Bahasa Melayu Tionghoa in Indonesia) and material culture. The idea of a Peranakan / Baba Chinese / Straits Chinese category is linked to the basic distinction between local-born and immigrant; the different ‘local-born’ labels in the Malay orbit are not exact synonyms, however, and Peranakan identity is situational.

Despite an attempt to transplant it to Suriname from Indonesia just before the Second World War, colonial ‘apartheid’ policy never emerged in Suriname. Therefore no Chinese migrant group or hybrid population was ever developed as a formal ethnic group, as was the case in South-east Asia. In contrast to the Peranakan of Indonesia and the Straits Chinese of Malaysia, the highly assimilated Laiap component in the small Chinese segment in Suriname never developed a substantial hybrid culture, and so the term laiap never became an ethnic category. Laiap implies counterfeit culture and bastardisation, and local innovations are all considered watered-down versions of authentic Chinese culture by Tong’ap as well as Laiap, and so Laiap codes have little value in ethnic boundary negotiations by Laiap agents.

Paradoxically, distinctly local cultural developments are associated with Tong’ap rather than Laiap, and this can go unnoticed despite the fact that they are very different from customs in the qiaoxiang. For instance, local versions of Hakka dishes are completely accepted as ‘normal’ Hakka cuisine. One example is a keu nyuk dish (lit. ‘buttoned meat’, because the alternating slices of

pork and vegetable are arranged to closely overlap). This dish in the qiaoxiang would be sliced pork belly and sliced yam or radish steamed with fermented tofu or preserved fish, and is made with cassava in Suriname. Although it is completely local, it is not widely popular outside Chinese circles. What is more intriguing in public settings where non-Chinese outsiders are not really expected, is the habit of serving food in flat plates (despite the availability of rice bowls) with a spoon to be held in the left hand and a pair of chopsticks in the right. Language is the clearest exception. The local Kejia variety with its typical mix of archaic, borrowed and locally invented lexical items – ‘laiap hakga’ – is rejected as a clear symbol of cultural impurity and has never become the language of a hybrid Surinamese Chinese culture.57

Hybrid Chinese identity in Suriname is different from that in the Malay orbit, but that is seldom evident in Suriname. The way Peranakan flaunt their hybridity makes it difficult for Laiap and Tong’ap to consider them ‘Chinese’. Fear of being caught acknowledging local Chinese culture combined with the necessity to defuse ‘dangerous ethnicity’ by public self-effacement can make Laiap seem very un-Chinese to Peranakan. As a middle-aged Peranakan woman who was born in Indonesia and met her Laiap husband in the Netherlands told me:

I just tell my husband and his family that they are not Chinese. In Indonesia one visits the temple, but there are no temples here [in Suriname]. Chinese here also do not have any Chinese values. What does Chinese culture here consist of, anyway?

As Rudolph notes for the Malay world, the meaning of hybrid Chinese categories developed over time, from being gende-red and generational to ethnic.58 ‘Tong’ap’ and ‘Laiap’ are labels, not categories in the sense that ‘Tong’ap-ness’ and ‘Laiap-ness’ are inheritable and reproducible over time. Fuidung’on Hakkas are Tong’ap by virtue of being migrants, and their children may be Laiap if they were born or raised in Suriname. Within ethnic Chinese families in Suriname one may thus find both Tong’ap and Laiap generations.59 In practice the Tong’ap label will sometimes be used

57 Tjon Sie Fat 2002.
59 As a generation gap, the Tong’ap-Laiap cleavage makes for an ethnic group apparently without a history. Many older immigrants were - and are - unwilling to speak of their past in any detail. Their stories boil down to: “What’s to tell? Life was hard. So we left.” There are virtually no current memories of the qiaoxiang, except a
to refer to people who look like (Fuidung’on Hakka) immigrants. The term *laiap* has also become very vague as its original meaning of ‘mixed offspring of Chinese migrants’ (the current fundamental meaning of *huayi*) has been broadened to include all local-born. It is important to note that many Laiap (mixed or not) have Creoles as their reference group rather than Chinese, and therefore do not self-identify as Chinese. Surinamese of mixed Chinese ancestry (Sranantongo: *moksi sneisi*, “mixed Chinese”; sometimes Surinamese Kejia *kepmoi* is an equivalent) may not have a Sino-Surinamese surname, might not physically resemble the Surinamese stereotype of an ethnic Chinese, and might not even be aware of the identity of their (remote) Chinese ancestor. As a regionally isolated subgroup of a numerically small minority, Laiap are unlikely to experiment with dangerous hybrid cultural pride, comparable to East Indian ‘douglarization’ which is a challenge to Creolization and conservative ‘Indianness’ in Trinidad & Tobago.

Laiap are fairly typical second or third generation immigrants according to the paths of cross-generational mobility laid out in Portes and Rumbaut (2001: 283). In their typology of social mobility, achieving middle class status among first generation migrants can lead to the second generation acquiring professional and entrepreneurial occupations, and complete integration into social and economic mainstream in the third generation. If the first generation has working class status and strong coethnic support, the second generation can attain middle class status through education, and the third generation can achieve full integration into the mainstream. However, if the first generation is of working class status but lacks strong coethnic community ties, educational achievement in the second generation tends to be low and the third generation remains marginalized working class or may even suffer downward mobility. In the case of Laiap, one can observe selective to full acculturation and upward mobility to middle class or professional and entrepreneurial occupations, but one can only rarely find

number of archaic cultural and linguistic items preserved from the 19th and early twentieth century, and memories of maybe the most basic rituals regarding death, some family relationships and anecdotes.

60 Some participants came up with nuances to describe the continuum of Chinese-ness: ‘pure Chinese Laiap’ for people of pure Chinese descent, or *blaka sneisi* (Sranantongo: ‘Black Chinese’) for dark-skinned Afro-Surinamese with Sino-Surinamese surnames. Interestingly, when Tong’ap call *moksi sneisi* (especially people who cannot pass for ‘Chinese’) ‘Laiap’, the intention is generally a compliment, or a claim of loyalty.

downward mobility and reactive ethnic identity among Laiap who can pass for ‘real Chinese’.

Laiap identity is readily viewed in terms of segmented assimilation, i.e. assimilation and social mobility of migrant groups over the span of generations. Light and Gold describe it with regard to ethnic ownership economies in the following way: “Racially defined immigrant youth often adopt the oppositional cultural and economic orientation of their native-born, coethnic peers, rather than that of the white majority; in so doing, they may also reject their parents’ social and economic strategies.” However, even though Laiap have not assimilated into a racialized underclass and achievement is equated with a Chinese background, many Laiap do reject racialized Chinese ethnicity. Analyzed in terms of ethnic boundary negotiations, Laiap identity is a marginal identity, not a new ethnic category. Marginality is the positioning of the subject of a negotiation near a boundary, in a “socially constructed human ‘no man’s land’ in which ‘we’ have located people (real or imagined) who are neither ‘we’ nor ‘them’, they are rather a subjugated subjectivity, which is a negation of ‘we’”. Laiap are marginal among the Fuidung’on Hakkas (meaning vis à vis Tong’ap), and they stay marginal when they choose to cross ethnic borders strategically. Their marginality explains their ambiguous status in the eyes of Chinese migrants: neither ‘we’ / Chinese, nor ‘them’ / non-Chinese. Analyzed in terms of power relations, Laiap ambiguity is even clearer; Laiap are subordinate to hegemonic Chineseness, yet wield the power to subordinate Tong’ap in Surinamese creolized society.

The Tong’ap-Laiap cleavage works well as an analytical tool to reveal details of networks along with social and cultural capital which would be less obvious if Fuidung’on migrants in Suriname were simply analyzed as ‘Chinese’ versus ‘assimilated Chinese’, or huaqiao versus huayi. As Laiap are a Tong’ap out-group, ethnic loyalty between the two groups should not be assumed to be a natural given. In the early 1990s an attempt by Laiap entrepreneurs to set up a joint trade organisation of Tong’ap and Laiap shopkeepers failed because of mutual distrust. Tong’ap generally

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63 Jørgenson 1997.
64 Details of the organization process are scarce, but it seems clear that potential members were approached carefully through personal and ethnic networks. Tong’ap entrepreneurs were approached on their own terms, in Kejia as much as possible. Apparently distrust originated among Tong’ap who were afraid that the Laiap members would use their networks (opaque to the Tong’ap because of language
remain migrant entrepreneurs, while the Laiap generation are encouraged to move out of that niche. Laiap are generally locally (and better) educated and tend to be better integrated into the job market and the mainstream economy than Tong’ap. Seen by outsiders as a unified urban trading minority, Tong’ap and Laiap are often stereotyped as middle class entrepreneurs and professionals, respectively.

The Tong’ap-Laiap dichotomy makes it very difficult to pin down the size of the Chinese segment in Suriname. In the Caribbean and Latin America ethnic identity was often not consistently registered, and consequently all numbers of Chinese in the various countries are estimates, often reflecting the political agenda of those in power.65 Strongly racialized Chinese ethnic identity was not distinguished from Chinese citizenship. Only the 1950 census was explicitly designed to record hybridity, and showed that there was not a complete overlap between Chinese ethnicity and Chinese nationality; 804 ‘Chinese’ held Chinese nationality (88.5% of 908 Chinese nationals in Suriname, 33.9% of the Chinese group), compared to 54 ‘Black-Coloured’ and 50 ‘Others’. Data from the 1950 population census suggest that numbers of local-born and foreign-born self-identifying ethnic Chinese were about equal: of 1,099 ethnic Chinese in Paramaribo, 585 were Suriname-born and 514 foreign-born (506 born in China).66

Between 1954 and 1959 the annual number of Chinese nationals settling in Paramaribo hovered around 19, but between 1960 and 1963 the number increased from 26 to 71, only to drop to 29 in 1964. The increase might reflect an influx of entrepreneurial migrants. In the same period the percentage of foreign-born apparently dropped from 41.1% (of 2,468 in 1950) to 29.4% (of 5,339 in 1964), despite an absolute increase of numbers of ethnic Chinese in Suriname.67 The latest population census of 2004 sets the number of ethnic Chinese in Suriname at 8,775; of these 5,575 were foreign-born, while the number of Chinese nationals was 3,654.68 This means that 3,200 individuals self-identified as local-born ethnic Chinese, but as the number of New Chinese migrants

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65 Kent 2003: 120-124. Kent quotes widely diverging estimates for the number of Chinese in Suriname for the period of 1990-2000: 3,000, 10,000 and even 40,000.
67 SIC 33.
68 SIC 213-2005/2.
cannot be traced in the census data, one should not assume that Tong’ap outnumber Laiap.

Extremely complex situational and performative identity processes make it difficult to treat mixed Chinese (Sranantongo: *moksi sneisi*) as a special and relevant case of Laiap identity here. Some *moksi sneisi* currently can and do pass for ‘Chinese’ (even speaking different varieties of Chinese) so that it makes little sense to distinguish them from Laiap who can pass for ‘real Chinese’. On the other hand, treating anyone with any amount of Chinese ancestry as Laiap regardless of their choice of self-identification has no merit either. Despite the fact that the Laiap label resembles an ethnic category by virtue of the criterion of being local-born of Chinese descent (local-born children of Laiap could thus conceivably also be called Laiap, no matter how mixed), it is fundamentally situational. Furthermore, performative freedom of mixed Chinese individuals is limited by the ability to ‘pass for Chinese’, either because of physical appearance or cultural knowledge.⁶⁹

Although one can fairly confidently predict which individuals will be labelled Tong’ap or Laiap in particular contexts, there is often a high level of uncertainty. ‘Laiap’ can refer to ‘real’ Laiap, Tong’ap raised in Suriname, and New Chinese raised in Suriname. In the same way New Chinese and the latest Tong’ap *sinkeh* can be indistinguishable to outsiders. The Tong’ap-Laiap distinction implies pure-bred versus mixed Chinese. Mixed Chinese (Sranantongo: *moksi sneisi*), the ‘original Laiap’, are in practice not automatically included under the Laiap label. Depending on phenotypical limitations, i.e. whether or not a mixed Chinese can pass for a ‘real Chinese’, mixed Chinese have the freedom to choose Chineseness situationally. One group of Tong’ap *sinkeh* stands out: the ‘Hong Kong Chinese’. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, Fuidung’on migration itineraries required a prolonged stop in Hong Kong, and so the last major group of Fuidung’on migrants in the 1960s and 1970s consisted of remigrants from Hong Kong. Acculturated to the Cantonese-speaking modernity of Hong Kong, they

⁶⁹ They might have been labelled Laiap, but mixed Chinese returnees to Suriname could fill the same niches as Tong’ap. In *Wi Rutu* of July 2008 (‘Sranan roots: George Eduard Fung-A-Jou aka ‘Blakka Sneesie’), William Man A Hing presented the case of probably the most famous *moksi sneisi*, George Eduard Fung-A-Jou (1911-1994). The son of Johanna Henriëtte Elstak and Fung-A-Jou, an immigrant from Dongguan, George was taken to the qiaoxiang by his father when he was very young, and returned to Suriname in the early 1930s. Being a mixed Creole himself, he twice married Creole women in Suriname, after which he married a Chinese woman from Taiwan. George was an entrepreneur and sat on the board of one of the Chinese associations.
transplanted the notions of the inferiority of Kejia and reinforced latent attitudes towards Cantonese as a high status public medium in Suriname.

The Laiap label is derived from Chinese cultural ideology as a category that is more distant from the Chinese Centre than a category of Chinese emigrants (huaqiao), at least in the eyes of Tong’ap. What the Laiap label means to New Chinese is not always clear; some use it to stress the gap between New Chinese and ‘Old Chinese’ (Tong’ap and Laiap together), others consider the gap between migrants and local-born (‘pure’ as well as mixed Chinese, i.e. huayi) as more basic. In any case, as Frank Dikötter says that “racialized identities are central, and not peripheral, to notions of identity in China”, and that “Chineseness – in Taiwan, Singapore or mainland China – is primarily defined as a matter of blood and descent”. He adds that modern ethnic discourse in the PRC is laden with strong notions of the threat of foreign pollution, hybridity as sexual transgression, and Han-Chinese racial superiority.

Ethnic Chinese in Suriname cannot be strictly defined by reference to a single ethnic group. It is easier to observe the maintenance of a border between Tong’ap and Laiap than between Laiap and non-Chinese. Many Laiap have Creoles as their reference group rather than Chinese, and therefore do not self-identify as Chinese. In Suriname, dichotomization between Chinese and non-Chinese is most easily framed in terms of race. However, the relationship between ethnic Chinese, in particular the Fuidung’on Hakkas, and Creoles shows complementarization – reflecting a ‘We-You’ relationship rather than ‘Us-Them’. For example, some Surinamese use the label Moksi Sneisi (Sranantongo: mixed Chinese) for people of mixed Chinese heritage, but without providing symbolic markers beyond the fact of a Chinese ancestor. Issues of mixing / creolization / hybridization were not linked to the maintenance of ethnic borders prior the appearance of New Chinese; ethnic Chinese were becoming more similar to non-Chinese groups over time, without developing cultural revivalist or ethnonationalist movements. With the arrival of New Chinese, the differences between ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese would appear larger to the casual observer.

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Dikötter 1997: 32.
3 FUI DUNG’ON HAKKAS – THE ‘OLD CHINESE’

The history of the ‘Old Chinese’ in Suriname matches the historical development of Chinese segments in other post-colonial states. This is the case not only in Caribbean locations and the Americas, but also in Asia. Their sojourner settlement developed during the ‘era of modern Chinese migration’, roughly 1842-1949, when Southern China was becoming increasingly influenced by the industrialised world.¹ From a Caribbean point of view, there is nothing particularly unique about the Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname; the basic labourer-merchant-sojourner model can be applied to all Chinese populations anywhere in the Caribbean. For instance, the history of the Chinese in Jamaica up to the early 1960s resembles that of the Chinese in Suriname: the Chinese presence can be traced to nineteenth century indentured labour, most Chinese indentured labourers were Fuidung’on Hakkas, they quickly established their own institutions, most were retail traders, and eventually integration and assimilation produced a generational cleavage within the community.² Then again, inter-ethnic relations in Jamaica were tenser than in Suriname; there were anti-Chinese riots in Jamaica (in 1919, 1938 and 1965) but not in Suriname.³

Perhaps the labourer-merchant-sojourner trajectory fits initial observations of Caribbean Chinese too neatly, and induces a certain amount of complacency in analyses. McKeown reworked the labourer-merchant-sojourner trajectory into a five-stage development of ‘diasporic Chinese business’. These were labour mobilization; the transition from labour networks to credit networks; the development into middlemen between the 1880s and 1920s; development into ethnic minorities and the rise of family firms; and the appearance of diasporic (i.e. transnational) businessmen.⁴ It is, however, difficult to apply this view to the Caribbean as very little

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² Li 2004.
³ Bouknight-Davis 2004: 84.
⁴ McKeown 2000.
has been written on Caribbean Chinese in the post-indentureship period, particularly with regard to the development of Chinese ethnic entrepreneurship. Did Chinese shopkeepers in the Caribbean make up a middleman minority? How did family and migrant networks develop and how should they be mapped in the Caribbean? The last two stages of McKeown’s historical framework might not be relevant to the Caribbean, because of the limited scale of developments (especially in the case of family firms) in a relatively small society, or perhaps simply because transitions are very recent (in the case of transnational entrepreneurs).

The labourer-merchant-sojourner trajectory tends to become hegemonic, dictating an image of uniform and linear development in Caribbean Chinese history. However, from an insider’s point of view – that is, taking into account laokeh attitudes towards sinkkeh – the nature of Chinese migration changes along socio-cultural lines through time, and varies according to the various destinations and changing conditions there. From an insider’s point of view the changes through time can be rather different from the categories implied by the hegemonic model. In this way, for instance, Fuidung’on Hakka migration to Suriname can be said to have transformed four different times: First there were the indentured labourers from Hakka villages in the Fuidung’on Region in the late nineteenth century; then Fuidung’on Hakka entrepreneurial chain migrants up to the first half of the twentieth century; next acculturated Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants via Hong Kong in the second half of the twentieth century; and finally Fuidung’on migrants who are virtually indistinguishable from New Chinese by the end of the twentieth century. In this chapter I use this view of Fuidung’on Hakka migration to paint a picture of the ‘Old Chinese’ in Suriname.

3.1 Indentured Labourers

There were two distinct Chinese migrations to Latin America and the Caribbean, including Suriname. These were indentured labour in the second half of the nineteenth century and ‘free migrants’ in the first third of the twentieth century up to the Great Depression of the 1930s.\(^5\) It would be overkill to provide a comprehensive description of the period of Chinese indentured labour in Suriname, but it is essential to note that on the one hand this historical period

\(^5\) Kent 2003: 117.
is seen as pivotal to Chinese identity in Suriname, while on the other Chinese indentured labour in Suriname was marginal even at the regional level. While not every aspect of Chineseness in Suriname can be traced to Chinese indentured labour, many important symbolic markers and structures certainly can. These are Fuidung-on Hakka identity, the Tong’ap-Laiap dichotomy, and the pattern of entrepreneurial chain migration (in particular the transition from labour networks to credit networks in McKeown’s historical framework above).

Chinese indentured labour in the Caribbean, and thus Suriname, should be viewed in the broader context of the labour crisis in the nineteenth century Caribbean sugar industry, following the decision of European countries to abolish the African slave trade and later slavery in their Caribbean colonies.6 Chinese indentured labour migration to Suriname lasted from 1853 to 1875, and was relatively small and relatively late compared to the rest of the Caribbean region.7 Numbers of Chinese indentured migrants to the Caribbean were also small relative to the whole of Asian migrant population, and never exceeded 10% of the total number of migrants. Caribbean migration was also marginal to China as a whole; the Caribbean migrants made up 0.3% of the total Chinese population which was at that time 430 million.8 Chinese indentured labour in Suriname is even more marginal when we consider the whole picture of Chinese indentured labour in the New World; the vast majority of Chinese migrants went to the sugarcane fields in Cuba and the mines of Peru.9

The Encyclopaedia of Chinese Overseas states that the Surinamese labourers were recruited from the Siyi, Fuidung’on and Zhongshan areas in southern Guangdong Province.10 Data from the Registry of Indentured Labourers confirms that most of the Chinese indentured labourers were likely from Hakka-dominated homelands in the Fuidung’on counties. These areas – just north of Hong Kong and including parts of the New Territories – were on the rim of a primarily Hakka area.11 Kejia-speakers arrived in the Fuidung’on area by the end of the 17th century, and were originally classed as

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10 Look Lai 1999: 249.
11 Leong 1997: 25, map 1.3.
non-Chinese. They occupied the hillier and poorer land, and they did not generally integrate with the Cantonese speaking population.

The first experimental shipment in 1853 was from Java, and so was the last shipment in 1874 after Hong Kong was closed to the ‘Coolie Trade’, whereas the rest originated from the Pearl River Delta, via Hong Kong. The Registry of the Chinese indentured labourers records the last place of residence of the immigrants, most of which are known Hakka areas. The places were varied, ranging from modern Meixian in central Dongguan to Taishan in the western part of the Pearl River Delta but they were mostly in Guangdong Province. However, most of the final immigrants from China came from the Fuidung’on Region in the eastern Pearl River Delta, particularly the area of present Dongguan Municipality. Moreover, virtually all the personal names in the Registry seem to reflect an original Kejia pronunciation. There is, however, an unverifiable oral tradition that some were also Hoklao (‘men from Fujian Province’, but actually meaning seafaring Min-speakers from Chaozhou, eastern Guangdong Province) among the indentured labourers. It is not exactly clear why and how apparently whole shiploads of indentured labourers could consist of Hakkas exclusively, but that appears to have been the case in Suriname.

What attracted Chinese indentured labourers to Suriname almost exclusively was the demand for bonded labour. The reasons to leave China included increased population, poverty, social instability caused by famine, foreign aggression, local insurrections, etc. Between 1650 and 1850 the Chinese population trebled, which fuelled continuous migration to existing Overseas Chinese communities around Southeast Asia. Even so, Emmer states that there is no clear-cut explanation for the increased emigration from China and British India. In general, labourers recruited in China included people trying to flee famine, prisoners in local wars (e.g. the

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13 Man A Hing 2000.
14 The registry is accessible online via the website of the Dutch National Archive at http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/suriname/base_china/introductie.html
15 One explanation for shiploads comprised exclusively of Hakkas could be strategies to reduce tensions on board, by avoiding mixed transports of Cantonese (Punti) and Hakkas (Look Lai 1993: 75). Chinese indentured labour in Suriname can be viewed in the context of the much longer period of Chinese indentured labour in the British Caribbean, as the majority of workers were shipped via the British crown colony of Hong Kong. Interestingly, Lai notes that toward the end of the British experience, the number of Fuidung’on Hakkas increased (1993: 49, 104).
16 Emmer 1992: 15.
Hakka-Punti wars), people with gambling debts, victims of kidnapping, etc. In the late Qing dynasty, emigration was a capital crime, and only in 1866 did the Chinese imperial government agree to regulate the emigration of Chinese indentured labourers.

The Surinamese population actually decreased during the period of Chinese indentured labour, as the death rate among the Afro-Surinamese population negated any increases due to immigration.\(^{17}\) The import of Chinese labourers was never intended as a form of Chinese colonization. The Dutch wanted bonded labour, not necessarily Chinese, but as the French and British had closed their colonies to other colonial powers, so the Dutch authorities only considered China as a source of bonded labour.\(^{18}\) Furthermore, a sustainable Chinese settlement was not possible through indentured labourers as long as the migration of Chinese women to Suriname was virtually absent. This is usually attributed to Chinese ‘clan leaders’ refusing to permit women to leave,\(^{19}\) but the Dutch colonial authorities assumed that the lack of Chinese women would not be a problem for either the migrants or the Surinamese.\(^{20}\) Emmer relates the absence of women migrants in the Caribbean to a traditionally low percentage of Chinese women migrating within Asia which at the time was 3\% of all migrants.\(^{21}\) In Suriname, as elsewhere in the Caribbean Islands, the first Chinese labourers were kept separate from African field slaves, and most worked in the sugar boiling houses. Subsequent Chinese indentured labourers in Suriname were not treated particularly well by their employers, who often complained of lack of productivity.\(^{22}\) In the whole of the Caribbean there was very little return migration to China and just 0.1\% are estimated to have paid for a passage back.\(^{23}\) No free return passage was included in Surinamese indentureship contracts,\(^{24}\) as in the rest of the Caribbean, and in Suriname too most went into retail trade after the end of their contracts.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{17}\) Lamur 1977.
\(^{19}\) Ankum-Houwink 1985: 185.
\(^{20}\) Ankum-Houwink 1974: 47.
\(^{21}\) Emmer 1992: 258.
\(^{22}\) Lamur & Vriezen 1985.
\(^{24}\) Ankum-Houwink 1974; Zijlmans & Enser 2002.
\(^{25}\) Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 44.
3.2 Sojourners and Ethnic Entrepreneurs

Fuidung'on Hakka migration to Suriname continued after Chinese indentured labour ended. Post-indentureship migrants were chain migrants sponsored by ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Suriname, many of whom had been indentured labourers. In 1876, a year after the arrival of the last Chinese indentured labourers, there were no licensed Chinese shops in Suriname. But in 1879 Chinese owned 12 (10.3%) of 117 businesses selling provisions, most of which were outside Paramaribo. Creoles owned about half of all registered businesses, and Jews slightly less. Turnover in the 12 Chinese businesses was in the low and middle range. About twenty years later, in 1898, Chinese owned 48 (25.4%) of 189 businesses selling provisions, now outnumbering Jews (18%) and approaching Creoles (37%), but ahead of the new East Indian entrepreneurs (7.4%). The Chinese shops were still predominantly rural, but now with regard to turnover they approached the Jewish businesses; there were more in the middle range than in the lower, as was the case with Creole businesses.26

The sojourner mentality of post-indentureship migrants clashed with the colonial government’s view of them as settlers (vrije migranten, ‘free immigrants’). In modern discourse they would have been termed economic migrants, as their main justification was to earn money to send back home. Sojourning was very rarely an individual undertaking, but implied a network; migrants were seldom pioneers, but required the help of relatives or coregionalists in Suriname for funds to travel, start some sort of income-generating activity, overcome language barriers, settle along earlier Chinese migrants, and deal with local authorities. The result was chain migration, a sustained flow of migrants from the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang sponsored by earlier migrants to Suriname. Chain migration distinguished Chinese in Suriname from other migrant groups, evidenced by the continued existence of sinkeh Chinese.27 Chinese

26 Unpublished data distilled by Ad de Bruijne in the 1960s from the 1876, 1879 and 1898 Patentregisters (colonial registers of licensed business) and the Surinaamsche Almanak of 1898. Branch stores were not registered. Ethnic labels are not exact as they were based on interpretations of names by De Bruijne and his network and assistants.

27 Sustained immigration since the time of indentured labour makes Chinese unique among the Asian groups in Suriname. Chain migration is not exclusive to them, Lebanese migration is also exclusively based on chain migration (De Bruijne 2006). Javanese and East Indians were not in sustained contact with an immigrant group for whom all local adaptations implied loss of authenticity. Suriname-born Javanese and East Indians could claim authenticity uncontested until fairly recently, when
migrants faced bureaucratic restrictions based on requirements with regard to the ability to maintain a livelihood in Suriname, and as a result only about a hundred migrants per year were granted legal residence.  

Escaping hardship is the traditional reason given for leaving the Fuidung'on Region. Hardship meant famine and disease caused by war and civil unrest. The Hakka-Punti Clan Wars raged between 1855 and 1867, particularly in the Pearl River Delta. The Fuidung'on region in the west of the Delta was not as heavily affected by them as the Siyi region (Taishan), but the architecture of the ancestral

increasing globalization enabled Surinamese to experience Indonesian and East Indian variety and modernity for themselves.

28 Man A Hing 1993: 55.
villages of the Surinamese sojourners reflects the influence of war; the old houses are closed to the outside, with a fortified watchtower. By the time Fuidung’on Hakkas started moving to Suriname, their qiaoxiang was still reeling from the effects of nineteenth-century civil wars such as the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) and foreign invasions (the Opium Wars), and the wars which continued during most of the period of sojourner settlement in the first half of the twentieth century (the Chinese Civil War 1927-1949, Japanese occupation 1931-1945).

Suriname was not the only or the most obvious destination for Fuidung’on Hakkas. It was easier for coregionalists from the Surinamese Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang to go to places that were closer to China such as Vietnam (Annam, North Vietnam) or Malaysia, or known areas of Hakka settlement in the Pacific, such as Hawaii or Tahiti. But it was the available network and quality of sponsorship that determined the sojourning, not the actual destination. Up to the 1930s migrants travelled from the Fuidung’on Region overland to Hong Kong, where they boarded ships to the west coast of North American. Travel would continue overland to the east coast, after which ships to the Caribbean Islands and Suriname would be boarded. The alternative route, via the Suez Canal and the Netherlands, does not seem to have been as frequently used.

The relationship between Suriname and the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang was not exclusive. Although the vast majority of Fuidung’on Hakkas arrived in Suriname directly from the Eastern Pearl River Delta, there were also (re)migrants from other parts of the Fuidung’on Hakka migration network. Up to the 1970s there were incidental Fuidung’on Hakka migrants from Vietnam (called Onnamzai, ‘Annamese’ in Kejia). The link with Malaysia was more durable, and there are a number of Fuidung’on Hakka families of mixed Malaysian background.29 The clearest network ties were closer to Suriname, as Fuidung’on Hakkas would travel up and down the three Guianas. In the nineteenth century, Chinese would remigrate from Guyana to the rest of the British Caribbean in search of better

29 The Naturalization Decrees published in the pre- and post-independence Journal of Acts and Decrees occasionally mention the Malaysian States, from where Fuidung’on Hakka migrants originated, and sometimes the exact place of birth: Perak State (Pusing), Sabah State (Sandakan), Johor State (Kulai), Pahang State, Kuala Lumpur. Singapore is also mentioned as a place of birth. Interestingly, one Naturalization Decree (SB1989.18) mentions a Chinese from ‘Calcutta, India’. Modern Kolkata is still known for its Hakka enclave.
livelihood and opportunities.\textsuperscript{30} Unable to compete with the Portuguese business class, many moved to Trinidad as traders or to Suriname and French Guiana as prospectors.\textsuperscript{31} There was also marriage migration from Guyana to Suriname, as Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname would try to find brides in British Guyana. It appears that Fuidung’on Hakkas from Suriname accessed the Chinese remigration network in the British colonies for similar economic reasons.

Calling Fuidung’on Hakkas sojourners in Suriname \textit{huashang} because of their entrepreneurship might give the impression of some kind of inherent tendency arising from a monolithic Chinese culture. In fact, Chinese entrepreneurship in Suriname has more to do with local patterns of migration and settlement. The stranger hypothesis of entrepreneurship provides a structural explanation as to why groups such as the ethnic Chinese became merchants in Suriname. Migrants from a different cultural background find themselves as outsiders and minorities in their target society who are excluded from conventional options, and eventually settle on entrepreneurship as a way of self-employment.\textsuperscript{32} Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants were outsiders in colonial Surinamese society, a condition they shared with other groups such as the Madeirans and the ‘Syrians’ (Lebanese). They all gravitated towards entrepreneurship, and shared similar routes along entrepreneurial opportunities: such as, itinerant vendors, market salesmen, small shops, and larger enterprises. Though they were obviously merchant minorities, none of these groups were middlemen minorities – they were not placed between a colonial elite and the ruled majority.

Light distinguishes between immigrant entrepreneurship, which is basically a coping strategy, and ethnic entrepreneurship, which would specify second-generation entrepreneurship.\textsuperscript{33} It is unclear what the proportion of immigrant entrepreneurs to ethnic entrepreneurs was among the post-indentureship Fuidung’on Hakkas; it is likely that a minority of enterprises progressed beyond first-generation migrant entrepreneurship. In both cases Fuidung’on Hakka enterprises in Suriname would provide a number of advantages. In a family business, labour becomes cheap, loyalty is not an issue and language barriers are not a problem, while financial resources can be pooled from family and coethnics and

\textsuperscript{30} Look Lai 1993: 193.
\textsuperscript{31} Look Lai 2004: 18.
\textsuperscript{32} Copulsky & McNulty 1974: 31.
\textsuperscript{33} Light 1972.
coregionalists as a source of capital. The need for trusted labour meant that people wanted someone from their own qiaoxiang to make the journey in order to work in the business, with the hope of one day being able to start up a business of their own as an incentive to migrate. In this way chain migration became firmly linked to the retail business among Fuidung’on Hakka in Suriname. However, retail trade was not a transplanted tradition. Of all the niches that Fuidung’on Hakka worked in Suriname, such as bakeries, jewellery shops, and electronics repair shops, only prospecting was a unique, transplanted skill. It is unclear how many Fuidung’on Hakka men were prospectors during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Prospecting could not sustain chain migration, and was eventually abandoned.

Entrepreneurial chain migration became a fixed element in Chinese ethnic discourse in Suriname, as Chinese identity became entwined with the concept of the Chinese corner shop (Chinese winkel, Dutch: ‘Chinese shop’; Chinees op de hoek, Dutch: ‘Chinese on the corner’). The Chinese corner shop system was reproduced in Suriname as new migrants (sinkeh) worked as apprentices in businesses of established migrants. Though a consequence of migrant entrepreneurship is market saturation, Fuidung’on Hakka migrants remained entrenched in the commercial niche, and only very rarely moved into other economic sectors; according to Light and Gold’s definition this is how the Chinese ethnic ownership economy had developed.34 Ethnic resources of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants were relevant to commercial success in their ethnic ownership economy with its semi-monopolistic hold on Surinamese retail trade, and the most important ethnic resource of all was the ability to access and manage various migrant networks. As Light and Gold point out, ethnic identification thus acquires an economic value.35 Management of Chinese identity, i.e. articulation, recognition, and mobilization of membership of the ‘Chinese’ ethnic group for the ethnic ownership economy, was a driving force in the development of Chinese community institutions in Suriname, in particular in the Chinese organizations for example by helping to organize ROSCAs as a source of business capital, by preventing price-wars between competing Chinese enterprises, by helping to stage communal

34 Light & Gold 2000: 9. The existence of a Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname can hardly be disputed, but it is extremely difficult to make firm statements about it; data on ethnicity of business owners in Suriname is limited due to Surinamese State policy with regard to multiculturalism, while dogmatic views of the economic mainstream dominate over ‘newer’ concepts such as ethnic economies.
performances of Chinese belonging, and by maintaining ethnic resources such as Chinese written language could be maintained (see Chapter 8).

As noted in Chapter 1, the Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname had produced a fairly stable and durable, albeit distinctly local and instrumental, Chinese ethnic identity. This does not mean that it also always produced a harmonious or unified Chinese ethnic group. Merchants responded to the competition inherent in entrepreneurial chain migration by moving out of Paramaribo, away from the majority of established Chinese shops, and by innovating on the corner shop concept (supermarkets). Market saturation implies that the entrepreneurs have become each other's competitors, despite the common assumption that ethnic loyalty is strong among Chinese in Suriname. A Chinese ethnic ownership economy is also no guarantee that Chinese family enterprises will develop. Many Chinese shopkeepers maintain their business as a more or less reliable source of income for the family, as a means to social mobility for their children away from the confines of Chinese entrepreneurship, and as a base for continued chain migration from China, or remigration from Suriname.

Examples are too numerous to mention. One Tong’ap shopkeeper I interviewed had fled to Hong Kong from Bao’an during the famine of the Great Leap Forward (1959-1961). He became a chain migrant to Suriname where he was apprenticed in the corner shop of an older Tong’ap relative. His Suriname-born daughter was eventually sent to the USA, where an uncle already lived, to study. The shopkeeper and his wife plan to retire and join their daughter in the USA. Their son, however, is expected to stay in Paramaribo and continue the business, because the father loved the shop very much and thought that the neighbourhood expected the business to continue. In any case, there was not enough money to send the boy to the USA to study. Another example is the Suriname-born daughter of a Tong’ap shopkeeper who returned from the Netherlands after her university education to continue running the supermarket; her brother had failed in the supermarket business that the family had prepared for him.

It is very difficult to reconstruct the historical details of how the link between the Fuidung’on Hakka sponsors in Suriname and their relatives in the qiaoxiang developed. The locations of the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang can be more accurately fine-tuned using a limited number of Chinese textual sources, such as gravestones with Chinese text in the Oranjetuin, Oud Lina’s Rust and Fa Tjauw Koen Sang burial grounds in Paramaribo and Chinese
language business guides. Based on those sources and the opinions of older Fuidung’on Hakkas, it would appear that migrants who arrived in Paramaribo between the 1900s and the 1960s came mainly from villages in Qingqi District in Dongguan County, Longgang District in Huiyang County, and various regions in Baoan County.36

The only information available is on the situation at the Surinamese end, and the opinions of chain migrants are very much coloured by cultural patterns that dictate what a good chain migrant should be like. Informants glossed over the less attractive aspects of the link with the qiaoxiang, such as the role of credit and debt in the structure of the chain migration network. To a certain extent the link socialized chain migrants to the patterns of Chinese identity in Suriname. More often than not Laiap and Tong’ap sponsors describe social relationships in term of chain migration; people who were sponsored remain tied to the sponsor through moral obligations of reciprocity, which are reconfirmed in public settings. Having been invited to communal events on more than one occasion by a prominent Laiap businesswoman, I often observed the typically Surinamese and Chinese preoccupation with personal networks in action, when strangers would come over to exchange a few words with our host or greet her from across the banquet hall. It turned out that she had sponsored many of them, and though they were not financially obligated to her, the sponsorship link was publicly acknowledged.

### 3.3 The Hong Kong Chinese

In Suriname, the hope of return became rather more of an illusion in the sojourner discourse after the founding of the PRC. Direct return to Guangdong Province under a communist system was not attractive to Fuidung’on Hakka sojourners in Suriname, and going to Hong Kong instead implied formal settlement in British territory, which was not a realistic option for most. Fuidung’on Hakka men in Suriname expressed the ideology of eventual return through the image of lychee orchards; now the trees which they had planted on the land they owned back home were no longer within reach.

36 Though later Fuidung’on Hakka *sinkeh* were more likely to be from Baoan, and areas further to the south such as the Shenzhen SEZ the New Territories, Dongguan dominates the imagination of the older Fuidung’on Hakkas. To some, Dongguan, and nothing else, is the ancestral homeland of Chinese in Suriname.
Before 1949 there was constant labour migration between Guangdong Province and Hong Kong, which became impossible after the founding of the PRC. After 1949 there were three major waves of (illicit) migration from mainland China, in particular Guangdong Province, to the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong: these were immediately after the founding of the PRC; following the large famine in the early 1960s which resulted from the founding of the first communes and the Great Leap Forward (1959-1961); and in the late 1970s, following the Cultural Revolution and just before economic reforms. Fluidung’an Hakka attempting to travel along their old chain migration route to Suriname between 1949 and the 1970s found themselves political refugees on the traditional first leg of the journey to the port of Hong Kong. Those who managed to evade PRC border guards overland and the sharks while swimming across to Hong Kong, needed to build up formal identities if they planned to continue journeying. As a place with an established Fluidung’an Hakka group, Suriname remained an attractive destination, but Canada and the USA had also abolished discriminatory limitations to immigration in 1962 and 1965 respectively (followed by Australia in 1973). Suriname thus became doubly interesting as a stopover to those destinations with remigration as a long-term goal.

Insistence on maintaining qiaoxiang ties during the Cold War was apparently easily interpreted by the colonial Surinamese government in terms of ethnic Chinese fostering links with Communist China, and immigration could be investigated as Communist infiltration. This was not forgotten by the older Tong’ap cohorts:

Actually, at that time it was very difficult to get family and friends over from China. In 1970 a Chinese here applied for an entry permit for a relative (a brother-in-law) and in 1973 permission had yet to be granted. Inquiries were made personally with the then President of the Central Bank, but nothing made sense. They heard that the person involved had been investigated by the Dutch consul in Hong Kong and it was discovered that he had worked for a leftist labour Union in Hong Kong and was therefore

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37 Pan 1999: 68. Skeldon (1994: 25) notes that emigration from Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s, most of which was from the New Territories and relatively minor compared to earlier and later periods, cannot be related to the labour-surplus nature of the Hongkongese economy at the time.
considered to be a communist, and was denied entry into Suriname.\textsuperscript{38}

The number of undocumented immigrants from the PRC and Hong Kong in Suriname seems to have been relatively substantial, for in 1958 a general pardon was granted to all Chinese illegals in Suriname\textsuperscript{39}. According to official figures, between 1950 and 1964 numbers of ethnic Chinese rose from 2,384 to 5,339 (1.2\% and 1.6\% of the total population respectively), but the percentage of foreign-born ethnic Chinese dropped from 41.1\% to 29.4\%.\textsuperscript{40} According to Lamur, immigration still remained a strong factor in the demographic development of the Chinese in Suriname; up to 1968 one in twenty ethnic Chinese was an immigrant, while the number of ethnic Chinese increased to 6,791 in 1970.\textsuperscript{41} The Hong Kong route also caused a distinct narrowing of the qiaoxiang area; at the beginning of the twentieth century, Fuidung’on Hakka migrants arrived from a wide range of villages in Dongguan, Bao’an and Huiyang Counties, but by the late 1960s most sinkeh apparently came from Bao’an County (now in the Shenzhen SEZ), which was nearer the Hong Kong border.

Life in the Crown Colony put Fuidung’on Hakka villagers under strong pressure to acculturate to the prestigious Cantonese dialect and urban culture of Hong Kong. Despite the waves of immigration from the PRC mentioned above, there were also increasing numbers of remigrants to the old villages from the 1960s onward; as a result Hong Kong acquired a more settled core popu-

\textsuperscript{38} XNRB 18 May 2005, 歷史的回顧; 漫談 NPS 華人支部 (In retrospect; A free discussion of the Chinese wing of NPS).
\textsuperscript{39} De West evening paper, 9 January 1958 and 2 April 1958. The illegals were defined as Chinese who had arrived in Suriname directly from Hong Kong or China, or indirectly, with intermediate foreign residency lasting no longer than one year. They were given up to 18 January to register, and eventually 67 individuals did, but most had trouble meeting the requirements of the pardon. The Surinamese police actually started investigating reports of large numbers of illegal Chinese immigrants on 5 November 1957. It was discovered that most illegals entered from Hong Kong via the USA or via French Guiana, and used various forms of identity fraud, in particular assuming the identity of a registered resident ethnic Chinese (alive or dead). Marriages of convenience and fictitious family ties were common.
\textsuperscript{40} Data from the 1950 (Dutch National Archives, 1950 census in Suriname, 2.10.19.2, 207-212) and 1964 censuses (SIC 33).
\textsuperscript{41} Lamur 1976: 17. According to Lamur, the increase over six years from 5,339 to 6,791 between 1964 and 1970 was mainly caused by immigration from Southern China via Hong Kong. In any case there was nothing to indicate that any ethnic Chinese newcomers / sinkeh came from areas outside the old Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang.
lation of people who identified themselves as Hongkongese.\textsuperscript{42} By the 1970s the generation of Hong Kong-born had basically lost its sense of belonging to the qiaoxiang of the immigrants.\textsuperscript{43} The difference in living standards between rapidly developing and Western-oriented Hong Kong society and the qiaoxiang in the PRC made for an attitude of superiority and disdain for the ‘mainland’ among Hongkongese.\textsuperscript{44} Hong Kong developed a strong Cantonese-based culture, which would have been impossible in Guangdong.\textsuperscript{45}

This process of localization is also reflected in the language shift among mainland immigrants to Hong Kong which had become structural by the 1950s. Regional dialects (Chaozhou, Kejia, Fujianese, Hoisan, Shanghainese) of immigrants were abandoned for the urban Hongkongese variety of Cantonese, and every Kejia speaker in Hong Kong was influenced by Cantonese to some degree, resulting in a ‘New Style’ Kejia spoken by younger people.\textsuperscript{46} Self-identification as Hakka, which had been a strong contrastive identity during the Hakka-Punti conflicts of the nineteenth century in the Pearl River Delta, became a liability in the new modernity of Hong Kong. By the 1970s dialect was not a predictable marker of sub-ethnic identity in Hong Kong, but an instrument of strategic identification.\textsuperscript{47} This shift away from qiaoxiang culture and language was transplanted to Suriname. Between roughly the middle of the 1960s to the middle of the 1970s the latest sinkeh from the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang neither referred to themselves as Hakka nor spoke Kejia in public settings, but identified with Hong Kong. They were therefore called ‘Hongkongese’ (Kejia: hionggongnyin) by older Tong’ap laokeh which filtered out via Laiap to the rest of the Surinamese population as ‘Hong Kong Chinese’ (Hongkong-Chinezen).\textsuperscript{48}

The Hong Kong Chinese became the outsiders (in Elias and Scotson’s sense) to the established Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname.

\textsuperscript{42} Lau 1997.
\textsuperscript{43} Johnson 2001.
\textsuperscript{44} Lau 1997.
\textsuperscript{45} Johnson 2001.
\textsuperscript{46} Lau 2000.
\textsuperscript{47} Blake 1975.
\textsuperscript{48} In the 1980s Chinese migrants from ‘China and Hong Kong’ formed a relatively significant economic bloc in Guyanese society, of about 2,000 persons and 150 businesses (Garner 2008). These migrants (who would likely have been called ‘Hong Kong Chinese’ in Suriname) were more noticeable in Guyana because of fewer numbers of established Chinese migrants, and were referred to as ‘new immigrants’ (G.K. Dans, ‘The New Immigrants’, Guyana Chronicle, 20 March 1983. Quoted in Garner 2008: 295-296).
The older migrants and assimilated Chinese - Tong'ap and Laiap - resented the Hong Kong sinkeh immensely. The Hong Kong Chinese did not have quite the same attitude towards migration as the older Tong'ap. The sojourner discourse of those Tong'ap focused on return even if that never happened; the newest migrants looked beyond Suriname to the world. Fuidung'on Hakka brides from Hong Kong were derided for their modern notions and unwillingness to put up with the hardships earlier Fuidung'on Hakka migrant wives had taken for granted. To this sinkeh cohort, the established Fuidung'on Hakka migrants were peasants, out of touch with the modernity of the Pearl River Delta, where the Fuidung'on Region was now the periphery of Hong Kong. The Tong'ap stereotyped the Hong Kong Chinese as members of organized crime rings, arrogant and materialistic, and unwilling to assimilate into Tong'ap life. The Hong Kong Chinese introduced certain Chinese festivals which had never been publicly celebrated in Suriname, such as Chinese Lunar New Year’s Day / Spring Festival and the Moon Festival. Both festivals were celebrated in public as non-religious events, the Spring Festival in the Chinese organizations and the Moon Festival in De Witte Lotus sports club, effectively to promote social cohesion.

The Hong Kong Chinese cohort remigrated in much the same pragmatic way earlier Fuidung'on Hakka migrant cohorts did, but some extended their business networks around the Caribbean and Latin America (for example São Paolo and Belem in Brazil). The most significant remigration of all Tong'ap cohorts occurred in the 1970s. A large number of Surinamese emigrated in the early 1970s out of fear of what might have happened after the planned independence in 1975, most went to the Netherlands. In 1980 there was the military coup, which initiated another wave of migration to the Netherlands, away from deteriorating socio-economic conditions. There are some indications that the ethnic Chinese of Suriname followed this trend, with numbers not increasing beyond the 6,029 persons of the 1971 census and which had fallen to.

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51 The Surinamese government registered a negative net migration of about 130,000 people between 1950 and 1980, what amounted to roughly 36% of the population. Estimates of total international migration over the last 25 years suggest that more than half of the Surinamese population moved abroad (Ketwaru-Nurmohamed 1999: 22).
5,494 by the 1980 census. 52 Between the 1970s and 1980s a distinct Surinamese segment was noted in the descriptions of Chinese in the Netherlands. 53 Naturalization Decrees can give an idea of the cultural shift caused by the influx of Hong Kong Chinese. From 1966 until Surinamese Independence in November 1975 a total of 69 Naturalization Decrees were promulgated which granted Dutch citizenship to a total of 1,273 ethnic Chinese (more accurately people with Chinese names, immigrants as well as local-born). 54 The vast majority were born in mainland China, only 107 (8.4% of ethnic Chinese)

52 SIC 171/92-2: 12. The 1980 census figure of 5,494 ethnic Chinese is unreliable. The 1980 census had been carried out by the Civil Registry Office (CBB) rather than the General Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Final results were only published in 1988, but were reinterpreted and re-published by the ABS when inconsistencies cropped up. Ethnic data were suppressed in the 1980 census for ideological reasons. Self-identification was not allowed, and ‘landaard’ was assigned according to the respondents’ surnames, religion and language spoken at home.

53 Pieke 1988. The Tong’ap-Laiap distinction did not survive transplantation to the Netherlands. The Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (www.cbs.nl) makes a basic native / non-native distinction (autochtoon / allochtoon), and defines non-natives as individuals born outside the Netherlands and their Netherlands-born children. Surinamese are classed among the non-Western non-native groups. Laiap in the Netherlands are classed as ‘Surinamese’ by virtue of being born in Suriname, while Tong’ap are classed as ‘Chinese’. Ethnic Chinese from Suriname can be strategically grouped together, as on the website of the Inspraakorgaan Chinezen (Chinese Community Advisory Association) where Chinese from Suriname are described as ‘often having excellent control of the Dutch language’ while ‘many are native speakers of Kejia’. (http://www.ioc-ch.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view&id=8&Itemid=22). As Kejia-speakers, Fuidung’on Hakka remigrants from Suriname are grouped together with people from Malaysia and Hong Kong, though numbers of Kejia-speakers in the Netherlands are unknown.

54 Naturalization Decrees, published in the Bulletin of Acts and Decrees of colonial and independent Suriname, shed surprisingly little light on Chinese migration in Suriname. The date of settlement in Suriname is not mentioned, the gender of the naturalized is not consistently stated, and place of birth is only broadly indicated in the case of Chinese migrants (usually only ‘Guangdong’ in pre-independence or ‘China’ in post-independence Decrees). The first naturalization decree (GB1956.121, enacted through GB1957.26) was for a single individual, Afoeng Chiu Hung. At the time his application for Dutch citizenship was considered an almost heretical break with the sojourning ideal by Chinese in Suriname, yet significant numbers of Chinese migrants started to naturalize to Dutch citizenship just a few years later. According to older Fuidung’on Hakka informants, acquiring Dutch citizenship was more a question of losing Chinese citizenship for anyone planning to remigrate to North America, especially at the height of the Cold War in the 1950s-1960s. Local informants say that because of US migration quotas remigration via intermediate destinations increased one’s chance of reaching North America. In the run-up to Surinamese Independence in 1975, acquiring Dutch citizenship was an exit strategy in case ethnic violence erupted between Creoles and East Indians. Frequency of naturalization of Chinese migrants in the post-independence Decrees does not reliably reflect immigration patterns or emigration strategies.
were born in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{55} However, when we consider the transcription of their names, 432 names clearly reflected Kejia pronunciation versus 595 that clearly reflected Cantonese pronunciation.\textsuperscript{56} In 1967-1969 clearly Kejia-based names (193) outnumbered clearly Cantonese-based names (71), but in 1970-1973 it was the other way around: 239 names were clearly Kejia versus 524 clearly Cantonese.

The process of \textit{sinkeh} becoming established, with earlier groups fading to the background, continued, and eventually Hong Kong Cantonese culture became the norm in Suriname. Relations between the earlier migrants and the Hong Kong cohorts had not been particularly good; the older cohorts considered the Hongkongese untrustworthy and arrogant, the Hongkongese cohorts considered the older Tong'ap ignorant peasants.\textsuperscript{57} Fuidung'on Hakka migrants in Suriname had been used to a diglossia of colloquial Kejia and written (Mandarin-based) Chinese, and now Cantonese became the medium of formal public addresses. The shift was not a full replacement of earlier Overseas Fuidung'on Hakka patterns; children could still be sent ‘to China’, though more were sent to Hong Kong or Taiwan than to the qiaoxiang, and spouses would still be sought abroad, though now from Hong Kong rather than the Fuidung'on homeland or the Caribbean region. Something of a transnational identity developed among families originating from the Hong Kong Chinese cohort, as increased mobility and affluence allowed Tong'ap to move more regularly between Hong Kong, Taiwan, the USA, Canada, and the Netherlands, and Suriname; individuals identified themselves by their transnational family, linked to an abstract ancestral village in the Fuidung'on region.

\textsuperscript{55} Chinese made up about 90\% of all applicants for Dutch citizenship in Suriname in 1966-1975. The China-born made up about 88\% of the Chinese applicants. The largest group of applicants born outside China and Hong Kong consisted of Peranakan, with 12 and possibly 30 individuals. There were also 8 born in Suriname, 3 born in Malaysia, 20 from Guyana, French Guiana, Martinique, and Trinidad & Tobago. Not all applicants born in China were Fuidung'on Hakka: one was from Shanghai and one from Hubei Province (PRC).

\textsuperscript{56} 93 names of China-born were either ambiguous or reflected a different Chinese pronunciation; at one extreme the number of Kejia-based and Cantonese-based names could therefore have been about equal, at the other there might have been more than twice as many Cantonese-based names.

\textsuperscript{57} Cf. Tseng 1991. The contrast between older Tong'ap and Hong Kong Chinese was particularly evident after Fuidung'on Hakka remigrated to the Dutch colonial metropole, but Hakka migrants from Suriname tended to isolate themselves in the Netherlands from other Chinese segments.
3.4 The Latest Fuidung’on Hakka Migrants

Immigration from Hong Kong had stopped by the end of the 1980s. The *sinkeh* that followed the Hong Kong Chinese were PRC citizens who came straight from the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang, once again from Dongguan rather than Bao’an / Shenzhen near the Hong Kong border. The post-independence naturalization decrees (i.e. those issued after 1975) give some idea of how the transition from the Hong Kong Chinese cohorts and the later Fuidung’on Hakka *sinkeh* occurred. Between 1977 and 1995 1,118 people with a Chinese name applied for Surinamese citizenship.\(^{58}\) The percentage of unambiguously Kejia pronunciations in the naturalization decrees hovered around 20% between 1977 and 1981, and dropped to about 15% from 1982 to 1989, but it fell to almost nothing in the 1990s. Clear Cantonese pronunciations averaged a little over 50% between 1977 and 1987, but started tapering off after that (27.9% in 1989) to about 2% in the 1990s. In any case, between 1977 and 1982 almost all Chinese names in the naturalization decrees reflected a background in the eastern Pearl River Delta / Fuidung’on area (i.e. clearly Kejia, clearly Cantonese, or ambiguous pronunciations, made up on average 97%). However, the percentage of Mandarin pronunciations started to increase steadily from almost nothing in the early 1980s to almost 100% by the end of the 1990s.\(^{59}\) I have noted that in the naturalization decrees from 1977 to 1995, 94% of Mandarin names belonged to Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants.

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\(^{58}\) That works out to 80 per year for every year that decrees were issued, and 56 for every year from 1976 through 1995. There was an absolute peak of 248 Chinese applicants in 1987, nearing the end of Military Rule in 1988-1990

\(^{59}\) 1983: 5.7%; 1984: 15.7%; 1986: 21.2%; 1987: 29.8%; 1989: 50%; 1993: 50%; 1994: 95.7%; 1995: 92%. In 2006 and 2007 all China-born applicants for Surinamese citizenship registered their names in Mandarin pronunciations, in Pinyin transcription. The Pinyin transcription first appeared in the naturalization decrees of 1982 (one Mrs. Tjin Kon Tai is ‘also known as Zeng Guantai’ in SB1982.101. She obtained Surinamese citizenship herself by SB1987.40). But before then Fuidung’on Hakka applicants born in the early twentieth century (adults by the time of the Second World War) occasionally registered their names in Mandarin pronunciation, albeit inconsistently transcribed. That habit reflects the influence of the Kuo Min Tang resincization project, later implemented in Suriname via Fa Tjauw Song Foei; Mandarin was supposed to unify the Overseas Chinese and China, but the result was that Mandarin transcriptions were felt to represent Chinese characters, and thus the ‘true essence’ of Chinese names in Suriname. Individuals tried to have at least their surname (the first syllable in trisyllabic Chinese names) in Mandarin, which could result in hybrid Mandarin / Kejia or Mandarin / Cantonese pronunciations.
The Tong’ap label now referred to four types of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants:

1. an ageing group of pre-1960s laokeh, typically with names reflecting Kejia pronunciation in Dutch orthography;
2. a small number of remigrants from other nodes in the Fuidung’on Hakka migration network such as French Guiana, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, Vietnam, typically with names reflecting the orthographies of their former places of residence;
3. the Hong Kong Chinese, characterized by names reflecting Cantonese pronunciation, in English orthography;
4. the post-1983 sinkeh, characterized by names reflecting Mandarin pronunciation, in Pinyin.

Hong Kong Chinese and Laiap informants with clear transnational family ties suggested that the latest sinkeh were spon-sored by Tong’ap in Suriname. But by the time the sinkeh started sponsoring their own chain migrants, earlier laokeh had a hard time relating to the newcomers. Laiap could not recognize them as typical Hakkas because of their unfamiliar names and the fact that most spoke Mandarin as well as Kejia. Many Hong Kong Chinese tended to avoid associating with what they had come to see as semi-barbaric mainlanders. Solidarity and ethnic loyalty were difficult ideals to reach even within the limited Chinese subgroup in the small Surinamese population, but at least people were familiar with one another in the strong Surinamese and (transnational) Chinese networking traditions. That network of reputation and gossip did not include the latest sinkeh. Resistance to marginalization by established Tong’ap could be an explanation for the creation of the Dongguan Tongxiang Hui (Dongguan Hometown Association) by Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh as an alternative institution to existing Chinese associations in Suriname.60

From the viewpoint of the Hong Kong Chinese, the old system of Fuidung’on Hakka chain migration had run out of steam as the focus of their migration shifted away from the qiaoxiang and even Suriname. First the qiaoxiang was linked to various locations, some of which were mutually linked (for example Suriname and Malaysia), then Hong Kong subsumed the role of the qiaoxiang, and now a network of Fuidung’on Hakkas overseas survives despite the loss of personal links to villages in the Fuidung’on region.

60 Dongguan Tongxiang Hui is first mentioned in Times of Suriname, 28 April 2007, ‘Communique “Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foe” (Communique from Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foei). See Paragraph 9.4.1.
Surinamese Fuidung’on Hakkas in the Netherlands, for instance, identify with Suriname, Hong Kong, Canada, and the ancestral villages in almost equal measure. This shift away from a translocal link with one homeland towards a more transnational interpretation of belonging could be termed rhizomic. The metaphor of the rhizome, a horizontal creeping stem, is meant to describe the multiplicious links in modern migrant networks, which are no longer rooted to and branch from one particular source.61

Such a slowdown in Fuidung’on Hakka immigration however is not really apparent from official data. According to census data, numbers of ethnic Chinese had been increasing between 1950 and 2004.62 But this does not reflect changing proportions of Laiap and Tong’ap, moreover the numbers of Chinese immigrants are not recorded in other sources.63 Throughout the twentieth century there were concentrations of different ethnic groups in various areas of Paramaribo, without strict ethnic segregation.64 In the first half of the twentieth century Chinese shops were concentrated in the centre of Paramaribo, particularly on street corners. Although Chinese remained an urban trading minority throughout the twentieth century, the percentage of Chinese in Paramaribo had been gradually shrinking; 76.9% in 1950, 71.1% in 1964, and 60.4% in 1971. This might reflect regional expansion of migrant entrepreneurs away from Paramaribo to less competition and cheaper real estate in the districts.65

In the 1980s the economic reasons for leaving the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang were not as obvious as they were for earlier chain migrants. Economic reforms in Guangdong Province in the 1980s improved the quality of life in the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang and increased the prospects of generating income locally. The Fui-

61 Deleuze & Guattari 1987.
63 Increasingly balanced gender proportions among the ethnic Chinese group on the whole are also the result of lack of differentiation between immigrants and local-born. Proportions of women to men, 1950: 624/1000; 1964: 767/1000; 1971: 833/1000; 2004: 859/1000. However, the sojourner pattern in which men outnumber women seems to have been replaced by a more equal balance among modern migrants. In 2004 the proportion of women to men among Chinese nationals in Suriname (817/1000) approached that of the whole ethnic group (859/1000).
65 Data from SIC 33, SIC 90, and Dutch National Archives (1950 census in Suriname, 2.10.19.2, 207-212). The concentration of Chinese in Paramaribo had increased again to 82.7% by the 2004 census, reflecting the New Chinese influx.
dung’on Region was reorganized in the process; part of old Bao’an County became the Shenzhen SEZ, and Dongguan was elevated to the status of Municipality. Rapid industrialization made the Dongguan region a destination for labour migrants from all over the PRC. People in the poorest villages could and did become rich renting out or selling real estate for the construction of factories. As in other developing regions in the PRC, local governments in the Fuidung’on region actively courted the Overseas Chinese as investors; ‘Overseas Chinese Offices’ (huaqiao bangongshi) were set up in all Fuidung’on counties, to help Overseas Chinese trace their roots.

Back in the 1930s, the qiaoxiang described Suriname as a source of wealth in the following slogan: ‘Up in heaven is the realm of gods and immortals, down on earth you have Suriname’ (tènsong sinsèntung, tiha sulilam).66 Links to huaqiao once considered counterrevolutionary were again sources of status in the 1980s. Sojourners from Suriname had not been able to resettle in the qiaoxiang for decades, but were increasingly able to visit via Hong Kong. Visitors were expected to provide distant relatives with consumer goods such as refrigerators, washing machines, television sets, and video recorders. However, with increased prosperity resulting from economic reforms, dependents in the qiaoxiang could acquire such items on their own, and for this reason the link between huaqiao and huajuan started to weaken.67

Economic development really took off in the Fuidung’on region by the mid 1990s, and populations expanded due to internal labour migration from the hinterland. The Shenzhen SEZ was closed off to internal migrants, which made Dongguan Municipality the front line of labour migration. Simultaneous with economic reforms in the 1980s, the government of the PRC had relaxed restrictions on emigration. During that period the number of PRC nationals entering Suriname did not increase. When the number of Chinese immigrants suddenly skyrocketed in 1990 (see Chart 1), the number of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants to Suriname apparently did not grow. Fuidung’on Hakka informants in Suriname had a hard time identifying any new faces from the qiaoxiang. It is unclear how many people used the Hakka chain migration network to get to Suriname, but saddled with expectations that had become a lot more sophisticated since the early days, few stayed. Only those dis-

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67 The local gazetteers of the Fuidung’on area reflect the change: the Dongguan Difang Zhi does not mention Suriname as an area where Overseas Chinese can be found, the Shenzhen Difang Zhi and Baoan Difang Zhi simply mention this, while the Huiyang Overseas Chinese Gazetteer contains the most extensive reference.
advantaged by lack of skills, education or problems with the law had any real reason to move to Suriname.  

In any case the latest Fuidung’on Hakka *sinkeh* in the 1980s and 1990s were different again from the Hong Kong Chinese, and at first glance they were indistinguishable from typical New Chinese. They had not been acculturated to Hong Kong modernity, nor had they experienced the language shift from Kejia to Hong Kong Cantonese. Instead, having been educated in the PRC, they were fluent in PTH, and were acutely aware of the processes of social change and development in the qiaoxiang. Cultural clashes were inevitable, though hardly noticeable due to the small number of *sinkeh*. Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname reported shock at an apparent reversal of the established patterns of huaqiao sojourners and *huajuan* dependents, when migrants began to actually receive rather than send back remittances.

The change in Chinese migration had also become noticeable to the general Surinamese public. By the late 1980s unusually large Chinese-owned structures were being built in Paramaribo, and their occupants, often Kejia-speaking newcomers running supermarkets or small restaurants, were very reticent about explaining the size and function of the buildings. Ethnic Chinese outsiders gave me a variety of explanations as to why such large buildings were built, for example that they are indicators of wealth and status to the people back home, or that Surinamese authorities could not implement building codes (so why not build big), or that they were investments in real estate aimed at an ethnic Chinese niche market. But as most of such Chinese buildings have remained only partly occupied at most, the most sensible explanation for building them seemed to be some type of money-laundering involving mortgage fraud, possibly related to Hong Kong being ceded back to the PRC in 1997. What seems clear is that the new buildings did not reflect local investments, and this suggests that some form of incoming and illegal cash flow may have been involved.

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68 More recent women Fuidung’on *sinkeh* in Suriname would frequently point to the one-child policy as their reason for leaving the PRC; they already had one child, had become pregnant again, and fled the qiaoxiang to avoid a late term abortion. During a visit to Dongguan in 2004, I found official notices pasted on walls along alleys in various neighbourhoods in Dongguan City warning citizens that the one-child policy should not be flaunted.
Chinese have always been highly visible in Suriname, because of their East Asian looks and their distinctive script. However, ‘traditional Chinese culture’, be it ancestral traditions from the Fuidung’on Hakka homelands or more generally emblematic Chinese culture and folklore, has always been remarkably absent. The general attitude of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants in Suriname was to be low-key and as inconspicuous as possible. But traditional religion also had no function in promoting social cohesion among huaqiao or status for the organizers; that was the role of the huiguan, which was ultimately related to the requirements of the Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname.69 Fuidung’on Hakkas did have a distinctive local culture, which was only partly observable in Suriname. Their variety of Kejia was the most obvious, though food customs from the homeland were less noticeable. The most distinctive customs were religious: for instance Fuidung’on Kejia in Suriname conduct grave-sweeping rituals for dead relatives (Kejia: gasan or baisan) on Chongyang (the ninth of the ninth lunar month) rather than on Qingming.70

Language is a very important marker of ethnic identity in Suriname, where up to the late 1940s the various language varieties strictly defined ethnicity and class (Eersel 1983). Ethnic Chinese in Suriname are marked as outsiders by Chinese language and script, but without distinction between different varieties or styles. By the time of the Japanese invasion of China, preceding the Second World War, a thriving Chinese-speaking group was in existence in Suriname. Using T’sou’s definition, this can be inferred from the existence of Chinese cemeteries (implying that Chinese script was used on gravestones and Chinese was spoken during funeral ceremonies), commercial and socio-cultural associations,

69 In Penang, Malaysia, elaborate Chinese temple-based religious festivals developed to promote social cohesion and elevate the status of the sponsors (DeBernardi 2004).
70 Chongyang (‘Double Yang’, the ninth day of the ninth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, usually early October) is commonly known as Kasan in Suriname after the gasan rituals. Gasan (commonly written as ‘kasan’ or even ‘kazan’ in Suriname) means ‘climbing up the mountain’, baisan means ‘paying homage to the mountain’. In the wider Chinese tradition beyond Hakka customs, visiting graves is considered secondary to rituals and practices aimed at ameliorating the potentially harmful influence of the ‘double yang’ (i.e. double 9) of the date. The ‘mountain’ in the name of the Hakka rituals refers to the custom of climbing hills on this date, a practice said to guarantee wellbeing in the coming year. Qingming (the 104th day after the winter solstice, usually 4 or 5 April) rather than Chongyang is the ‘regular’ grave sweeping day in transnational Chinese culture, and is a public holiday in the PRC and Taiwan.
Chinese religious institutions, Chinese-language education (written Chinese, taught in the Kejia vernacular) for Chinese children in Chinese schools, Chinese-language media, and at least two consecutive generations with a basic knowledge of Kejia.

Until the appearance of the Hong Kong Chinese, the Kejia varieties of the Fuidung’on Hakka migrant cohorts were basically the only Chinese language spoken in Suriname. Fuidung’on Kejia is spoken in the areas where Dongguan, the Shenzhen SEZ / Bao’an, and Huiyang meet. The Kejia varieties spoken in those areas are mutually intelligible; the lexicon of Huiyang Kejia has evidently been more influenced by Cantonese, and linguistic data from local publications indicate that tones are the main difference. Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname usually describe the different varieties as ‘accents’. Not surprisingly a local Kejia variety has developed in Suriname, with reduced tones, archaic vocabulary items, Sranantongo loanwords, and code-switching with Dutch and Sranantongo. Kejia had been the only form of spoken Chinese in Suriname for a long time, and its low status had been irrelevant until the introduction of Cantonese as a public medium in the 1970s.

The question of how many people in Suriname actually speak a particular form of Chinese tends to be ignored; Chinese identity is seen as a monolithic entity that is defined by, and defines an undifferentiated ‘Chinese language’. There are no reliable data on numbers of speakers of Chinese varieties in Suriname up to the 1990s. Household surveys by the General Bureau of Statistics in Paramaribo held in the 1990s included questions on

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71 T’sou 1987: B-16a.
At that time these were a temple to the popular deity Gan Di Ya (Mandarin: Guan Di) in Paramaribo (up to the 1930s, Tjon Sie Fat 1999: 122-123), and the church of the Chinese Catholic Mission (between 1892 and 1921, Vernooij 1998: 90).

72 Fuidung’on Kejia: Sinitic > Kejia > Yuetai > Xinhui.

73 Li 1997: 3.

74 Zhang 1999.

75 Baoan Difang Zhi; Dongguan Difang Zhi; Zhang 1999.

76 Tjon Sie Fat 2002. Also called ‘Laiap Kejia’. Kejia names for other Chinese varieties in the qiaoxiang reflect the low status of Kejia. Mandarin is still called zennyi (真語, lit.: ‘true language’), and Cantonese was called pakwa (白話, lit.: ‘white language’, meaning ‘vernacular’). A similar situation developed among Javanese and Indian immigrants. Smaller numbers of speakers of Balinese, Sumatran and other languages merged along with the majority of Javanese speakers. Among the East Indian, the minority of speakers of languages such as Telugu and Urdu, eventually merged with the majority of speakers of a number of related North-Indian varieties of Hindi (particularly Bhojpuri).

77 SIC 181-1998/1.
languages spoken at home, but the results are so wildly fluctuating as to be useless. The concept of preferred language of the household (i.e. current language behaviour) was not contrasted but equated with mother tongue (i.e. first language learned in childhood and still spoken), which suggests that the category was primarily seen as an ethnic marker rather than as an indicator of language development.

What is clear is that Kejia has lost its place as essential Chinese lingua franca to PTH – which lowered the low status of Kejia even further. The newcomers refuse to learn Kejia, and Hakkas who do not learn PTH are considered ‘incomplete’; the inability to speak PTH is a symptom of Chinese who are out of touch with modern China. PTH thus also exposes a generation gap among the Tongap. The last Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants have learned PTH in school, and are thus able to communicate with non-Hakka immigrants. While newcomers recognize the usefulness of Srana tongo as inter-ethnic lingua franca in Suriname, they refuse to learn Dutch, explaining that the role of English in the world is rather like that of PTH in China (English – increasingly American English – is described as a guoyu, a koine), and that learning Dutch is not worth the investment of time and money – rather like learning Kejia. Dutch is the dominant local language, rather like Cantonese in Guangdong Province, a view bolstered by the relatedness of Dutch and English. But unlike Cantonese, Dutch in Suriname functions as a guanhua, an official language, a language one needs at all formal levels of society. In PTH and Kejia Srana tongo is called tuhua / tuwa (lit.: ‘earth speech’, local patois) – in many ways rather like Fuidung’on Kejia. In 2003 two Shandongese women started up a one-hour programme in Mandarin and English on the ATV television station (‘A Bridge to Suriname, a Window to China’). Mandarin was aimed at all Chinese, and all non-Chinese were assumed to know some English.78

78 Various Surinamese radio and television stations carried a number of Chinese-language broadcasts, notably the daily China Central Television slot on the State TV broadcaster STVS. In July 2005, a Chinese-language radio station (Viva-953 on FM radio, of the Suriname Chinese Media Groups Foundation / 蘇理南華語創作媒體) started broadcasting in Cantonese and PTH (ZHRB 12 July 2005, 蘇理南中文電台, FM 匯聚 953 頻道致蘇理南僑胞的公開信 (Open letter to the Chinese of Suriname from Chinese-language radio on 953 FM); XNRB 4 July 2005, announcement by ‘Suriname Chinese Media Groups Foundation’). In February 2008, a Chinese TV station (SCTS on channel 45, of Stichting Kong Ngie Tong Sang TV) which carries programmes from the PRC in PTH was opened in Paramaribo (http://surinaams
Fuidung’on Hakka resentment about the inferior status of Kejia in Suriname is very rarely voiced. In 2004 the newspaper of the Chung Fa Foei Kon huiguan, Zhonghua Ribao, printed a short text titled ‘Kejia Is Quietly Going Extinct’. The writer, a Fuidung’on Hakka by the name of Luo Quan, complained about the continued disrespect of the ancestral Kejia dialect in favour of Cantonese and PTH in public settings:

Last year was the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the First Hakkas in Suriname. From Huiyang, Dongguan and Bao’an, but mostly from Dongguan and Bao’an those first Hakkas came to endure hardship and create their businesses and institutions out of nothing. Those first Chinese set up Kong Ngie Tong Sang (more than 120 years old), Chung Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, and later also Hua Cu Hui and Chung Tjauw Fu Li Foei. Kejia is spoken at the monthly general meetings of the associations, and during the fuicèn meetings as well. Why? Because they and their ancestors are Hakkas, so they all speak Kejia. But certain people, even though their ancestors, their parents, they themselves and their descendents are all Hakkas, often do not speak the language they use at home, even rejecting it as though any other random language can raise their status.

During this year’s Moon Festival only Minister Jong Tjien Fa uttered one line of something I would not have dared to call Kejia. Besides this, the three masters of ceremony only spoke Cantonese, Mandarin and Dutch, but not a syllable of Kejia could be heard during that Moon Festival which was organized by Hakkas for all Chinese in Suriname. Someone remarked that this indicated assimilation. I said it was self-alienation, that your own self is authentic. This is so sad!

You must have surely seen how Zhejiangese and Fujianese address people from their hometowns in their own dialect. But only we Hakkas like to speak another dialect, especially Cantonese. If you or your children cannot or will not speak your own language, is that not foolishly suppressing your own roots, is that not aiding in the extinction of Kejia? I would hereby like to press upon you, you who work in education and in society, that it is time to take this issue seriously!

Language is the most important issue between the smaller, but more visible and deceptively concrete Tong’ap sphere, and the

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79 Fuicèn: traditional Fuidung’on Hakka ROSCA.

80 ZHRB, 2 October 2004: ‘客家話正在悄悄地消亡’(Kejia is quietly going extinct).
much larger, but diffuse Laiap sphere. All Fuidung’on have at least a basic command of the lingua franca variety of Sranantongo, but few Tong’ap are proficient in Dutch, the formal language of the Surinamese State. Laiap seldom speak other Chinese varieties than the local, Surinamese variety of Kejia. Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh of the 1980s and 1990s are also fluent in Cantonese and PTH, but very seldom in any Western language. Immigrants are generally illiterate in Western languages, and Laiap are virtually all illiterate in Chinese. So the Tong’ap and Laiap worlds do not meet on Chinese terms, but Laiap have become gatekeepers for Tong’ap vis à vis the Surinamese State. A child of Chinese migrant parents, i.e. one whose mother tongue and home language are a form of Chinese and who learned Dutch and Sranantongo in Suriname, is also a gatekeeper who is “required to translate – and thus mediate, negotiate, and broker – adult realities across cultures”, as Antonia Castañeda says of children of Latino migrants in the USA. 81 Whether it is harmful or empowering, the experience of translating is producing a generation of ethnic Chinese who are uniquely equipped to deal with Surinamese as well as Chinese identities.

The Chinese school in Paramaribo is the main generator of Chinese-language literacy in Suriname. The tradition of Chinese schools in Suriname started with reading and writing classes for children of Chinese immigrants organized by the various huiguan (a so-called jiaotonghui: ‘association for the instruction of youths’). In the Second World War the Kuomintang promoted resinicization of Overseas Chinese in Suriname through a Chinese school facilitated by the Fa Tjauw Song Foei huiguan. Republican Chinese curricula were intended to ‘reconnect’ Fuidung’on Hakka loyalty to the Motherland and Overseas Chinese communities elsewhere in the world. The limited size of the Chinese group in Suriname meant limited funding and interest in the effects of the Kuomintang resinicization program, and eventually the Fa Tjauw Song Foei school died out. Mandarin, which meant the Taiwanese Guoyu standard taught in the Chinese school, was of little use from the viewpoint of life in Suriname, until the appearance of Chinese globalization in the form of PRC economic development and New Chinese.

The current Chinese school (Zhongwen Xuexiao, in the Guang Yi Tang jinian lou cultural centre in Paramaribo) is run in a

81 Castañeda 1996: 205.
more professional manner. It functions as an expat school providing primary education and it is accredited by the PRC (with plans to extend the program to secondary education and further). It is a language centre providing courses in PTH and written Chinese (the school is attended by New Chinese, Tong’ap and Laiap children, and even small numbers of non-Chinese students), as well as continuing the tradition of the basically symbolic jiaotonghui reading and writing classes for Fuidung’on Hakka children. (Re)sinicization is less clearly an ideological goal of this school, as its focus on the PRC is basically pragmatic; ‘China’ means the rising superpower of the PRC, and mastery of its language is a valuable asset. However, the PRC curriculum stresses the PTH standard of the PRC as a unifying symbol of global Chinese identity, and transplants the PRC’s view of its history and multiculturalism.

In the apanjaht logic of Surinamese ethnic discourse, all ethno-cultural segments are equal and should therefore have equivalent sets of markers, and so Chinese in Suriname are assumed to have an authentic Chinese religion. Organized Chinese religion does not exist in Suriname – there are no Buddhist or Daoist temples – and traditional Chinese ‘folk religion’ is rarely visible. The most visible and persistent traditional religious custom among Fuidung’on Hakkas is the gasan ritual of honouring the graves of departed relatives during Chongyang. Only terms indicating traditional religious categories were recorded with reference to the nineteenth century indentured labourers (e.g. ‘Confucianist’). Up to 1930 there was a popular religion shrine in the Kong Ngie Tong Sang huiguan. In 1945 about 70% of 2,312 Chinese belonged to an undefined category of ‘followers of Confucius’, but by 1964 there were 2.8% out of 5,339 Chinese. In 1972 there were just 75, and in 1980 merely 19.

Besides (semi-)religious festivals such as Chinese Lunar New Year, the Moon Festival, Chongyang, and the Dragon Boat Festival, and the occasional household and ancestral altars, very few other aspects of Chinese traditional religion are currently visible.

82 It is not physically encapsulated by a huiguan building, its ties to the Fuidung’on Hakka huiguan is not particularly clear-cut. In practice it is jointly run by Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon and Fa Tjauw Song Foei. See Chapter 8.
83 Its extracurricular activities include a students’ dancing troupe that learns and performs ‘traditional Chinese dances’. Many of these dances are dances of ethnic minorities in the PRC, such as Tibetan and Uyghur dances.
84 Tjon Sie Fat 1999: 123.
among Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname. The following is an advertisement placed by a Maoshan Daoist magician in Zhonghua Ribao:

The ninth day, Jia-Yin, of the Element Water and the Constellation Jiao, of the eleventh lunar month of the Ren-Wu year is the anniversary of the death of my teacher of the arts of Maoshan, Master Zhang Jinbo. Our House intends to honour his memory, and so we will conduct a ceremony before the main altar at eight o’clock on the ninth (Thursday) of the eleventh lunar month. We hope all our Brothers will join the sacrificial ceremony at the appointed time. We also welcome all coregionalists, friends, and believers to join!

Maoshan has existed for millennia, and is still with us; The Master has been gone for tens of thousands of years, but remains powerful. Preserved by the great grace of the gods all these millennia; The secret and profound power of the Arts remains through tens of thousands of years.

Maoshan is the best-known school of Daoist magic, with practices ranging from ‘white’ to ‘black’ in Western terms. This particular Tong’ap practitioner (now deceased) was known for conducting oracular séances and making charms and amulets.

No Christians were registered among the nineteenth century indentured labourers, but Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants tended to convert to Catholicism, apparently a pragmatic choice related to education in Suriname. Catholicism seemed to have been an adaptive strategy among early immigrants; a distinct, Chinese-speaking congregation helped to integrate newcomers until 1922. Religion was the one boundary marker that could distinguish Tong-ap (adherents of Chinese traditional religion) from Laiap (Christian, usually Roman Catholic). According to data from the second gene-

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85 The Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. It is also called Rice Dumpling Festival, because zong (PTH, 粽, glutinous rice stuffed with meat, wrapped in bamboo leaves and steamed or boiled.) are the focus of the celebration. One particular Fuidung’on Hakka restaurant advertised various fancy zong in the Chinese-language newspapers in Paramaribo ahead of the Dragon Boat Festival. In Suriname zong can be a slightly arcane marker of Hakka cultural identity; tetrahedral zong are said to be Punti, while square ones are supposedly Hakka.
86 12 December 2002.
88 See Tjon Sie Fat 1999.
89 Tjon Sie Fat 1999: 122.
ral census in 1950, 471 out of 585 Suriname-born ethnic Chinese in Paramaribo were Catholic, against 62 of 506 foreign-born ethnic Chinese. Most of those indicated that they were either ‘Confucianist’ (143) or had no religion (241).90 Aware that Christianity provided the best route to social advancement and education, any obvious signs of alien religious practices were frowned upon within the Chinese segment.

The next oldest Chinese-language Christian congregation among Fuidung'on Hakkas in Suriname is Moravian (Tshoen Tjien Church), established in the late 1940s. The most recent Christian group is the evangelical Protestant Christian and Missionary Alliance Church (Christelijke en Zending Alliantie Kerk van Suriname, CAMA Suriname). The origins of the Chinese CAMA church go back to activities of US missionaries among a couple of Hong Kong Chinese families in Suriname during the late 1970s. Within a decade a Dutch-speaking Laiap group appeared within the original Cantonese congregation, and now several languages are used for various audiences. Although the size of its membership is unclear, the importance of the CAMA church is recognized by Chinese elites by its inclusion in the list of Chinese institutions and huiguan. Chinese language and Christianity are closely linked in Suriname; Chinese Christian congregations are effectively ethnic churches that provide a Chinese community environment.

As markers of Chinese culture from any point of view, traditional religious practices can still distinguish Tong'ap from Laiap identities performatively. Tong'ap can ‘do Chineseness’ in a way that effectively excludes Laiap. Rituals maintained by Tong'ap such as gasan are linked to the experience of migration – the dead are migrants in more than one way, having passed from the qiaoxiang to Suriname and they go from this world to the next. Generally speaking, Laiap do not participate in such rituals steeped in emotions of separation from and reunion with imagined lineages and qiaoxiang homelands. On the one hand the predominantly Christian world of Laiap does not allow for ancestors, but on the other hand language remains the greatest barrier to Laiap participation in ‘Chinese rituals’. Information on the ritual calendar is written in Chinese (either in the Chinese-language newspapers or tongshu almanacs), and it is therefore basically inaccessible to Laiap. Language barriers also limit Laiap participation in communal festivals such as the Lunar New Year and the Moon Festival; as huiguan events in Suriname, these celebrations are conducted in

Cantonese and Mandarin with minimal translation into Dutch and Sranantongo.

Social positioning of Chinese entrepreneurial chain migrants in colonial Surinamese society was not primarily determined by racial discourse, but rather by their economic strategies. Chinese migrants acquired middle class status as entrepreneurs in the late nineteenth century, not long after indentureship. The structure of the colonial Suriname middle class was complex, as was the case in many colonial Caribbean societies. As noted earlier, in the British Caribbean the middle class was two-tiered; education produced a class of Coloured civil servants, while expanding trade offered migrant entrepreneurs opportunities for social mobility. In Suriname, Chinese traders competed with other merchant minorities such as Jews, Portuguese, and Lebanese, but primarily with middle class Creoles and eventually East Indian entrepreneurs. Initially anti-Chinese sentiments were a reaction to the highly visible outsiders as a result of nineteenth century Asian migration and were triggered by growing economic hardship at the beginning of the twentieth century. Framed in Orientalist stereotypes, the view of Chinese immigrants as a growing pollution had settled into the local pattern of inter-ethnic conflict management through racist stereotyping.

Despite a number of profound crises and developments such as the anti-Chinese attitude of the Surinamese colonial elite of the 1920s and 1930s, and the emergence of the Hong Kong Chinese migrant pool, the ‘Old Chinese’ retain an image of stability and predictability. The available data basically reinforce the image of ethnic Chinese as predominantly urban, middle-class, and self-employed in the trade sector, and in fact suggest remarkably little change over the last 40 years; the relative size of the ethnic group is hardly increasing, educational levels are unchanged, social mobility remains high across generations, and the gender imbalance is slowly disappearing. But the image of continuity barely conceals paradoxes; Chinese are well integrated citizens but also outsiders completely lacking citizenship rights, they are strongly upwardly mobile as well as stuck in migrant coping strategies.

Light’s ethnic ownership economy theory allows one to appreciate the instrumental nature of Chinese cultural identity in Suriname. Cultural markers are only relevant if they can function to guard the economic value of Chinese ethnic identification, and so

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Chinese language is hugely important, but traditional Chinese religious practices are not. Though the Chinese school run by Fa Tjauw Song Foei / the Surinamese Wing of the Kuo Min Tang promoted reorientation to the idea of Republican China in the 1940s, nothing like the Singaporean ‘Speak Chinese Campaign’ of 1979 ever developed in Suriname. The Campaign was part of a broader process of resinicization in the Malay world, aimed at pulling Peranakan / Baba Chinese / Straits Chinese away from Baba Malay and colonial languages ‘back’ to Mandarin, which thus became the ultimate marker of Chineseness. Increased cultural and linguistic variety and the shift towards PTH as intra-ethnic lingua franca is no more than the latest change in the repertory of Chinese cultural symbols in Suriname as a result of modern migration. Linguistic shifts have occurred before, most importantly in the 1960s when Hong Kong Chinese sinkeh introduced a modern and urban Hong Kong culture among the Fuidung’on Hakkas, and made Hong Kong Cantonese the vehicle for public speaking.

A Chinese community exists insofar as Chinese institutions can manage the relationship between Chinese elites and migrants, and provide support and funding for people who can claim membership as ethnic Chinese. Light’s views on migrant entrepreneurship could be used to fine-tune aspects of McKeown’s general framework for understanding the historical development of Overseas Chinese, especially with regard to the role of ethnic Chinese as middlemen. However, there are far too few data to allow for a proper analysis of Fuidung’on Hakka migration history according to McKeown’s criteria; it is abundantly clear that the Chinese ethnic identity of Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname relies heavily on the development of ethnic resources and various translocal and perhaps even transnational networks, but how labour networks transitioned into chain migrant and entrepreneurial networks is unclear. What is clear is that, despite obvious distinctions between various Fuidung’on Hakka migrant groups, there is a surprising overlap between the latest Fuidung’on Hakka migration and the New Chinese. To understand the reasons behind the distinctions we will cast an ethnographic eye on the New Chinese in the following chapter.

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4 THE NEW CHINESE

The way Chinese migrants are portrayed in the Surinamese media during the first decade of the third millennium would suggest a clean break with all previous Chinese migration to Suriname, and that the distinction between ‘Old Chinese’ and New Chinese is indisputable, even fundamentally ethnic. However, there is continuity as well as clear difference between the old and the new. As we saw in the previous chapter there is quite an overlap between the last Fuidung’on Hakka migrant cohorts and the New Chinese, as both groups originate from the PRC and speak PTH. As we shall see in this chapter, many of the migrants who are called New Chinese are also entrepreneurial chain migrants, while contrasts between the ‘Old Chinese’ and New Chinese include competing commercial niches, different regional and linguistic backgrounds, and a wider range in migration strategies.

New Chinese in Suriname are associated with a sudden and remarkable increase in Chinese immigration in the 1990s. Throughout the 1980s the number of PRC nationals entering Suriname remained a steady 200 persons up to 1990, when about 4,800 Chinese citizens were registered at the Surinamese border controls.¹ The following year a record number of 7,587 Chinese citizens entered Suriname (more than 11% of all non-resident aliens entering Suriname). The numbers sharply dropped in 1996, and averaged a little over 1,100 until 2003. Although the numbers rose in 2004, they fell over the next two years to 1,246 in 2006.

¹ Interestingly, in the same period the number of people who self-identified as ethnic Chinese in neighbouring Guyana remained roughly stable: 1,864 in 1980, 1,290 in 1991, and 1,395 in 2002, about 0.2% of the total population. In 2002, foreign nationals (646) made up 46.3% of all self-identified Chinese (2002 Population and Housing Census, published 13 October 2005, obtained via the Embassy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in Paramaribo). Up to 1980 the Chinese population of Guyana had been shrinking, to the point that it was no longer listed as a separate category in the Population Census. Chinese were included with Europeans, Portuguese, Syrians and Lebanese in the Portuguese-dominated ‘Other’ category, together only 1% of the total population. (Kwok-Crawford 1989: 6). Nothing quite like the Surinamese ‘New Chinese’ phenomenon has been reported from Guyana.
Chinese were a minor part of the influx of non-resident aliens during these 21 years, as the majority consisted of holders of Dutch passports.

Anything approaching real migration data for Chinese in Suriname only covers the period after the great influx of the 1990s. Emigration figures compiled by the Department of Demographic Statistics of the Surinamese Civil Registry (CBB) are inaccurate, as most emigrants do not trouble with removing their names from the civil registry list. The vast majority of those who do follow the procedure move to the Netherlands. In 2002 (the year for which data are available from CBB, ABS, as well as the Surinamese Ministry of Labour) 886 out of the 951 registered emigrants (93.1%) moved to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, mostly to the Netherlands (790, or 83.1%). The Dutch CBS, however, recorded 3,356 immigrants from Suriname, more than four times as many as the number of emigrants to the Netherlands recorded by the Surinamese CBB. The CBB did not record PRC nationals among the emigrants to the Netherlands in 2002. PRC citizens who acquired Surinamese

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**Chart 1: Numbers of Non-Resident Chinese Nationals Entering Suriname via J.A.Pengel International Airport, 1985-2006 (data from SIC 220-2006/2 and SIC 242-2008/1)**

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2 ABS data are not fully reliable. According to the statistics for 2006 in SIC 242-2008/1, tourists from the PRC outnumbered PRC nationals entering via the international airport and the port of Nieuw Nickerie: 1,757 versus 1,391. In SIC 242-2008/1, the number of non-resident PRC nationals entering via the international airport in the year 1996 was set at 2,011, instead of 724 in earlier publications (e.g. SIC 220-2006/2).
nationality might of course have registered their exit with the CBB, but this category was simply not recorded.

It is unclear how accurate CBB immigration figures are. It is also not really clear to what extent migrants can avoid formal registration in Suriname; insofar they exist, data on undocumented migrants in Suriname are unreliable (see Chart 2). According to the CBB, the numbers of Chinese immigrants\(^3\) averaged at a relatively stable rate of 212 between 2000 and 2004. If we again take the year 2002 as an example, there were 152 registered immigrants from the PRC, most of whom settled in Paramaribo (127 or 83.6%). The Ministry of Labour issued work permits to 373 PRC nationals in that year. This is far less than the 962 non-resident PRC nationals who entered via the international airport and more than twice the 152 PRC nationals who formally immigrated. With migration statistics lacking, there is no way to accurately track the number of PRC citizens or ethnic Chinese entering and leaving the country.\(^4\) In any case the 2004 population census registered 3,654 PRC nationals, which is 41.6% of the 8,775 self-identified ethnic Chinese who were registered in that census.

In the 1990s the new influx of Chinese migrants was immediately noticeable to local observers: PTH was spoken in the street, names were transcribed from PTH in the Pinyin Romanization of the PRC, new Chinese shops were springing up everywhere and in a break with the stereotype of Chinese shopkeeper, and these new shopkeepers did not speak Sranantongo. In an appendix on the Chinese which is included in their short study of class and ethnic distribution in Paramaribo, in 1997 Schalkwijk and De Bruijne\(^5\) described a basically stable Hakka-dominated urban entrepreneurial minority group, but in the revised second edition of 1999, they noted changes with regard to homelands, languages, and financial resources of recent Chinese migrants, as well as the new phenomenon of PRC resource extraction and technical cooperation projects.\(^6\)

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\(^3\) This refers to PRC nationals who have formally registered their Surinamese residence status with the CBB.

\(^4\) Travellers are asked to give their reasons for entering Suriname in a limited questionnaire; Chinese chain migrants generally state ‘visiting family’. Their motivations for travelling to Suriname or their possible activities there are not asked about elsewhere. Travellers leaving Suriname and emigrants are also not asked about their destinations or the reasons for leaving.

\(^5\) Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1997: 98-99. The study was based mainly on 1992 fieldwork data.

Because they were so unlike the Chinese of the past, the unfamiliar immigrants were soon commonly called *nieuwe Chinese* (Dutch: ‘new Chinese’) and *nyun Snéisi* (Sranantongo: ‘new Chinese’). These latest migrants were also ‘new’ to Fuidung‘on Hakka observers in Suriname, and not just as the latest migrant cohort (*sinkeh*); the Chinese-language newspapers in Paramaribo refer to the New Chinese as ‘New Migrants’ (*xin yimin*), a term transplanted from the PRC to these latest migrants. ‘New Migrants’ is not an exact equivalent of ‘New Chinese’; New Migrants is an international terms that refers to migrants who left the PRC after 1978, while New Chinese (*nieuwe Chinese*) is a local term that refers to Chinese migrants who became noticeable to the Surinamese public after 1990. In the local Chinese papers, the new cohorts even referred to themselves as ‘New Chinese’ (*xin huaren*, see Paragraph 9.2.3).

Wang Gungwu notes that the term New Migrants was coined by PRC authorities to refer to the renewed emigration following economic reforms in the late 1970s. The New Migrants category is in fact a pragmatic strategy linked to economic develop-

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ment. The communist ideology of the PRC could not readily accommodate the existence of *huajuan* (dependents of Overseas Chinese), although it recognized that huaqiao were a useful source of foreign exchange through the remittances they sent to their dependents in the homeland. When the promise of remittances remained unfulfilled in the 1950s, the special privileges of Overseas Chinese dependents under the Maoist regime were curtailed. In the post-Mao reform period of the late 1970s, Overseas Chinese and their dependents were rehabilitated, as they came to be seen as an asset in the modernization project of the PRC. Rapid economic development was the main reason why the PRC established policies to engage with the ‘Chinese diaspora.’ With direct contact with the homelands renewed, Overseas Chinese supported their dependents with luxury goods and cash gifts, but by the mid-1980s it had become clear that remittances and donations were no longer necessary or as important as they once were.

The Chinese authorities managed the loyalties of Overseas Chinese by refocusing them on their dependents in China. Overseas Chinese interest in the homeland was organized in terms of interest in one’s ‘ancestral village’, and such contacts were managed by the state institution of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office. *Huajuan* areas were institutionalized as *qiaoxiang* to accommodate Overseas Chinese contributions, and eventually certain *qiaoxiang* in the coastal areas were designated Special Economic Zones to attract investments. In the migration policy of the PRC which is geared to bringing migrant groups under its control, the formal category of New Migrants is a subset of the *huaren* (i.e. ‘ethnic Chinese’) category, together with *huayi* (i.e. ‘people of Chinese descent’). While Wang does not see New Migrants replacing the Overseas Chinese (*huaqiao-qiaoxiang*) model, PRC authors treat the new migration less as an extension of the labourer-merchant-sojourner trajectory and more are as a redefinition of Chinese migration.

New Migrants were designated as such in line with modern views of globalized migration – the ‘new migration’. They were also new in the context of the PRC: they were taking part in a renewed migration after almost thirty years (between the founding of the PRC in 1949 and the relaxation of emigration barriers in 1978), but

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8 Thunø 2001; Barabantseva 2005.
9 Bolt 1996.
10 Barabantseva 2005: 12.
12 Xiang 2003.
there were also new types of transnational ties between migrants and their homeland through modern mass media and mass transit. There is also the sense that New Migrants may be like ‘old migrants’ in that they are ethnically and culturally bound to China, but they inherently share the modernizing goal of the state; in this way economic success makes them patriotic.\textsuperscript{14} Reasons for recognizing the overseas links of New Migrants were therefore fundamentally pragmatic – to manage their transnationalism by preserving their link with the PRC. However, their transnationalism remains fundamentally problematic for the PRC; dual nationality is not a problem, but no transnational citizenship participation in PRC is possible. Instead, New Migrants are bound to the PRC via transnationalized ethno-patriotic loyalty, which rephrases sinocentric notions of Chinese identity in terms of the PRC as ‘the motherland’.\textsuperscript{15}

As a segment of globalized migration, New Chinese Migrants are literally found all over the globe, but they were first described as such in relation to North America and Europe.\textsuperscript{16} Writing in the late 1990s, Zhuang Guotu typified post-1978 migrants as relatively young, firmly embedded in Chinese culture, well-educated, mostly legal, and with a definite economic motivation.\textsuperscript{17} Pál Nyíri lists the characteristics of New Chinese Migration in Europe\textsuperscript{18}:

- They may be from regions in the PRC without a tradition of overseas migration;
- For most, overseas migration is a continuation of internal migration in the PRC;
- They are upwardly mobile;
- Migration is not a survival strategy;
- Destinations are chosen to minimise competition with other Chinese migrants, and competition drives remigration;
- Migrant categories (traders, labourers, students, etc.) shift and overlap;
- Distinctions between legal and illegal migration are blurred;
- China is the centralized concept of the PRC, not the specific qiaoxiang central to huqiao imagination;
- They are less likely to adapt economic and cultural mechanisms to local conditions.

\textsuperscript{14} Nyíri 2001: 638.
\textsuperscript{16} Nyíri 1999; Nieto 2003; Pieke et al 2004.
\textsuperscript{17} Zhuang 1997: 3. Zhuang includes entrepreneurs from Hong Kong and Taiwan in his analysis.
\textsuperscript{18} Nyíri 1999: 118-128.
Rapidly increasing immigration of the kind that marked the appearance of New Chinese in Suriname was initially noted particularly in Europe.\(^{19}\) With regard to the developing world, New Chinese Migrants have been documented and tracked in Africa and in other locations lacking any previous history of Chinese immigration.\(^{20}\)

In one sense New Chinese migrants are not new; they may be considered the result of renewed migration from China. This is another possible meaning of *xin yimin*. In the thirty-odd years between the founding of the PRC in 1949 and economic reforms in the late 1970s, migration from mainland China came to a virtual standstill. As an incarnation of globalized migration, New Chinese Migrants are often assumed to be transnational, which links them to the older term ‘Chinese diaspora’ by the promise of deterritorialization of collective migrant identity. However, New Chinese migration is a challenge to the traditional assumptions about the nature of a ‘Chinese diaspora’, and is probably more usefully regarded as part of, in Skeldon’s words: ‘a varied and complex migration of Chinese peoples’.\(^{21}\)

In Suriname, New Chinese are also not quite new in another sense, as mentioned in Paragraph 3.5. Although Chinese in Suriname tend to ethnicize the distinction between the *laokeh* and New Chinese – *laokeh* are Hakkas, New Chinese do not, since the latest Fuidung’on Hakka migrant cohorts are New Migrants. It seems that earlier Fuidung’on Hakka migrants had a hard time recognizing post-1990 Chinese migrants were *sinkeh* from the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang. Pre-1990 Fuidung’on Hakka migrant cohorts were not familiar with more recent branches of the chain migration network and were basically ignorant of the impact of social and cultural developments there.

It is unclear what the proportion of Fuidung’on Hakka *sinkeh* among New Chinese migrants was, but it is unlikely to have dropped to zero after 1990. If all one had to go on were the Surinamese naturalization decrees, there would be no reason to believe that non-Fuidung’on Hakkas had ever entered Suriname in substantial numbers. Between 1977 and 1995 there were only 14 applicants who were born in China and from outside the Fuidung’on area, just 1.3% of the 1,118 applicants had Chinese names and

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\(^{20}\) E.g. Li 2000; Dobler 2008; Østbø & Carling 2005.

\(^{21}\) Skeldon 2003:63.
5.6% of these had Mandarin names. A total of nine naturalization decrees were issued between 1996 and 2005, by which 660 Chinese persons were granted Surinamese citizenship. Of these, 88% had names transcribed in Pinyin, of which about 12% were from outside the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang.

It is not possible to reconstruct the number of Fuidung’on Hakkas versus non-Fuidung’on Hakka migrants for this period. The naturalization decrees do not accurately reflect immigration patterns, only the willingness of immigrants to naturalize. Taking into account the requirement of 5 years of uninterrupted residence in Suriname before one can apply for citizenship, the Chinese migrants appearing in the decrees of the year 2000 entered Suriname no later than 1995, this is when the second peak of 5,105 non-resident Chinese entries occurred (Chart 1). Non-Fuidung’on migrants had clearly entered Suriname in substantial numbers, but the reasons why so few of them applied for Suriname citizenship remain unknown.

4.1 Regional Backgrounds

As all ethnic Chinese (i.e. Han) migrants in Suriname from the PRC view themselves as originating from a monolithic ‘China’, one should be careful not to overemphasize regional differences that would risk imposing sub-ethnic categories that Chinese subjects do not recognize themselves. However, in the Surinamese case it would certainly do no harm to note the different regional origins of Chinese migrants as loyalty claims based on regional identification is an established basis for social organization among Chinese migrants. Regional backgrounds of New Chinese migrants should also be taken into account, not only as it would counter the tendency to see a monolithic Chinese ethnic group, but also to question ‘New Chinese’ as a uniform ethnic label that distinguishes Fuidung’on Hakkas from other Chinese migrants. This label is an

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22 Jiangsu Province: 1; Guizhou Province: 1; Shanghai: 2; Zhejiang Province: 8, of whom 2 from Dongyang, 1 from Wencheng, and 1 from Hangzhou. Besides these 14 from the PRC there were also 4 applicants from Taiwan.
23 Guangdong Province: 27, of which 8 from Guangzhou, 7 from Taishan, 3 from Shunde, 3 from Huidong, 2 from Zhongshan, 1 from Macao, 1 from Yangchun County, 1 from Boluo County, 1 from Zijin County; Zhejiang Province: 5, of which 2 from Wencheng County; Fujian Province: 2, of which 1 from Jinjiang and one from Shishi; Shanghai: 2; ‘Xin Jiong’ (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region? The occasional Han migrant from Xinjiang has been noted in Paramaribo): 1.
 artefact of interaction between outsiders and migrants across linguis tic and cultural barriers, and it serves as a significant marker of strategic group identity in other contexts.

The New Chinese in Suriname have come from every imaginable region in the Chinese world, but the vast majority arrived from the coastal provinces of the PRC, from Hainan in the south all the way to Liaoning along the North Korean border. With their arrival, the linguistic and cultural situation within the Chinese segment of Suriname became unusually complex. Up to then, the main factors affecting Chinese identity in Suriname were assimilation (the Tong’ap-Laiap distinction) and modernity (in particular the influence of Hong Kong), and to this were now added regional variation and the modernity of the PRC. Subsequently Fuidung’on Hakka identity was rephrased as a specific provincial (Guangdong) and linguistic background (Kejia). The various New Chinese groups now have their own sinkeh cohorts and local-born or locally educated children, though a distinction between immigrants and ‘New Chinese Laiap’ has not yet emerged.24

Regional variation among Chinese migrants in Suriname is framed in Chinese terms by Chinese speakers, the basic distinction being between Northerners and Southerners. New Chinese are often called ‘Northerners’ by Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname, because they speak PTH, the Mandarin koine which is the official language of the PRC. There are true Northerners in Suriname – mother tongue speakers of varieties of Mandarin, whose home-towns were in north of the Changjiang / Yangzi River: Nanjing, Shandong Province, Beijing, the Provinces of Liaoning, Heilongjiang and Jilin (the Dongbei region). As native speakers of Mandarin varieties, Northerners enjoy high status among the Southern Chinese majority in Suriname, but they are keenly aware that they are occasionally associated with some less desirable (non-Northern) New Chinese cohorts by the Fuidung’on Hakkas. In turn, they distinguish themselves linguistically and phenotypically as ‘Northerners’ versus the ‘Southerners’ – everybody else. The North-South divide is sometimes used to claim affinity across sub-ethnic boundaries. For instance, Hainanese accept that they speak a different language and have a different qiaoxiang than the Fuidung’on Hakkas, but they will include themselves among ‘us Southerners’

24 There is no reason to assume that New Chinese migrants will avoid processes of integration and assimilation that produced Laiap. It will be interesting to see how large such a local-born New Chinese generation will be, and if it will merge with the Laiap.
(Hainanese, Hakkas, Cantonese, Hongkongese, Guangxinese) in contrast to ‘others’ (Wenzhounese, Mandarin native speakers, etc.).

4.1.1 The North: Shandong Province, Dongbei Region

Currently the largest group of Mandarin native speakers in Suriname consists of about 100 Shandongese, a slight majority of whom come from Qingdao. Although there might have been individual Shandongese immigrants in Suriname in the early 1990s, there has only been a sustained presence of Shandongese in Suriname since the middle of that decade. Economically, the Shandongese in Suriname are a heterogeneous group, ranging from street vendors to Baihuo Business traders (see Paragraph 4.2.1 below), and individuals known to have a lot of foreign currency. Generally speaking, the Shandongese are better educated than most New Chinese, and do not copy the Fuidung’on Hakka habit of retreating from public scrutiny; for instance, a short-lived one-hour programme on the ATV television station in 2003 in PTH and English (‘A Bridge to Suriname, a Window to China’) was an initiative of two Shandongese women, and the only non-Fuidung’on Hakka newspaper (Huawen Zhoubao) is published by a Shandongese man.

Most other native speakers of Mandarin varieties in Suriname are from the Dongbei region (known in the West as Manchuria). Their presence is the result of PRC technical cooperation projects and resource extraction projects (see Chapter 5.4). During the 1990s, a group of about 50 construction workers from Nanjing worked in Paramaribo under temporary contracts; a smaller number entered a decade later and set up a construction company catering to ethnic Chinese clients. About 50 people from the Dongbei region work in Suriname in logging and construction, as workers and administrators. People working in the timber industry are virtually all from Jilin Province. The China Dalian International Cooperation (group) Holdings Ltd., based in Dalian in Liaoning Province, which carried out an extensive road rehabilitation project in Paramaribo (see Chapter 4) during the 1990s and early 2000s, used construction workers from Nanjing and higher level expat staff from Liaoning Province. Dongbei people not involved in logging or construction work in supermarkets owned by Chinese from other backgrounds, and a few individuals own their own businesses. The

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25 Current contract labourers in the Dalian road rehabilitation projects have various regional backgrounds.
vast majority – from all three Dongbei Provinces of Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang – are men, with only a few families in Suriname. There are small numbers of individual women migrants, some of whom work as salespeople in ethnic Chinese shops, while others seem to be sex workers.

Not all Liaoningese are ethnic Han, however. An unknown, but apparently substantial number are ethnic Koreans – the only ‘ethnic minority overseas Chinese’ in Suriname. The Liaoning Koreans came to work for South Korean fishery companies that were active in Suriname during the 1980s and 1990s. The South Koreans had their own migration network in South America, focusing on São Paolo, Buenos Aires and Paraguay. During the 1990s, the South Korean fishermen were applying for entry visa and work permits for ethnic Korean men from Liaoning Province, as specialized workers. As a result, the number of ethnic Koreans in Suriname grew while the number of South Korean citizens shrank. The Korean presence in Suriname might not be sustainable; the South Korean fishing fleets have left Suriname, which ended the recruitment of specialized workers from Liaoning Province, and no links were ever developed through chain migration with the ethnic Korean hometowns.

The existence of the Koreans refutes the illusion of objective truth produced by formal categorization of Chinese nationality. Although the Surinamese State does not formally recognize ethnic categories, its representatives tend to confuse ascribed Chinese identity with holding Chinese citizenship. The Fuidung’on Hakkas from Vietnam were registered as ‘Annamese’ rather than ‘Chinese’ in the 1950 general census, though they were recognized by the established migrants as part of their migrant network. The ethnic Koreans of Suriname were originally South Korean fishermen who operated off the Surinamese coast from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. Some fishermen settled in Suriname, and some of these eventually became involved in a Korean migration network that linked Chile, Argentina and Paraguay with Korea and the Dongbei region. The Surinamese authorities registered the Dongbei Koreans

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26 Cf. Zhao 2004 for the use of the term. Like ‘New Chinese’, the term ‘ethnic minority overseas Chinese’ (少數民族華僑華人) is a political term, aimed at bringing together non-Han migrants from the PRC and relationships with foreign coethnics under the umbrella of the state. Ethnic Koreans are one of the 56 Minority Nationalities recognized by the PRC. A majority live in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province, situated within the territories of the early medieval kingdoms of Goguryeo and Balhae. Despite being from Northern China, they are do not enjoy the same status as ‘Northerners’ in Suriname, who are ethnic Han Chinese.
as citizens of the People’s Republic of China, and were never aware that this particular cohort of New Chinese did not integrate with the established Chinese migrants.

4.1.2 The South-East: Zhejiang Province, Fujian Province

In Suriname, the unflattering Kejia term for New Chinese migrants, Zetgongzai (‘those people from Zhejiang Province’) reflects the fact that the largest New Chinese group is from the southern part of Zhejiang Province. The majority – possibly more than half of an estimated 1,000-2,000 people – are from Wencheng in the Wenzhou area, with smaller numbers from Lishui. There are some people from other areas in Zhejiang Province, such as Hangzhou, but these do not have stable networks linking Suriname to their homeland (migration, qiaoxiang or other transnational networks).

Wenzhounese have been in Suriname from the early 1990s, and they seem to have found Suriname as a natural extension of their European networks, possibly by using the migrant networks of the Fuidung’on Hakkas. The Wenzhounese who I have talked to are linked by language and qiaoxiang, but in contrast to the Fuidung’on Hakkas, they ranged from large groups of people linked by blood, hometown loyalties or employment, who try to maintain two-way flows of people, goods and money across their international networks, to single women going it alone. Zhejiangese entrepreneurial chain migration is basically a variation of the Fuidung’on Hakka system, with ethnic entrepreneurs sponsoring coregionalists or relatives to come to work in their businesses in Suriname.

As a result, most Zhejiangese in Suriname are self-employed owners of corner shops or supermarkets. The Wenzhounese system (‘Baihuo Business’, see below) is closely tied in with the rapid development of Zhejiangese exports, and it is common among New Chinese, particularly Wenzhounese, in many parts of the developing world. However, Zhejiangese migrants do not exhibit much of a transnational identity in Suriname; instead they tend to copy local, tried and proven Fuidung’on Hakka positioning strategies, such as huiguan, ROSCAs and political patronage (see

27 The size of the populations of the various regional groups can only be guessed. Estimates come from various sources among the New Chinese and Fuidung’on Hakkas, and are in no way accurate.

28 A table of language preferences in Huang (2008: 32) carries an interesting suggestion that at least speakers of Zhejiangese varieties have produced a local-born generation.
Chapter 8 for the ‘Zhejiangese Hometown Association’ / Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui. Their particular version of entrepreneurial chain migration has strongly influenced the economic landscape of Suriname.

Wenzhou prospered with the economic reforms in the 1980s, yet the number of huaqiao keeps growing. Wenzhou people have developed a culture of migration which puts great pressure on young people to leave; in the 1930s, returnees could enhance their status and that of their family with money earned in Europe, and by the 1990s a strong ‘qiaoxiang consciousness’ had developed where huaqiao were expected to flaunt their wealth and qiaojuan (i.e. dependents in the qiaoxiang) celebrate their connections in Europe. Wenzhou people are prominent among Chinese migrants in Europe, but Latin America and the Caribbean were not traditional destinations in the 1990s. About 5% of the 7 million inhabitants of greater Wenzhou live abroad, and up to 80% of these are in Western Europe: France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. This European presence began in the 1930s, after migration to Japan came to a halt in the 1920s; less than a third of all Wenchengese migrants went to Europe up to 1929. Motivations of Wenzhou people to Suriname are basically the same as those of Wenzhou people Huaqiao in Europe – to return to Wenzhou rich.

There were apparently also no Fujianese in Suriname before the early 1990s. Current numbers are impossible to estimate, this is so even for the few Fujianese shopkeepers willing to speak to outsiders. Linguistic identification is difficult, as many Min varieties are mutually unintelligible and Fujianese therefore tend to use PTH as a lingua franca. Although the Fujianese migrants seem to be encouraging the mystery surrounding their presence in Suriname, they publicly – in Chinese-language media – refer to themselves as Fujianese (fujianren) and have started to organize themselves accordingly (the Fujian Tongxiang Hui, see Paragraph 8.3). Other than the indisputable fact that there are New Chinese from Fujian Province in Suriname, very little can be said about them. Most Fujianese are said to run supermarkets; none of the Fujianese supermarkets that could be identified with certainty appeared to be very successful.

29 Thunø 1999: 175.
30 Li 1999a: 190-192.
32 Thunø 1999.
33 Strictly speaking, the few Peranakan Chinese in Suriname from Indonesia could be said to have had a Fujianese background.
Despite the lack of clear data on Fujianese in Suriname, the Surinamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, influenced by the international media and apparently the US embassy, assumed that New Chinese were mainly and perhaps even exclusively Fujianese.\(^{34}\) This association of New Chinese with one particular regional background parallels the way New Chinese were called ‘Zhejiangese’ by the established Fuidung’on Hakkas. In 1991 a Shanghainese informant told me that there were some shopkeepers in Paramaribo from the Jinjiang Area in Fujian Province. In 2002 a Hainanese informant was certain that Fujianese made up the vast majority of New Chinese immigrants in Suriname and that most of these Fujianese were from Sanming in Fujian Province. Has there been a shift from one Fujianese qiaoxiang to another over the years, or have there always been smaller numbers of people or even individuals from other areas in Fujian?

Migrants from a few villages in Xianyou County formed a remarkable subgroup.\(^{35}\) All were involved in selling instant lottery tickets for the *Sociaal Culturele Vereniging Xin Hua Lin Liang Xin* (‘the Xin Hua Lin Liang Xin Socio-Cultural Association’), founded by one Lin Liangxin along the Latourweg in the southern outskirts of Paramaribo. The lottery served to facilitate chain migration; newcomers from Xianyou paid off loans for their travel expenses and other debts by selling tickets.\(^{36}\) The Lin Liangxin Association was dismantled by 2003, but the group’s shadowy organizer had moved on to other short-term money-making ideas, for instance an enterprise with a number of Tong’ap exploiting a small and temporary amusement park in the entertainment district of Paramaribo under the name of ‘Good World Tourism N.V.’\(^{37}\)

\(^{34}\) Interview: Visa Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001.

\(^{35}\) The group would be called Henghua (PTH: Xinghua, the name of the older administrative entity that included the current counties of Xianyou and Putian in central Fujian) in Singapore. Henghua migrants are common in Southeast Asia, but comparatively rare in the New World (Fujian Sheng Zhi: 183-188). Associations on the basis of Henghua identity are even rarer there. Xianyou County is not a major qiaoxiang. According to the Xianyou Xian Zhi, 7,914 people of a population of 914,756 in 1992 were migrants, mostly entrepreneurial migrants.

\(^{36}\) The instant lottery scheme mirrored earlier Fuidung’on Hakka lotteries, *lampa* in the 19\(^{th}\) and *piauw* in the twentieth centuries, which served to provide destitute immigrants with a source of income. Cf. Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 58-62, 126-129.

\(^{37}\) 好世界國際旅遊業有限公司.
Taiwanese, who are geographically and linguistically linked to Fujian Province, are present in Suriname in negligible numbers.\(^38\) Taiwanese in Suriname are like New Chinese in the sense that they are not Fuidung’on Hakkas, but their presence has nothing to do with renewed migration from the PRC in the late 1970s. In South America, Suriname is not a primary destination of choice for Taiwanese migrants, most of whom can be found in metropolises such as São Paolo. The Taiwanese presence in Suriname can be traced back to the founding of the Surinamese branch of the Kuomintang in Paramaribo (1943), in line with the policy of the Chinese Nationalist government to increase its influence among Overseas Chinese. The Kuomintang government in Taiwan funded a printing press for a Chinese language newspaper in Suriname, *Lam Foeng* (‘Southern Wind’).\(^39\) Taiwanese taught Mandarin in the Chinese school on the premises of the Kuomintang club / Fa Tjaw Song Foei. But by the time the People’s Republic of China was the first foreign state to recognize the newly independent Suriname in 1975, the role of the Kuomintang was over. In 2003 there were five Taiwanese families in Suriname, with a total of about 20 persons. One family has been there for more than twenty years, fully integrated into Surinamese society, with children who are indistinguishable from fully assimilated children from the Fuidung’on Hakka cohort. The four other families arrived in Suriname around 1997, and are all missionaries of a Taiwanese syncretist ‘Daoist’ lay group that is active among non-Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean.\(^40\)

4.1.3 The South: Hainan Province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Guangdong Province

Hainanese migrants are the most prominent of the New Chinese from the South. One estimate of about 500 of Hainanese in Suriname...
me in 2003 is based on a suggestion of a Hainanese informant that there were about 100 families. Most are from Wenchang, in the North-east of Hainan Province, with smaller numbers from the provincial capital Haikou. The first Hainanese in Suriname apparently arrived as partners of Fuidung’on Hakkas, sometimes in the late 1980s. They quickly developed a stable Hainanese group, with an identical system of sponsored migration through apprenticeship in retail shops as the Fuidung’on Hakkas. Hainanese copied the local Fuidung’on Hakka strategy of corner shops and supermarkets, as well as riding the rollercoaster of Zhejiangese commodity export via the Baihuo Business links of the Wenzhounese. Although there is chain migration, in the sense of Hainanese entrepreneurs sponsoring relatives and others from the qiaoxiang to come to Suriname, it is unclear to what extent Hainanese migrants use transnational networks (i.e. Hainanese speakers and coregionalists not necessarily resident in the qiaoxiang) to reach Suriname, nor if Suriname is anything but an ad hoc destination.

To outsiders, Hainanese in Suriname are not clearly distinguishable from Tong’ap. They copy Fuidung’on Hakka attitudes to local positioning, and are Chinese migrants in a very broad sense, with very little ‘traditional culture’ for non-Chinese to observe. Although Hainan Province is home to four official nationalities and at least eight languages in four distinct language groups, all Hainanese in Suriname call themselves Han Chinese, which is not surprising, as northern Hainan is dominated by Han. The more robustly assertive Wenzhounese are much easier to identify for Fuidung’on Hakkas and to dislike than the Hainanese. Hainanese in Suriname consider themselves less affluent than either the Fuidung’on Hakkas or the Wenzhounese, though there is clear variation in wealth within the group. Hainanese have established an organization, the Hainan Tongxiang Hui, which is actively fostering links with other Hainanese tongxianghui abroad (see Chapter 8).

When self-differentiating, the southern Chinese in Suriname tend to combine criteria of provincial origins and spoken dialect. This results in a broad distinction between Hainanese and mainland southerners from Guangxi and Guangdong Provinces. In practice, mainland southerners further distinguish between speakers of Yue (‘Cantonese’) and Kejia, basically reflecting the distinction between

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41 The four officially recognized ethnic groups of Hainan are Han (i.e. ethnic Chinese), and the three Minority Nationalities of Li, Yao, and Hui. These speak, respectively, Sinitic (Wenchang, Haikou and Yue), Tai-Kadai (Lingao, Hlai, Jiamao, Cun), Hmong-Mien (Kim Mun) and Austronesian (Tsat) languages.
Fuidung’on Hakkas and outsiders. Migrants from Guangxi Province, for instance, all speak local varieties of Yue.\(^{42}\) Like the Fujianese, migrants from Guangxi Province only relate to one another at the provincial level. Most long-term residents in Suriname from Guangxi are shopkeepers, but these do not seem to have developed a chain migration link with their hometowns. It is unclear how and when the first Guangxinese arrived in Suriname, and although we know that they were not many, their numbers can only be guessed at.

Guangdong Province has obviously provided the vast majority of Chinese migrants to Suriname - the Fuidung’on Hakkas. New Chinese from Guangdong, however, are a minority. Apparently, most come from Guangzhou City and Taishan in the Siyi Region.\(^ {43}\) The majority of native speakers of Yue varieties would seem to be from Guangzhou; in fact, numbers of Guangzhou migrants seem to have been substantial enough to warrant the foundation of a ‘Guangzhou Hometown Association’ (Guangzhou Tongxiang Hui) somewhere before 2007.\(^ {44}\)

Though they are minority among the Southerners, Chixi Hakkas are remarkable because they have developed a separate ethnic economy based on urban agriculture, they have an institutionalized link with their qiaoxiang via a newsletter, and they are not ‘New Chinese Migrants’ according to Nyíri’s characteristics: they have a long huaqiao tradition, the individuals in Suriname generally do not have a history of internal migration, they are not upwardly mobile and for them overseas migration is very much a survival strategy.\(^ {45}\) They are chain migrants, sponsoring relatives to come to Suriname to escape the poverty of Xiangling Village and provide a better future for their children, who are assimilating into Surinamese society.\(^ {46}\) Their agricultural activities are a survival strategy

\(^{42}\) Guangxi is ethnically and linguistically very heterogeneous, which is reflected in its official designation as Zhuang (ethnic group related to the Thai) Autonomous Region. However, all Guangxinese in Suriname self-identify as ethnic Han.

\(^{43}\) Siyi, ‘four counties’, refers to the former counties of Taishan, Enping, Kaiping and Xinhui in the west of the Pearl River Delta. The Chixi Hakkas are not the first Siyi migrants in Suriname; some of the indentured labourers were from the Siyi area, and according to Lai & Yang (1990: 681) a minority of Surinamese Chinese hailed from Heshan the ‘fifth county’ in the Siyi area.

\(^{44}\) Times of Suriname, 28 April 2007, ‘Communique “Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foei” (Communique from Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foei).

\(^{45}\) Nyíri 1999.

\(^{46}\) The Chixi Hakka chain migrant network originated from within the Fuidung’on Hakka network. Sometime in the 1950s the son of a Tong’ap and a Creole woman was sent to the PRC for a Chinese education, and in the early 1980s he returned with a Chixi Hakka wife. The wife’s relatives followed, and by 2003 there were about 100 Hakkas from the village of Xiangling in Chixi District (Kejia: Ciakkai Hî), Taishan,
copied from Xiangling, where planting vegetables for private use is normal. Qiaoxiang ties are strong, with relatives in Xiangling sending packets of seed, clothing, etc. to Suriname, and migrants sending back goods and cash when possible. Chixi migrants consider urban agriculture as a proven survival strategy, but none have long-term entrepreneurial ambitions in agriculture.47

Though the group of Chixi Hakka agriculturalists is small, with no more than about eight households planting full-time at any moment, they are basically the only group involved in classical urban agriculture in Paramaribo.48 Despite problems such as bad drainage and inferior soil, the urban farmers from Xiangling have succeeded in sustaining a weekly market every Sunday morning in Paramaribo, this is one of a number of informal Sunday markets.49 Their chain migration network is not based on apprenticeship in

spread over Greater Paramaribo. About 200 Hakkas from other areas in Chixi District followed this link to Suriname, as well as about 300 Hoisan-speakers from other Taishan districts. Most (particularly the Hoisan-speakers) are in the same economic niche as Fuidung’on Hakkas: supermarkets and corner shops. Quite a few can be found in the informal sector, selling roast meat, washing cars, and engaged in urban agriculture. Although Hoisan (or Taishanese: Sinitic > Yue > Yue Hai > Siyi > Taishan), is related to standard Cantonese, the two languages are not mutually comprehensible.

47 I introduced University of Amsterdam geography student Frank Hoogendoorn who was in Suriname to write an Ma. Thesis on urban agriculture in Suriname to some Chixi Hakka agriculturalists in 2003. One respondent reluctantly suggested to Hoogendoorn that a good monthly yield could amount to €200, if the rainy season was not too heavy and pests could be controlled and landlords (non-Chinese as well as Chinese) did not decide to raise rents (Hoogendoorn 2004: 110).


49 The ‘Chinese Sunday Market’ began in front of a Tong’ap restaurant (Weidestraat / Fred Derbystraat) in the 1990s, but after municipal authorities decided to crack down on informal markets for the regional Carifesta festival of Caribbean culture that was to be held in Paramaribo in 2003, the market moved to the Waaldijkstraat where the Tong’ap owner of a restaurant / hotel interceded to acquire permits on behalf of the Chixi Hakkas. In 2006 the market had grown and moved to a parking lot near the Chung Fa Foei Kon huiguan. It was to find a permanent location in the Kankan triestaat in Paramaribo in late 2008. (De Ware Tijd 19 May 2008, ‘Chinese zondagmarkt krijgt binnenkort vaste stek’ (Chinese Sunday market to get permanent location shortly)). The Chinese Sunday market is unique in the Caribbean, with its Southern Chinese or Southeast Asian combination of locally grown Chinese vegetables, poultry, imported Chinese foodstuffs and dim-sum style foods. According to a short item on the Market in Paramaribo Post magazine, the snacks are a transplanted strategy; in Chixi people would compete by selling the same vegetables and try to diversify by selling snacks (Chang 2005). The market has a favourable reputation as a specialty market with the closest approximation of organically grown produce in Paramaribo. The rest of the week the urban agriculturalists sell their products directly from home or from fixed locations in downtown Paramaribo under the protection of Fuidung’on Hakka businesses, and they also supply fresh vegetables to Chinese restaurants.
corner shops or supermarkets, either as insiders in Taishanese businesses or as outsiders in non-Taishanese (i.e. established Fuidung’on Hakkas or different New Chinese) businesses. Urban agriculture is a niche for fresh chain migrants; ideally, Chixi Hakka sponsors in Paramaribo will have moved on to the retail business and let their relatives take over their agricultural network. Urban agriculture does not promote community formation in Suriname, even though mutual cooperation would be far more feasible than in the retail niche. The agriculturalists view each other as competitors and keep communication down to a minimum. Participants in the Chinese Sunday Market copy each other’s innovations almost immediately.

The Chixi Hakkas overseas are linked through a qiaokan, a special type of magazine linking huaqiao to the qiaoxiang, which was first published in Taishan in the 1910s. The modern magazine for Chixi Hakka huaqiao, the Caofeng Qiaokan appeals to the loyalty of Chixi Hakka huaqiao on the basis of Hakka identity. The magazine contains general information for Overseas Chinese, news from home, lists of remittances from Chixi Hakkas overseas and items on Hakka culture, but Chixi Hakkas from Suriname are glaringly absent. This makes the Chixi Hakkas the only Chinese in Suriname with a clear-cut transnational Chinese, albeit Hakka, identity. Individuals have an ancestral village and the whole group is linked to a qiaoxiang, but Chixi Hakkas do not imagine ‘Hakka-ness’ as defined by and limited to the geographical territory of China.

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50 Hsu 2004.
51 The particular history of Chixi District as a ‘Hakka reservation’ to accommodate ‘ethnic cleansing’ as a means to end Hakka-Punti violence at the end of the 19th century (Zheng 1998) has influenced the way Chixi Hakkas view Hakka identity. All differences between Hakkas are considered minor. Asked if Chixi Kejia and Fuidung’on Kejia are mutually intelligible, one Chixi Hakka informant in her early thirties answered: “Of course. They’re completely the same. We’re all Hakkas, we all speak Kejia.” This contrasts with the response of a Kejia-speaking Laiap woman of about the same age: “Yes, I can understand them. But it’s different. The tones are different. They are Hakkas, but they’re not like us.” Chixi Kejia is unclassified in the Language Atlas of China. Dongguan Kejia may be classified as: Sinitic > Kejia > Yuetai > Xinhui > Dongguan Kejia (> Laiap Kejia). Chixi Hakka children, whether born or raised in Suriname, are fully integrated in Paramaribo society from a young age and are for all intents and purposes Laiap. They speak several languages (any bigger or smaller combination of Fuidung’on Kejia, Mandarin, Dutch, Sranantongo, Hoisan, Cantonese, English), unlike their parents, who generally only speak Chixi Kejia and PTH.
4.2 Language and Religion

Language and religion play an important role in Surinamese ethnic discourse by signalling inclusion and exclusion. Religion (common cult) is in fact a very basic ethnic boundary marker, and like commensality and kinship it is a ‘single recursive metaphor’ that simultaneously symbolize and constitute the group.\(^{52}\) Language, like ethnic dress, is a secondary surface marker, in the sense that it communicates the deep basis of ethnic identity but does not constitute it. As an ethnic marker, however, language must be native, not acquired, so that full competence in a particular language variety clearly matches group identification.\(^{53}\) Even so, language and religion associated with ethnic Chinese and Chinese migrants are presented here from the viewpoint of a Surinamese agenda (‘who are these people, what do they speak, to what religion do they belong?’) in order to be able to answer the question to what extent these boundary markers are locally constructed.

There is no doubt that Chinese script is a clear marker of Chinese culture, but since the arrival of New Chinese, how strong is spoken Chinese language as an ethnic marker in Suriname? The 2004 census recorded 3,654 Chinese nationals (i.e. holders of a PRC passport) in Suriname and 8,775 people who self-identified as ‘Chinese’. It should be noted that the formal category of Chinese nationals does not necessarily correspond to a self-ascribed label of Chinese ethnicity. Nor is it the same as ‘New Chinese’ because Chinese nationals in Suriname may be Suriname-born Fuidung’on Hakkas. More than 90% (7,954) of self-identified ethnic Chinese lived in Paramaribo (7,151) and the neighbouring districts of Wanica (653) and Para (150); here there were 3,139 PRC nationals. In these three districts 4,848 first language speakers of unspecified Chinese languages were recorded, as well as 211 second language speakers. This corresponds to 61% and 2.7% respectively of the ethnic Chinese in those areas. Numbers of non-ethnic Chinese speakers of Chinese language were likely very small. If we assume that all Chinese nationals are also first language speakers of a Chinese language, then 1,709 ethnic Chinese in Paramaribo, Wanica and Para are native speakers of some variety of Chinese and are not Chinese nationals; this works out to 21.5% of all ethnic Chinese there. As this would suggest that less than two-thirds of all ethnic Chinese in Suriname are native speakers of a Chinese language and

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\(^{52}\) Nash 1989: 11.

\(^{53}\) Nash 1989: 12.
that about one-fifth of non-immigrants speak Chinese, speaking ‘Chinese’ is not a reliable marker of Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname.\textsuperscript{54}

One can safely assume that all New Chinese are native speakers of some form of Chinese, and as PRC citizens they also all speak PTH. The Wenzhounese are speakers of varieties of Wenzhounese (\textit{Wenzhouhua})\textsuperscript{55}. To be precise, the majority of Wenzhounese in Suriname speak rather different sub-varieties from what is spoken in the Wencheng area, such as Daxue, Ruidan, and Huangdan. The sociolinguistic situation in Wencheng is complex; locals are confronted not only with Wenzhounese varieties and the national standard PTH, but also with Southern Min varieties and the non-Sinitic language of the She nationality (\textit{Wencheng Xian Zhi}: 239-242). The dominant language of Hainanese in Suriname is \textit{Hainanhuu} (‘Hainanese’), also known as \textit{Wenchanghua} (‘Wenchangese’).\textsuperscript{56} It is quite different from other Min varieties spoken in Suriname by the Fujianese\textsuperscript{57} and the Taiwanese.\textsuperscript{58} Varieties of Yue spoken in Suriname include Hoisan, Standard Cantonese (Guangzhou), Hong Kong Cantonese, Guangxi Yue.\textsuperscript{59} Shandongese and other Northerners are well aware of the prestige they have in Suriname among the Hakkas and other Southerners and Easterners as native speakers of North-eastern Mandarin varieties, which are very close to PTH.

The main linguistic impact of New Chinese within the Chinese language community in Suriname is the increasing impor-

\textsuperscript{54} Data derived from SIC 224-2006/06, SIC 225-2006/07. As noted earlier, of 1,309 households in Paramaribo, Wanica and Para where some variety of Chinese was either the first or second language, 49.96% used Chinese as the first language and Sranantongo as the second language.

A recent and more reliable estimate of numbers of speakers of Chinese varieties in Suriname is provided by Huang (2008). Based on a sample of 180 subscribers to the Chinese-language huiguan newspapers, Huang (a Laiap native speaker of Kejia) concludes that immigrant subscribers are overwhelmingly multi-lingual, with 83% speaking more than one variety of Chinese, and about 82% speaking Sranantongo. Over 80% prefers Mandarin, slightly more than half prefer Kejia, slightly less than half prefer Cantonese, while about 16% prefer ‘Zhejiangese’ and about 8% ‘Fujianese’, leaving roughly 2% ‘other’ varieties (Huang 2008: 32).

\textsuperscript{55} Sinitic > Wu > Oujiang > Wenzhou.

\textsuperscript{56} Sinitic > Min > Qiongwen > Wenchang

\textsuperscript{57} Sinitic > Min > Puxian > Xianyou

\textsuperscript{58} Sinitic > Min > Minnan > Taiwanese. An interesting detail is that the head of one of the Taiwanese missionary families is a Hakka, which brings the number of reported Kejia varieties in Suriname to four: Dongguan, Chixi, Meixian and Taiwanese (Hailu?).

\textsuperscript{59} Sinitic > Yue > Siyi > Taishan; Sinitic > Yue > Guangfu > Standard Canton, Dongguan Cantonese, Guangxi Cantonese
tance of PTH as an intra-ethnic lingua franca. Not only is PTH a prestige language that signals globalized Chinese identity, but it is also a symbol of the growing power of the PRC and thus ethnic pride through PRC patriotism. PTH is becoming closely linked to written Chinese in Suriname, as transcriptions of local and non-Chinese names are increasingly based on PTH pronunciations rather than Kejia or Cantonese. However, the PRC orthography of simplified characters has not overtaken the traditional orthography, and Chinese texts in Suriname can be found either made up of horizontal lines reading form left to right (and occasionally from right to left) or of columns reading from right to left, with simplified characters treated more like a typographic style than an official orthography.

Language also reflects the position of New Chinese in the broader context of Surinamese society. Immigrants in Suriname can get away with not speaking Dutch, on the condition that they learn Sranantongo. Even though it is not a prestige language and some Surinamese tend to treat it with near disrespect, it is the medium of informal communication and thus signals the lowering of barriers. In 2003 a common criticism levelled at Chinese immigrants was that they did not speak Sranantongo - which was hardly surprising, as many were fairly recent immigrants. The charge of arrogance probably involved the common perception that all Chinese speak Sranantongo, but even so Chinese immigrants (who were seen as profiteers) were singled out as problematic. The apparent increase in discomfort with Chinese immigrants was often expressed by oblique statements, such as, “They should learn the language”.

Despite its importance in Suriname as an ethnic marker, religion does not appear to be treated as such by New Chinese. It may be that they are reticent about clearly placing themselves in religious categories, conditioned by the officially anti-religious stance of the Chinese Communist Party. However toleration for

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According to the Seventh General Census, of the 1,309 households in the three districts of Paramaribo, Wanica and Para (where most self-identified ethnic Chinese were registered) where a variety of Chinese was either the first or second language, 22.7% used only Chinese. Households in which Chinese was the first language and Sranantongo was the second, made up 49.9%. (Data derived from SIC 224-2006/06, SIC 225-2006/07).

The formula was even repeated by President Venetiaan in a speech during the celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year on February 1, 2003 in a huiguan in Paramaribo, when - speaking Sranantongo at the advice of his hosts - he urged new Chinese immigrants in Suriname to ‘learn the language as quickly as possible’. In that particular context, the implied language was Sranantongo.
traditional religions is greater than ever among the various qiao-xiang represented in Suriname. It might also be that New Chinese are trying to reduce their alienness in Suriname as much as possible, or that religious identity is not a relevant ethnic resource in New Chinese economic strategies. In any case, data on religion and ethnicity in the 2004 census in Suriname (see Chart 3) showed an increase in the number of self-proclaimed Chinese ‘adherents of traditional religion’, they numbered 299 out of 8,775 self-identified ethnic Chinese, or 3.4%. However, the term was not clearly defined for Chinese, and there are indications that the actual number may be higher. The number of respondents in the category ‘does not know’ is a remarkable 2,877 or 32.8%. Combining the numbers of adherents of ‘traditional religion’ with those who could (or would) not indicate a religion and those who checked the category of ‘other’, would produce a high sum of 4,044 adherents of Chinese religions, or about 46% of all self-identified ethnic Chinese in Suriname. If the number of traditionalists is nearer this higher range, then the cultural differences between New Chinese and Fuidung’on Hakkas may be greater than the Chinese of Suriname will publicly admit to.

Then again, transplanted irreligious attitudes among migrants from the PRC would present a far less complicated explanation for the results of the census. The varied religious experiences in the different New Migrant qiaoxiang were not reflected in Surina-
me between 1990 and 2005. Popular religion is alive in Wencheng (Wenzhou region), where the most prominent officially sanctioned religion is Buddhism, with 28 functioning monasteries and nunneries in 1990.62 But Wencheng migrants, who are the majority of New Chinese, do not build temples or shrines or attempt to establish a religious identity in the public sphere. There were also no reports of household shrines or altars. Moreover, no remarkable changes in existing public religious practices, for instance relating to the Chinese burial ground, were apparent. But public displays of Chinese festivals did increase. New Chinese tended to celebrate the Lunar New Year / Spring Festival as they have done in their home-towns, but at home with fireworks. Many Tong’ap (Hong Kong Chinese who were now laokeh) considered this very audible statement of cultural belonging too public. The Surinamese public seemed somewhat surprised at the change in ‘Chinese New Year’ from a localized and contained huiguan event to a neighbourhood spectacle.

The conservative nondenominational Protestant church which in Suriname is the Chinese CAMA church (see Paragraph 3.6) is the only organized religious institution that caters to Chinese migrants. Yang’s observations of Chinese conversion to Evangelical Churches in the US also ring true in Suriname63; namely, that these are instrumental responses to local realities rather than personal crises, and that personalities and networks of individual migrants determine the rate of conversion. The CAMA church potentially provides Chinese migrants with a number of benefits: a Chinese environment; an inclusive identity instead of a variety of regional and linguistic identifications; access to local networks of earlier migrant cohorts and established Fuidung’on Hakkas; the transnational network of CAMA, either through missionary networks or between established Chinese churches in the USA, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, etc.; and finally global Evangelical modernity as an alternative to the traditionalism of local Chinese ethnic identity. Even so, the church targets middle-class ethnic Chinese rather than the average, less influential, Chinese migrant. Conversion does not automatically lead to local assimilation, and in fact the Chinese CAMA church can become a generator of instrumental Chinese ethnicity. On the one hand the Chinese-language environment of the ethnic Chinese church community is fostered as a tool for reaching ethnic Chinese in Suriname and abroad, while on the other

62 Wencheng Xian Zhi: 886, 895.
63 Yang 1998.
conversion to protestant conservatism is easy as it is compatible with conservative Chinese notions of family, gender and governance.

4.3 New Chinese as Migrant Entrepreneurs

New Chinese migrants entered Suriname in a period of economic stagnation in the 1990s. Suriname had managed to avoid economic problems of Latin America in 1980s, but just as Latin America was recovering, Suriname was hit by extremely high inflation in the 1990s as a result of huge budget deficits.\textsuperscript{64} These were caused by the suspension of Dutch development aid in the 1980s during the period of Military Rule, plummeting world market prices for bauxite and aluminum, the Jungle War which crippled mining operations, and the fact that Suriname had not been able to access loans from multilateral institutions such as IMF, the World Bank, and IDB.\textsuperscript{65} Inflation peaked at 43% in November 1994, and a wide gap opened between official and parallel market exchange rates. Devaluation of the official rate in January 1999 started a new spiral of inflation, which eventually rose to 150%. Consequently there was a severe recession. The informal sector grew substantially, with an estimated size of 26% of the registered labour force, generating equivalent of over 25% of GDP by the mid-1990s. A substantial illegal sector also developed based on drug trafficking. One IDB estimate suggest about this made up one-third of legitimate formal economy.\textsuperscript{66} Condemned to clientelism in apanjaht ethnopolitics, the government carried out populist policies such as massive growth in government sector wages, expansion of the health care sector (\textit{staatsziekenfonds}), and price controls.\textsuperscript{67}

The socio-economic situation was not a hindrance to the new migrants. New Chinese are a diverse group, as we have seen, and this variety extends to the economic strategies migrants adopt in Suriname. The basic problem is the same, nonetheless; language barriers and the fact that skills and diplomas of Chinese migrants are often not recognized in Suriname, make participation of New Chinese in the formal Surinamese job market as difficult as it was for ‘Old’ migrants. New Chinese faced the same economic challen-

\textsuperscript{64} Braumann & Shah 2001.
\textsuperscript{65} Van Dijk 2001b.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Braumann & Shah 2001.
ges in Suriname as later members of the Fuidung’on Hakka cohort, and had basically the same options: copy and adapt survival strategies of earlier Chinese immigrants in Suriname or continue survival strategies from the qiaoxiang. In fact, most economic strategies employed by New Chinese in Suriname are transplanted, be it construction companies, contract labour in construction or fishery, barber shops / beauty parlours, urban agriculture, catering, or certain forms of retail trade.68

New Chinese lacking a Surinamese network enter the retail trade and catering niches in the same way early Fuidung’on Hakka migrants did, progressing from the informal sector to formal economic participation, first as itinerant vendors (vending roast meats in the case of New Chinese), then small market stalls or open food stalls, followed by corner shops or small cookshops, up to grocery shops, supermarkets, and restaurants of various sizes. There are few really unique strategies and niches available to New Chinese pioneer migrants in Suriname, but they have proven to be very flexible with various short-term income generating strategies, from washing cars from the yard of one’s rented home, to providing specialized cultural services for ethnic Chinese (Chinese foods, traditional Chinese medical services such as tuina massage and acupuncture, etc.). Some of these informal activities mirror those which the New Migrant engaged in when they were in their hometowns but they also mirror those of internal migrants in the PRC. ‘Barber-shops’ (falang) and ‘Chinese massage parlours’ are often covers for family-run prostitution, and there are people who claim to be traditional Chinese medical specialists (acupuncture, qigong therapies, tuina massage, etc.).

Although the variety of strategies has increased, the bulk of Chinese migration to Suriname basically remains sponsored migration based on privately owned businesses of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs. Old as well as New Chinese sponsor relatives or coregionalists to come to Suriname in order to work as apprentices in their retail businesses, to learn the ropes and eventually set up their own
businesses. The system may be stable, but the businesses themselves are not necessarily intended to endure; very few plan to set up a sustainable long-term investment that would cross generations, as they are all hoping for rapid social mobility.

Most Chinese migrants, ‘Old’ or New Chinese, prefer to work in some form of retail business, as no special diplomas are required for this in Suriname and very few other economic strategies are compatible with chain migration. Other economic niches, such as catering and restaurants, allow more limited migration through applications for working permits for specialized staff. The nature of ethnic Chinese businesses in Suriname (geared to the requirements of chain migration rather than intended as long-term enterprises) reinforces the incorrect stereotype of Chinese as temporary residents, using Suriname as a stopover on the way to more prosperous destination. Chinese migrant entrepreneurs might indeed like to move away from other Chinese competitors in Suriname, but that would likely be in the direction of a less affluent destination with less competition.

So is there a single Chinese ethnic ownership economy that New Chinese assimilate into, or are the New Chinese involved in different adaptive strategies in Suriname? The available evidence indicates that New Chinese migrants have indeed adopted a wider range of survival and adaptive strategies upon their arrival in Suriname, but also that they carved out a separate niche in the Surinamese retail sector and have developed an ethnic ownership economy that is distinct from and competes with the Chinese ethnic ownership economy of the ‘Old Chinese’: Baihuo Business as we will see below.

### 4.3.1 Baihuo Business

Like the established Fuidung’on Hakkas, the vast majority of New Chinese, particularly those from Wenzhou and the provinces of Hainan, Fujian, Guangxi, Guangxi and Shandong, based (chain) migration on retail trade. What made them absolutely ‘new’ to the general (non-Chinese) public was their shops which sold an enormous variety of PRC-made commodities for very low prices. The first of these new shops appeared after the influx of Chinese migrants noted by the ABS in the early 1990s; shops selling cheap clothing made in PRC had become noticeable by the late 1990s. The new shops included the term *maoyi gongsi* (lit.: ‘trading companies’, enterprises) in their Chinese-language shop signs. Locals have no
distinct name for the *maoyi gongsi*, other than *Chinese winkels* ('Chinese shops') or *Chinese supermarkten* ('Chinese supermarkets'). At first glance the main difference between a Chinese supermarket in Suriname and a *maoyi gongsi* is the fact that the latter does not carry foodstuffs. The two shop formats are distinguished by their Chinese language shop signs. One of them uses variations of the word *chaoshi* ('supermarket'), the other uses the term *maoyi gongsi*.

Wenzhounese migrants in particular, in keeping with the general pattern of Wenzhounese entrepreneurial migration in PRC and abroad, established their chain migration to Suriname on the trade in cheap everyday consumer products imported from Yiwu in Zhejiang Province. Østbø and Carling present a rare analysis of Wenzhounese entrepreneurial migration which is useful in understanding the Surinamese situation; but remarkably little has been written on New Chinese entrepreneurial chain migration in a South-South context (and even less that highlight regional differentiation). In their Cape Verdean case, Østbø and Carling coined the useful term ‘Baihuo Business’ for this particular entrepreneurial strategy of New Chinese migrants. In Baihuo Business, migrants develop transnational business networks that exploit the drive of privately owned businesses in Zhejiang Province to increase exports, and the need for self-employment among New Migrants who as outsiders in their host societies face limited opportunities for socio-economic advancement. Baihuo Business - the ability to access and exploit Overseas Chinese networks - is just one route towards market expansion which is available to Zhejiangese exporters. Baihuo Business is also just one of many self-employment strategies available to New Migrants. From the angle of ethnic economy theory, Baihuo Business is a New Chinese ethnic ownership economy based on access to migrant networks that link Zhejiang Province to various migrant destinations abroad, including Suriname.

The economy of Zhejiang Province developed explosively after the PRC abandoned socialist planning of the economy, the

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69 According to Østbø & Carling (2005) Cape Verdeans call the shops of New Chinese immigrants *loja chinês* ('Chinese shops'), while the immigrants themselves speak of ‘baihuo shops’. Dobler (2008) reports in Oshikango, Namibia the local term ‘China shops’ is used for the same phenomenon.

70 Østbø & Carling 2005.

71 Baihuo (lit.: ‘hundred commodity’) means ‘general merchandise’. By capitalizing both words, the term is modified here to refer to all its aspects, and to distinguish it from the closely related, but distinctly non-globalized supermarket strategy of the Fuidung’on Hakkas.
liberalization of emigration regulations in the late 1970s, and through rapid increase in exports of low-priced, labour intensive products made by migrant workers from inland provinces. The rapid growth of exports is attributed in particular to the rise of privately-owned enterprises under the Wenzhou Economic Model; most of these exporters are small and medium-sized family-based private enterprises. The family-based enterprises developed from the small traders and producers who clustered in the cities in response to the huge demand for consumer products following the economic reforms, this was basically a revival of local traditions of crafts production or long-distance peddling; small producers gathering together soon gave rise to industrial clustering in Zhejiang – leather shoes in Wenzhou, small commodities for daily use in Yiwu, clothing in Ningbo, ballpoint pens in Fenshui, etc. With the addition of small merchants, clustering revived the traditional commercial institution of the transaction market, first in Zhejiang Province, and later in most cities of the PRC.

This is the background to the rapid development of the huge commodity wholesale market Yiwu China Commodity City in Yiwu, Jinhua Municipality, located in the centre of Zhejiang Province. The Yiwu China Commodity City was formally set up in 1982, and has been the PRC’s largest market of industrial products since 1991. The Yiwu market channels production from Zhejiangese industrial clusters to the rest of the country and abroad. Yiwu China Commodity City sells over 400,000 commodities in 1901 categories from 43 industries, earning it a reputation as the world’s production and distribution centre of daily necessities. Wenzhou, a two or three hour bus ride from Yiwu, is firmly linked to the Yiwu market. Nine Wenzhou industrial clusters opened booths in the Yiwu Market, while Wenzhou merchants expanded sales networks all over the PRC (a revival of long-distance peddling) and abroad through Wenzhouese migration networks. As a hub in a global

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74 Ding 2006a.

75 ‘Yiwu China Commodity City’: 義烏中國小商品市.

76 Ding 2006a.


78 Zhang & Wang 2004; Ding 2006. Exports from Zhejiang are now faced with domestic and foreign barriers. The PRC has suspended the return of value-added
trade network, Yiwu is thus also linked to various migration networks; labour migrants come to Yiwu from inland provinces while Zhejiangese entrepreneurs such as Wenzhounese move products from Yiwu along domestic and transnational networks.\(^{78}\)

Baihuo Business and the ethnic ownership economy of the Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname have developed in separate ways to meet exactly the same needs but of different migrant cohorts. However, the two ethnic economies are not strictly separated, nor do they distinguish their participants along ethnic lines – hardly anyone can avoid selling Yiwu merchandise in Suriname, and Fuidung’on Hakka supermarkets can and do use the Baihuo Business networks. The idea of Baihuo Business is also not completely new to Suriname; it closely resembles the economic strategies used by later Fuidung’on Hakka migrants such as the Hong Kong Chinese, who would sponsor qiaoxiang migrants on the basis of an economy driven by cheap consumer goods from China. New Chinese entrepreneurial migration to African countries like Cape Verde and Namibia is different from that which exists in countries such as Suriname with an old, established Overseas Chinese presence.

Chinese entrepreneurial migrants in Cape Verde and Namibia see themselves as pioneers in new markets, far removed from the PRC, and in the case of Oshikango they mark an end point of Chinese trading networks.\(^{79}\) Though they face heightened anti-Chinese sentiments, New Migrants in Cape Verde and Oshikango are not faced with the problem of positioning themselves politically or ethnically \(\text{vis à vis}\) established Overseas Chinese communities; they are not ‘new’ in contrast to earlier Chinese migrants, but a new local phenomenon. Even so, the organization of Baihuo Business taxes to exporters – a policy intended to encourage exports – as rapid growth of exports implies equally rapid increase of tax revenue. As most developed countries still see the PRC as a planned economy, Zhejiangese exports face protectionist policies abroad (Zhang & Wang 2004).

\(^{78}\) Probably the most famous example of entrepreneurial migration in the PRC is Dahongmen Clothing Street, or ‘Zhejiang Village’. Located in Nanyuan Township, Fengtai District, in the south of Beijing Municipality, Zhejiang Village was founded in the 1980s by settlers from Wenzhou. Early migrants were marginal ‘ethnic’ entrepreneurs, but soon turned to trade in clothing produced in their hometown areas. Zhejiang Village is now home to more than 100,000 migrants from Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong Provinces, and its annual trade volume accounts for more than half of that of Beijing Municipality’s clothing business. According to Xinhua News Agency (October 2003, “Beijing rag-trade “Village” nurtures a host of migrant multimillionaires”) Zhejiang Village has produced multimillionaires, some of whom have extended business networks to the European market.

\(^{79}\) Dobler 2008. According to Dobler, the China shops in Oshikango link Chinese networks and the ‘normal’ retail trade across the border in Angola.
ness in Suriname closely parallels that which is found in the Cape Verdean and Namibian cases. A wide variety of cheap goods of uneven quality are purchased in Zhejiang in relatively small quantities and shipped to Suriname in containers. As in Cape Verde and Namibia, merchants go to Yiwu to order the containers directly, but the number of such importers in Suriname is limited in comparison to the number of migrants involved in Baihuo Business. Underinvoicing of the containers to evade import duties and taxes is a regular practice, in order to bring the goods to the Surinamese market as cheaply as possible. Goods are preferably sold wholesale, but they will also be sold individually.

Baihuo Business in Suriname does not produce significant employment for locals; Surinamese are clients in maoyi gongsi, not workers. There are no reliable data on numbers of non-Chinese employed in Chinese-owned businesses in Suriname, but observation in the field suggests that numbers are low. The idea that only well-trusted people should be allowed to handle money is common to both Fuidung’on Hakka and New Chinese businesses in Suriname. Chinese workers are therefore recruited among relatives, or from networks of people of good repute, which in the past meant that employees shared the same qiaoxiang as the employer. With falling numbers of reliable immigrants from the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang, the businesses of established Fuidung’on Hakkas will also employ non-Fuidung’on Hakka Chinese in the same way as New Chinese maoyi gongsi do. Such Chinese employees are migrants who receive board and lodging, work to repay the costs of a ticket or other expenses related to migration. They might not receive payment in a form acceptable to locals or they might even forego regular payment as apprentices learning business skills and Sranantongo. They are also dependent on their employers in ways that local employees would not be. Maoyi gongsi will employ locals as a practical strategy to overcome the language barriers with the public.

Importers can use cheaply imported goods to provide indirect loans to migrants. The goods are sold to retailers on credit,
who then repay the importer from the profit once the consignment starts selling. According to Østbø and Carling, ‘lending goods’ adds to the pressure to increase turnover, which can be achieved by opening new outlets. However, increased risk to the lender (there is no guarantee that the lender will recoup the loan) results in even more emphasis on relationships of trust (proven relationships, relatives). The number of maoyi gongsi chains in Suriname is small, they are all family-owned and employing people from the same qiaoxiang. The most extensive maoyi gongsi chain was owned by a family from Qingdao in Shandong Province, with branches in Paramaribo and Nieuw Nickerie in Western Suriname.82 Baihuo Business model might have been introduced to Suriname by the Wenzhou-nese, but quickly spread to maoyi gongsi from every regional background. However, the main importers of cheap commodities from Yiwu are Wenzhou-nese.

From a Surinamese perspective Baihuo Business is the latest incarnation of the Chinese ethnic ownership economy and entrepreneurial chain migration. Just like shops and supermarkets of the established Fuidung’on Hakkas, all maoyi gongsi in Suriname compete with each other. In this way Baihuo Business produces the same kind of underlying mutual distrust as the Fuidung’on Hakka supermarket business, which impedes Chinese community development. Ironically, the close trust and personal loyalties required by the system emphasize ties between coregionalists. This in turn gives the appearance of ethnicity formation. Fuidung’on Hakka hui-guan were initially organized as tongxianghui - coregionalists’ associations - for the purpose of facilitating qiaoxiang ties, though the associations later shifted to tongyehui / shanghui (business / merchants’ associations), which facilitated the ethnic ownership economy by mediating between the State and Chinese entrepreneurs, and in conflicts among Chinese businessmen.83 New Chinese migrants in Suriname have started to copy this pattern of organiza-

82 Maoyi gongsi will sell wholesale to local wholesalers, but there are no reports of Baihuo Business loans to non-Chinese. There might not yet be any economic incentive to include ‘non-trusted’ links in the Baihuo Business network. Moreover, the strong anti-Chinese discourse does not encourage the locals to trust Baihuo Business entrepreneurs.

83 The huiguan (the san tuan) suppressed price wars by negotiating prices of goods. One recent example is the settling of the price of egg noodles which are locally produced by Chinese, out of sight of the Surinamese State, who might have labelled the action unfair competition or cartel formation. Egg noodles, in the form of fried noodles (Sranantongo/Surinamese Dutch: bami; Kejia: cao mèn) are an important Surinamese staple, and any price war would immediately threaten the livelihood of many Chinese food shops.
tion, and have recently set up their own Hometown Associations (Zhejiang Tongxianghui, Hainan Tongxianghui, Fujian Tongxianghui, see Chapter 8) to transcend the basic distrust between Baihuo Business entrepreneurs, assist in financial transactions, and provide a basic social safety net.

It is debatable whether globalization of the PRC economy drives migration to destinations like Suriname or whether it is New Migrants from China who are introducing PRC products to new markets. The works of Østbø and Carling, and of Dobler on New Chinese migration in Africa confirm the link between cheap Zhejiangese consumer commodities and New Migrants – in particular Wenzhounese – though neither study explicitly analyzes Baihuo Business as a type of ethnic ownership economy and the implications this has for ethnic identification among New Migrants. What is new about this type of entrepreneurial chain migration is its South-South pattern. The Chinese entrepreneurs in Africa who are the subject of studies by Østbø and Carling, and by Dobler are just one local aspect of Chinese migration, and typically set up their own businesses separate from established huaqiao groups. Unlike the South-North Wenzhouinese migration to Europe, Wenzhouinese move towards new markets, often in the opposite direction of other migration flows. In contrast to the local stereotype of Chinese migrants, Wenzhouinese in Suriname are not interested in moving to more affluent places, but to less regulated, open markets in other Southern destinations.

4.3.2 Local Reception of Baihuo Business

The established Fuidung’on Hakkas did not welcome the appearance of Baihuo Business. As maoyi gongsi and supermarkets carried different wares (commodities versus foodstuffs, with an overlap in non-food daily necessities), they could be in principle complement each other, but competition for the new niche was a common source of ‘Old Chinese’ grievance against the New Chinese. Established shopkeepers felt that the newcomers had an unfair advantage, as profit margins in non-food items had always been higher, and the maoyi gongsi could charge far less than established Fuidung’on Hakka supermarkets. Maoyi gongsi initially did not

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84 Østbø & Carling 2005; Dobler 2008.
86 Østbø & Carling 2005.
cause market saturation in the supermarket sector, as the two niches were initially separate. Supermarkets had been an innovation in response to market saturation faced by Fuidung’on Hakka grocery stores. With price wars suppressed by the huiguan, Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants approached market saturation through geographical and sectoral expansion, moving out of urban areas to the major access roads to Paramaribo and updating the supermarket concept according to the American model. Without their own huiguan to mediate in price wars, New Migrant entrepreneurs faced market saturation in the maoyi gongsi sector within a couple of years after introduction of the concept in Suriname. Supermarkets of established Fuidung’on Hakkas started buying from Baihuo Business importers, which further increased competition among sellers of cheap Zhejiangese goods. During the course of this study, it was observed that New Chinese entrepreneurial migrants seem to set up their businesses as far away from Paramaribo as infrastructure and costs allowed, just like the Fuidung’on Hakka supermarket owners.

Surinamese consumers first became aware of the maoyi gongsi when they started selling cheap textile imports from the PRC. One Wenzhounese proprietor of a maoyi gongsi who specialized in clothing explained that he had been a civil servant in Wencheng, in the Wenzhou area. Invited to Suriname by two brothers, he used his contacts in Zhejiang to establish a trade link with exporters in Yiwu. As a typical maoyi gongsi, the business (which had inexplicably disappeared three years later) was operated as a wholesale, with customers also able to buy single items. Surinamese tend to welcome the availability of cheap products; there is general agreement that maoyi gongsi improved living standards by raising purchasing power of the poorest. Owners turned to renting their shops to New Chinese, while others converted existing properties or constructed new buildings to take advantage of the increased demand for business premises. Though it is impossible to quantify the effect, it is clear that local retailers, especially of clothing, were driven out of business under the new competition.87 From an initial assumption that big profits were being made in the maoyi gongsi, locals inferred that New Chinese were either rich or were laundering money from the PRC, that the PRC was dumping its over-

87 Cheap Chinese clothing has even begun to impact the Lebanese monopoly in the Surinamese clothing market. Some small Lebanese shops had to close. Some Lebanese entrepreneurs started new businesses. Some for instance began to import textile products directly from China. (De Bruijne 2006: 112-113).
production in Suriname, and that the Surinamese government either ignored the problem or was complicit by giving ethnic Chinese preferential treatment. There have been discussions in the National Assembly about the trade imbalance between Suriname and China, which is often falsely assumed to be something which the PRC has clear control over.88

The opacity of Baihuo Business fostered irrationally negative as well as positive interpretations. Importers found themselves with a measure of political clout as established Fuidung’on Hakka entrepreneurs and elite cautiously overestimated their economic resources. Some locals welcomed the entrepreneurial spirit inherent in Baihuo Business and the possible catalytic effect of Chinese business networks on the Surinamese economy. The real estate boom that developed around the Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh of the 1980s and 1990s carried on into the new millennium with the broader New Chinese influx as increasing numbers of entrepreneurial chain migrants fuelled a demand for business premises. Many locals (ethnic Chinese as well as non-Chinese) chose to rent out their properties to New Chinese, or constructed new business premises with an eye on increasing demand for shops (ironically, often built by New Chinese construction workers with cheap construction materials imported via Baihuo business). The idea that New Chinese were either rich or could quickly generate hard currency drove up rents. It was not uncommon to find New Chinese entrepreneurs stuck with unaffordable rents and loans which had to be repaid to the Baihuo business sponsor, and accordingly most maoyi gongs/i were unsustainable.

Baihuo business had a clear impact on the image of Chinese in Suriname. The Saturday Keerpunt column in De West of 7 February 2004 presents a clear example of the kind of impact Baihuo Business had on the image of Chinese in Suriname:

[…] The Chinese are mostly found in the retail trade and get lots of things done via the Ministry of Trade and Industry. No wonder then that Chinese supermarkets rise like mushrooms. Keerpunt is referring to a certain trend that is noticeable from Albina to Nieuw Nickerie. What we should absolutely consider is that all kinds of

88 Østbø & Carling (2005) report a similar situation in the Cape Verdian Islands. Despite the absence of any direct connection between the two countries, Cape Verdians (laypersons as well as officials) assumed that the Cape Verdian government was giving the Baihuo Business traders preferential treatment in return for PRC development aid. Officials expressed the fear that Cape Verde was being overwhelmed by migrants.
criminal elements enter this country with this immigration, to which we shall have no real response. Bona fide traders have long complained about the attitude of the Chinese importers, and then we are referring to people who have arrived here from China not that long ago and speak not a word of Sranantongo or Dutch. Among them are some very clever types who import almost everything and who are completely ruining the regular retail trade. Not long ago the customs authorities were confronted with a consignment of goods from China, of which the customs authorities were one hundred percent sure that they were heavily undervalued. This was the reason why the customs authorities refused to release the goods. The Chinese importer who was involved then marched to the commercial attaché of the Chinese embassy, who quickly provided the man with documentation which would prove to the customs authorities that the goods had been correctly valued. Our customs authorities had no choice but to release the goods after a pittance of import duties had been paid. In this way the market is severely polluted by all kinds of dumped goods and the tax collector does not earn very much. It is precisely this kind of activities that will cause Surinamese trade, and we mean bona fide trade, to fold in a short while. There is then a danger that in the near future the only traders in this country will be of Chinese descent..

Maoyi gongsi came to represent the most concrete sign and outcome of New Chinese migration; people objected to the increasing number of Chinese supermarkten (a phenomenon originally linked to the Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh of the 1980s and 1990s) popping up all over the place and demanded some kind of government response. Jenny Simons of the NDP opposition party brought the issue to parliament in December 2004, demanding government action against ‘China price’, Chinese migration, lack of regulation, and Chinese labour in maoyi gongsi who do not even speak Sranantongo.

Eventually Baihuo Business was impacted by government action, although such steps were (officially) not primarily aimed at Chinese importers, and were implemented in the context of institutional strengthening and rationalization of government services. In 2004 Baihuo Business had existed in Suriname for roughly a decade, and its success as a business scheme and a strategy to facilitate

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89 De West, 7 February 2004, ‘Keerpunt: Onderfacturering door Chinezen schering en inslag’ (Turning Point: Undervaluing by Chinese is quite common now).
90 De West 8 December 2004, Simons bepleit bescherming Surinaamse producenten tegen China price (Simons pleads for protection of Surinamese producers against ‘China Price’).
chain migration depended on its informal nature within the overwhelmingly informal Surinamese economy. Institutional weakness of the Surinamese State fostered informality; policy makers were very slow to take new developments into account, local authorities did not enforce regulations separating the wholesale and retail sectors, and an inefficient customs system allowed Zhejiangese products to enter the Surinamese market cheaply.

The strong links between Baihuo Business and migration became apparent in late 2004. The Surinamese customs authorities contracted Crown Consultants as a follow-up to the assistance provided by the Dutch Ministry of Finance to the Surinamese Ministry of Finance with regard to budget cycles and tax revenue. Under Dutch pressure the Ministry of Finance moved to increase revenue from indirect taxes by reforming the customs service, which was plagued by allegations of corruption and inefficiency. 91 Crown Consultants was given an extensive mandate to restructure the customs service. Interpretations of subsequent developments vary, but it is clear that relations between Surinamese customs officers, the Crown Agents consultants and the Dutch advisors were sometimes not very good. Apparently, the Dutch criticized Crown Agents for focusing too much on the short-term goal of achieving the 50% increase in state revenue, while the establishment of customs officers resented the broad powers granted to Crown Agents. The Dutch supported the introduction of a Customs Intelligence Unit (Douane Informatie Centrum) to investigate corruption. In any case, state revenue from import duties increased.92 Nobody was surprised to learn that some companies had never paid import duties, nor that the suspicions about containers of goods from Yiwu being undervalued (at US$7,000 on average) turned out to be true.

Once containers from Yiwu were actually inspected and their contents valued at upwards of US$40,000, retail prices in the maoyi gongsi were immediately affected. Prices had been low because the products were produced very cheaply, but also due to evasion of import duties. Maoyi gongsi were suddenly no longer as competitive as they had been, and the network of goods and loans supporting migration collapsed. New Chinese became less visible over the following months as maoyi gongsi and supermarkets star-

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91 Crown Agents were originally a British public corporation which moved to the private sector in 1997. http://www.crownagents.com/
92 The 2004 Country Report of the Economist Intelligence Unit reported an 18.7% increase of tax income over 2004 compared to 2003. But while revenues from direct taxation increased dramatically by 41.5%, taxes linked to production and imports only increased by 10.6%.
ted folding and people were rumoured to be leaving Suriname perhaps earlier than they had expected to. New Migrant households switched to small restaurants, while others with access to the right technical knowledge and / or the right networks switched to running Internet cafés (called cybers by locals). With the import networks unravelling, the sources of goods became more visible. New Migrant entrepreneurs started to facilitate and share their Yiwu connections with Tong’ap entrepreneurs and the general public through advertisements in the Chinese newspapers.

Reforms in the customs service did not prove sustainable after Crown Agents left Suriname and the government became less active in the run-up to the 2005 elections. The reforms had impacted all importers, not only the Chinese. East Indian importers and wholesalers in a position to exert political pressure on the ruling NF coalition were also affected. Customs inspection again became less strict during 2005. Importing cheap consumer goods from Yiwu became once again lucrative, and consequently New Chinese became more visible again as new maoyi gongsi and supermarkets appeared, along with new faces in ethnic Chinese social circuits.

The situation since then has remained basically unchanged. The number of maoyi gongsi remains unknown, but it appeared to be stable (again) in 2005. Shops selling Zhejiangese goods stayed in business for four years on average, and this steady turnover of outlets appears to be delaying market saturation. Importers have innovated and many have conquered a relatively stable and specialized niche in the Surinamese market, such as importers of fruit, bamboo matting and screens, and building material. Trade in Zhejiangese goods is becoming normalized, in the sense that goods are also imported via local, non-Chinese channels, and sold outside the context of maoyi gongsi, and most people are unaware that the products are imported from the PRC, unless they purchased them from a Chinese outlet.

The maoyi gongsi phenomenon in Suriname is linked to New Chinese entrepreneurial migration (particularly from the Wenzhou area in Zhejiang Province), which currently depends on the availability of cheap commodities from Zhejiang. As a form of globalization, Baihuo Business in Suriname stands to benefit from regionalization. Suriname is part of the CARICOM Single Market and

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93 From personal observation, four years is roughly the time from when a new Baihuo Business shop appears in a neighbourhood till the moment when it closes down for whatever reason. Not all Baihuo Business shops are duly registered with the authorities, and so their disappearance is also seldom formally reported.
Economy, and citizens of member states will soon be able to freely establish businesses and travel throughout the CARICOM. Locally, rationalization of economic policies and tougher enforcement of relevant legislation are clear barriers to Baihuo Business in Suriname. Baihuo Business is also potentially threatened by changing policies in the PRC with regard to Zhejiangese exports. For instance, the PRC government suspended the policy of returning value-added taxes to exporters, because rapid increase of exports implied increased tax revenue. This affected the prices at which Baihuo Business entrepreneurs could sell commodities abroad, and consequently affected chain migration.

Increasingly negative local attitudes to Chinese migration and changing motivations and expectations of (Wenzhounese) chain migrants might also impact the future of Baihuo Business. As set out in Chapter 6, the Surinamese government is responding to calls to tighten restrictions on immigration; this will make it increasingly difficult for chain migrants to enter Suriname as workers or apprentices in *maoyi gongsì*, and will reduce the number of outlets available to Baihuo Business importers. Although Baihuo Business links Zhejiangese trading centres and exporters to overseas markets via South-South migration routes, it has not contributed to the development of a transnational social field among the Wenzhounese or other New Chinese cohorts in Suriname.

The immediate result of the upsurge in Chinese migration of the early 1990s was that Chinese became more visible; Suriname was becoming ‘more Chinese’. In this slightly weak sense, resinicization of the Chinese group in Suriname means increased Chinese immigration. However, it also signals the threat of cultural change and domination, as stereotypes of contamination (especially the Yellow Peril stereotype, see Paragraph 6.1 and Appendix 1) are resurrected to make sense of Chinese aliens and a substantial influx of unfamiliar Chinese culture and language. The *Mamio* Myth (see Chapter 1) reserved a place for Chinese in the Surinamese multicultural landscape, but offered no protocol to handle their immigration.

‘Resinicization’ as a sense of a renewed Chinese presence in Suriname is as structural as Chinese migration will prove to be, and Chinese migration to Suriname continues because entrepreneurial chain migration continues to make sense. In the near future Chinese migrants in Suriname will very likely continue to position themselves as ethnic entrepreneurs in retail business. Push factors

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such as local traditions of migration in various sending areas, inequality driving internal Chinese migration, and the production of cheap commodities, and pull factors such as the market for cheap Chinese products, the weak Surinamese state, and the viability of Latin American and Caribbean migration circuits, remain relevant, though they are by no means permanent.

Chinese identity is a fixed aspect of Surinamese apanjaht multicultural discourse; people expect Chinese to exist in Suriname. The general public in Suriname (ethnic Chinese or otherwise) distinguishes New Chinese from ‘Old Chinese’ by language, regional backgrounds, type of business. Once again, the concept of the ethnic ownership economy helps to explain why ‘Chinese identity’ is rather different for Fuidung’on Hakkas and the other groups of New Chinese, and why their identities are subtly different from Chinese-ness in their homelands. However, the core of ‘Chineseness’ might shift to Laiap (‘Surinamese Chinese’) as lessens and assimilation starts to dominate. In that case, distinctions between ‘Old Chinese’ and New Chinese or between huaqiao and xin yimin will blur as sinkeh will eventually merge into local society.

In Suriname, Baihuo Business is a migrant self-help strategy for New Chinese who find themselves excluded from the Fuidung’on Hakka ethnic ownership economy. Although it is based on Zhejiangese (in particular Wenchengese) networks, ethnic identification produced by Baihuo Business is not limited by Zhejiangese cultural markers (such as Wenchengese language, religious practices, etc.), but it is based on broader ethnic resources such as PRC modernity, spoken and written PTH, and the ability to access migrant networks that connect New Migrants with export centres in the PRC such as Yiwu. This link with the PRC is crucial to the ethnic ownership economy of New Chinese in Suriname, but its nature is not fully appreciated by the Surinamese public who conflate it with the distinct phenomenon of the growing influence and power of the PRC in the Caribbean and Latin American region. This association made by the Surinamese public is the subject of the next chapter; for this purpose it is necessary to understand the role of the PRC in Suriname, as it shapes the image of Chinese migration in Suriname, and sets limits to local positioning and the articulation of ethnic identity of Chinese in Suriname, ‘Old’ or New.
5 THE PRC PRESENCE IN SURINAME

The position of the Chinese in Suriname – migrants as well as local-born – cannot be properly discussed without considering the role of the Chinese State. In the case of Suriname, the Chinese State is the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the original home of the Chinese minority and in particular the New Chinese. The PRC is present in Suriname through the New Chinese, who are New Migrants (xin yimin). As explained in the previous chapter, the category of New Chinese must be understood in the context of policies which are designed to keep migrants loyal to the modernization project of the PRC. The PRC works to keep New Migrants (i.e. all post-1978 migrants) loyal to the patriotic cause of development of the Chinese Motherland. New Migrants are also seen an instrument to reconnect pre-1978 migrants with the PRC. According to Zhuang Guotu, the presence of New Migrants influences the development of Chinese communities overseas by strengthening Chineseness, thus effectively countering assimilation; Chinese overseas might therefore develop from ethnic Chinese citizens of foreign countries¹ into members of the Chinese race.²

The increasing importance of the PRC in the New World and renewed Chinese migration to the region should be analyzed as two separate processes; the PRC would have deployed diplomatic activities and technical cooperation projects in Suriname with or without the presence of (New) Chinese migrants, and Chinese migration to Suriname developed independently of PRC-Surinamese ties. The PRC fills a gap in the Caribbean region left by the former colonial powers. Peter Clegg has pointed out that the former colonial metropoles have very little to gain from their relationships with their former Caribbean colonies; drug trafficking in the Caribbean and the marginal importance of trade with the region, and the burden of aid to former colonies contribute to the notion that the Caribbean is not a valuable asset to Europe. Clegg lists three main

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¹ 華人, definition according to Nyíri 2001: 636.
² Zhuang 1997: 5. Zhuang conflates ethnicity and race in PRC civic discourse. He takes ‘Chineseness’ to be a translation of 華人意識: ‘being conscious of being a Chinese person’, i.e. being patriotic towards the PRC.
reasons for Chinese engagement in the contemporary Caribbean (the One-China Principle, access to natural resources, and Third World solidarity) and describes the practical impact of PRC policies in the Caribbean in terms of security cooperation and institutionalization of economic ties.\(^3\)

However, the Surinamese public tends to misunderstand the PRC’s presence in Suriname in terms of globalization and geopolitics and conflate the PRC, Chinese migrants survival strategies and ethnic Chinese as ‘China’ / ‘Chinese’. This has two major consequences. On the one hand, non-Chinese in Suriname – the general public as well as individual agents in the apparatus of the state – base their perception and approach of the PRC and Chinese migrants on such misunderstandings. On the other hand, Chinese migrants and ethnic Chinese in Suriname need to choose their positioning strategies with the general image of monolithic Chinese-ness in mind, in which ‘China’ and ‘Chinese’ are inextricably intertwined.

Discussing the presence of the PRC in Suriname separately from that of the New Chinese helps to clarify two interlinked but in many ways independent processes that shape the image of ‘China’ and ‘Chinese’. Many Surinamese assume that the PRC is in control of Chinese immigration, and therefore distrust of the intentions of the emerging superpower can run high. At the same time the ‘flood’ of New Chinese migrants, indistinguishable from the flood of cheap PRC-made commodities and demands for imported Chinese contract labour from PRC-owned companies, magnified the growing influence of the PRC in Suriname. Then again untransparent links between resource extraction (usually logging) companies and the PRC government may be passively or actively misrepresented as development programs, usually by Surinamese counterparts. As a result the general public never fully understood the exact role of the PRC and made up its own minds about it through the rhetoric of decolonization: the Chinese were replacing the Dutch as the new colonizers, the Chinese were not actually doing anything for the Surinamese, just exploiting them.

The current relationship between the PRC and the Republic of Suriname is based on the goals of PRC policy in the region: recognition as the only true undivided Chinese state, and access to natural resources. The ties between the PRC and Suriname cover the period from the emergence of the PRC on the international stage at the end of the Maoist era to its emergence as an economic

\(^3\) Clegg 2006.
superpower. The relationship between the two countries reflects the developments in the PRC. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the Republic of Suriname following Surinamese independence in 1975 is best understood in the context of Western recognition of the PRC as the one and only ‘China’, symbolized by its entry in the UN in 1971. Following economic reforms in the PRC in the 1980s, the relationship between the two states was increasingly dominated by the ‘Pocketbook Diplomacy’ in the service of the One-China Principle. The increasing economic expansion of the PRC in the 1990s was reflected in Suriname by the implementation of ‘technical cooperation projects’ by the PRC, and it was paralleled by the phenomenon of New Migrants (xin yimin, see Chapter 4). By the mid-1990s, the result of sky-rocketing economic development was that the PRC was no longer self-sufficient in strategic natural resources, and again this is reflected in its presence in and relations with Suriname, where PRC or Chinese-related resource extraction projects have been operating since the late 1990s.

In this chapter we will explore the development of PRC involvement in Suriname along these historical lines and track its impact on local Chinese positioning.

5.1 Diplomatic Ties and the One-China Principle

The PRC formally established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Suriname on 28 May 1976, shortly after independence on 25 November 1975. Suriname had indirectly recognized the PRC a year earlier, when the Kingdom of the Netherlands recognized the PRC on 18 May 1972. Dutch recognition of the PRC followed general Western policy after the entry of the PRC in the UN (and the expulsion of the Republic of China) on 25 October 1971. The PRC set up its embassy in Paramaribo in May 1977. Suriname opened its embassy in the PRC much later, in January 1998. For much of the first ten years, the relationship between the two countries was not of much interest to either side. PRC policy in Suriname was initially aimed at keeping Suriname in the PRC camp away from Taiwan, while Suriname was too closely focussed on the

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aid relationship with the Netherlands to consider the PRC of any use. The period of Military Rule (1980 – 1991) covered most of the first ten years of diplomatic ties. The Dutch suspended development aid to Suriname after the ‘December Murders’ of 8 December 1982. The Surinamese military regime, leftist in name if not content, slanted to the PRC. In 1986 and 1987 the first of many Agreements on Economic and Technical Cooperation, as well as a Cultural Agreement were signed in Beijing. All administrations since the return to democratic rule in Suriname have supported the PRC. Between 1979 and 1993 there were regular official visits between the PRC and Suriname. Of the parties within the current ruling New Front coalition, the NPS has the oldest ties with Surinamese Chinese and the PRC.5

Diplomatic ties between the Republic of Suriname and the People’s Republic of China continue to be dictated by PRC foreign policy. The One-China Policy (yige zhongguo zhengce) is the dominant paradigm of PRC diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean, which in practice is about the PRC and Taiwan holding out competing financial incentives to the smaller states in the region. The PRC is winning this “pocketbook diplomacy” through its increasing economic reach in the New World.6 At present (2008) six countries in Central America (Belize, Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala), one in South America (Paraguay) and six in the Caribbean (the Dominican Republic, Haiti, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) still have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, these make up almost half of its diplomatic recognition worldwide (23 countries). Both the PRC and

5 The NPS has had a Chinese section since 1967, and has formal ties of friendship with the Chinese Communist Party.
6 The PRC is careful to avoid any impression of political pressure in the region, in keeping with the “peaceful rising” (和平崛起) strategy that presents China as a “soft power” that will benefit from stable and unaggressive relations with its neighbours. The ‘peaceful rise of China’ was first introduced at the 2003 Boao Forum for Asia by Zheng Bijian, chairman of the China Reform Forum. The PRC’s rapid development in the roughly 25 years since economic reforms started, have raised worries of a possible threat. Peaceful Rising would imply a move away from old-style industrialization, more equitable economic and social development, and disavowing violent acquisition of resources abroad and world hegemony. As a strategy based on reassurance, it was designed to counter the USA’s view of the PRC as a threat in the Asian-Pacific region. However, the term has been quietly replaced with ‘peaceful development’ and ‘peaceful co-existence’, following criticism within the Chinese Communist Party that it actually fuels the idea of the PRC as a threat rather than maintaining world peace, and that it might give Taiwan the impression that the PRC would not attack if the island declared independence (Leonard 2005).
Taiwan use aid and investments to entice the New World to switch or deepen allegiance to their own side.

PRC diplomacy in Suriname fits this pattern: the PRC increasingly presents itself as an alternative source of funding for the cash-strapped Surinamese State. Economic issues now dominate the PRC’s relationship with Suriname. Cultural exchanges are limited to visits from Chinese acrobatic groups and an occasional song and dance troupe to Suriname, and educational programs such as PRC scholarships have not proven popular. The PRC embassy clearly stated that financial assistance has consistently been answered by Suriname with political support. During the signing of a grant agreement of RMB 20 million (roughly US$ 2.5 million) on 27 December 2005 Ambassador Chen Jinghua called Suriname a loyal political ally, supporting Beijing in many international issues, especially with regard to the One-China Policy. According to the Ambassador, Suriname has actively supported PRC candidates with its vote in various international organizations since 2003.

The One-China Policy determines the way both countries describe their relationship. The theme of equality pervades diplomatic language; the PRC speaks of Surinamese support for the One China Policy, PRC support of Suriname as a friendly nation, mutual assistance in development, etc. Never is the suggestion raised that Suriname, or any other country in the region, could be described as a client state. Suriname’s relationships with foreign countries are very much coloured by its ties to the Netherlands as the former colonial metropole and primary aid donor. The notion of aid makes other countries either inconsequential or potential donors, and so the importance of the PRC is often framed by the Surinamese government in terms ‘development cooperation’. The PRC embassy never publicly resists this image.

There are other motivations behind PRC diplomacy in Suriname than the One-China Principle. Rivalry between the PRC and

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7 De Ware Tijd, 28 December 2005: ‘China schenkt 2,5 miljoen US$ voor projecten’ (China donates US$ 2.5 million for projects).
8 Times of Suriname, 28 December 2005: ‘China schenkt US$ 2,4 miljoen aan technische assistentie’ (China donates US$ 2.4 million worth of technical assistance).

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the USA is played out by the PRC in the Caribbean, right in the USA’s backyard. Following the 1982 December murders, the Netherlands and the USA suspended military assistance programs to Suriname. Although they resumed limited military assistance after a democratically elected government came to power in 1991, there had been something of a void that the PRC stepped in to fill. Military cooperation proved to be the most consistent PRC interest in Suriname, and between 1991 and 2001 the PRC was the greatest donor of the Surinamese Ministry of Defence.

As is the case in Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago, PRC military assistance to Suriname is limited. Surinamese Defence Ministers Siegfried Gilds, Ramon Dwarka Panday and Ronald Assen visited China respectively in March 1996, March 1999 and April 2001. In June 1998, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA Lt. General Kui Fulin visited Suriname. In July 2002, Vice-President of the Defence University Major General Chen Zhangyuan visited Suriname at the head of an inspection team of the PLA. PRC donations to the Surinamese National Army are now customary, averaging US$ 400,000 since 1996, usually consisting of medical equipment and logistical assistance. Surinamese also studied at military academies in the PRC. However, military programs (assistance and exercises) in Suriname which are carried out by the USA and the Netherlands, the PRC, and Brazil are basically little more than geopolitical posturing.

By establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC, Suriname committed itself to the PRC’s One-China politics. All administrations in the Republic of Suriname have openly supported the One-China Principle. In practice, Surinamese politicians are fairly indifferent to the One-China Principle. There is no history of deep relations with Taiwan, and Surinamese foreign policy is very much geared to Europe, the USA, and the Caribbean region rather than Asia. Winston Jessurun of DA’91 has voiced the only dissenting opinion in Suriname. According to the 2000-2005 Government Policy Statement, presented by President Venetiaan on 15 November 2000, Surinamese foreign policy would be aimed at maintaining good relations with neighbouring states, increasing regional integration, and developing existing relations with the PRC, India and Indonesia.

9 De Ware Tijd, 7 December 2000: ‘Leger ontvangt 350.000 US dollar aan materiaal van China’ (Army receives US$ 350,000 worth of material from China).
10 In 1986/1987, during the NDP administration, the government had received a Taiwanese loan of almost US$ 40 million. The loan could not be repaid, and Surinamese assets abroad were seized.
The Policy Statement was unanimously adopted by the Assembly on 9 February 2001, and yet two weeks later Jessurun, a member of the Assembly, suggested that Suriname should re-evaluate its position on the One-China Principle. Jessurun argued that Suriname would not risk international isolation by establishing trade relations with Taiwan. He also claims that since the PRC would very likely respond by turning its back on Suriname, this would leave Suriname free to pursue fuller diplomatic relations with Taiwan. He also pointed out that the relationship with the PRC had not resulted in actual investments in Suriname and that Taiwanese influence in Suriname might prompt the PRC to increase aid. Jessurun was sceptical about the support of former military strongman Desi Bouterse for President Venetiaan’s position with regard to the One-China Principle. The government ignored Jessurun’s plea and advice. During a reception on 26 September 2001 on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of the founding of the PRC, President Venetiaan publicly reaffirmed Suriname’s support of the One-China Principle. The President and Ambassador Hu Shouqin both pointed to investments of Chinese enterprises in Suriname. The Ambassador repeated the mantra of the very long relationship between Suriname and China, which started with the arrival of ethnic Chinese indentured labourers in Suriname.

A year later, Jessurun reiterated his position following President Venetiaan’s address to the Assembly on 1 October 2002 which contained the explicit statement that “Suriname supports the One-China policy”. According to the President the PRC supports Suriname’s development efforts through direct investments, by which he meant housing projects, refrigeration facilities at the international airport, and the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jessurun suggested that Taiwan had a US$ 150 million budget surplus that it was willing to invest in Suriname, and that Taiwan was interested in Suriname’s strategic links to European, Caribbean and Latin American markets. This was nothing new: the fact that Suriname was potentially of strategic interest as a link to the

11 http://www.kabinet.sr.org/Regeringsverklaring/regeringsverklaring.htm
12 De Ware Tijd, 26 February 2001: ‘Winston Jessurun: Suriname moet zich heroriënten in ‘One China’ politiek’ (Winston Jessurun: Suriname should re-orientate with regard to ‘One-China’ policy).
13 http://www.kabinet.sr.org/redevoeringen/1oktrede2002.htm
European Community, the Caribbean and Latin America, had always been recognized by all parties.\textsuperscript{15}

The One-China Principle is also an important factor in the relationship between the PRC embassy and the huaqiao of Suriname. The embassy approaches the huiguan as representatives of the Chinese of Suriname, as well as strategic local links and pathways to the backdoors of power. To the huiguan the PRC embassy is sometimes just another Chinese institution, but at other times it channels the claims and demands of the PRC with regard to huaqiao, especially since the PRC started appreciating huaqiao as assets. When the Surinamese huiguan are not stuck between the demands of Surinamese State and the expectations of the PRC, they are courted by both players who wish to tap into the (perceived) personal networks of the huiguan elite. Because most diplomacy between the huiguan and the embassy is personal and occurs offstage, often literally behind the closed doors of the VIP-rooms in Chinese restaurants, it is difficult to find hard evidence for this relationship (however, see Appendix 2, ‘Hidden quarrels’ for a glimpse of an inside view). However, the One-China Principle is the one issue that the PRC embassy will not compromise over, and it is aimed past the huiguan elite and straight at a broader public that the embassy would call ‘Chinese’ (Chinese-speaking, immigrants, etc.).

The unity of China has never been questioned among Chinese in Suriname. Taiwanese ideology (Taiwan and the Mainland joined under Kuomintang rule) used to be much stronger. Double Ten Day (\textit{shuang shi jie}, the Taiwanese national day, celebrating the start of the Wuchang Uprising of 10 October 1911, which precipitated the collapse of the Qing dynasty) was an important holiday among the Chinese of Suriname up to the 1970s.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{itemize}
\item[15] On 26 February 2006, Norman Girvan, held a lecture entitled ‘Regional Integration as a Response to Globalization; The Case of the Caribbean Community’s Single Market and Economy’, at the Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA), University of Amsterdam. According to Girvan the reason why Suriname was admitted to CARICOM on 4 July 1995 despite the policy to ‘Deepen not Widen’ the Community, was because CARICOM saw Suriname as a link to the European Union.
\item[16] Local and foreign attempts to refocus the Overseas Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname on Taiwan had never been fully successful. For those who were opposed to the communist regime and those who required access to sources of Chinese culture beyond the qiaoxiang, Taiwan had become a substitute for mainland China. Some Fuidung’on Hakkas resorted to sending sons to Taiwan for a ‘Chinese education’. In the 1970s, Afoeng Chiu Hung as chairman of Kong Ngie Tong Sang proposed to shift the focus of the Surinamese huiguan from Taipei to Beijing. His reasoning was pragmatic: the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang was part of the PRC, and any concrete ties with
\end{itemize}
However, Taiwanese independence (taiwan duli, or tai du for short) never had much vocal support among Chinese in Suriname. In late December 2004 the Anti-Secession Law was to be discussed by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of the PRC. The law would formalize PRC policy to use force if necessary to block Taiwanese independence.

Fa Tjauw Song Foei, still officially the local branch of the Kuomintang, placed a large advertisement on the front page of Zhonghua Ribao - nominally more pro-Taiwan than its Siamese twin Xunnan Ribao - in the shape of the Taiwanese flag with the text: “Congratulations. The Republic of China has achieved its 93rd anniversary. Double Ten National Day. Freedom; democracy; equality”. On 14 October 2004 the PRC embassy responded with a fairly large article in the Zhonghua Ribao on the issue of Taiwanese independence. The text was mainly propaganda, strongly criticizing and clearly rebuking any attempt at acknowledging Taiwan as an independent state. Chineseness was couched in patriotic terms, reflecting PRC nationalistic ideology; Chinese ethnicity, the PRC and Taiwan, Overseas Chinese, all were subsumed by the word ‘China’ (zhongguo). On 28 December Zhonghua Ribao carried a joint declaration dated 27 December (after the discussion of the law in Beijing) and signed by Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, Chung Tjauw, Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, ‘the Chinese investment companies in Suriname’, and Huaqiao Cujin Hui (apparently Hua Cu Hui).

The declaration fully endorsed the patriotic view of the Taiwanese issue, and went even further than the PRC embassy by linking Chinese patriotism to all people of Chinese descent (huaren) rather than only ethnic Chinese born in China (huaqiao). The relatively short law (ten articles) was adopted at the Third Session of the

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that qiaoxiang needed to be approved by the PRC government. Allegiance to Taiwan required belief in an abstract, Mandarin-speaking, diasporic community, where Fuidung’on Hakkas from Suriname were second-class members. Chiu Hung extended this practical acceptance of the status of migrants to Suriname: Fuidung’on Hakka huaqiao needed to become Surinamese citizens, as their livelihoods existed in Suriname, not China. He was vilified for this position by some, though it eventually became mainstream among the Chinese of Suriname.

17 ZHRB 9 October 2004.
19 ZHRB 28 December 2004: ‘永護國家立法,促進祖國統一’ (Support National Legislation, Promote Unity of the Motherland). ‘Chinese investment companies in Suriname’ was 駐蘇理南中資公司.
Tenth National People’s Congress on 14 March 2005. The Surinamese huiguan (the same list, without ‘the Chinese investment companies’) duly responded on 19 March 2005 with another declaration in Zhonghua Ribao, in which they endorsed the Anti-Secession Law. The huiguan also claimed to endorse the law even more so in the name of ‘all Surinamese of Chinese descent’ (quantisulinamhuaren).\(^{20}\) The huiguan had to tread a fine line between unconditional support of the PRC because of ethnic loyalty / patriotism, and asserting their independence. Taiwanese independence was already a non-issue in the public realm, and privately it was the status quo, and in any case the huiguan had stated their hopes for peaceful unification – and thus left open the option of at least neutrality in the case of PRC aggression versus Taiwan.

The broader (non-Chinese) Surinamese public had been aware of the Pocketbook Diplomacy of the PRC, but had not witnessed direct PRC competition with Taiwan until 2007, when Taiwan made overtures to the Surinamese government via the ‘Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation’. This organization, which was indirectly linked to the Javanese Pertjajah Luhur party of the ruling coalition, passed on a Taiwanese offer of US$100 million in return for diplomatic recognition of Taiwan.\(^{21}\) Though the Surinamese government was quick to reaffirm its support of the One-China Principle, a delegation of members of the National Assembly and the opposition parties travelled to Taipei.\(^{22}\) The offer was not accepted, and the government even acted to curb promotion of pro-Taiwanese viewpoints on Surinamese television.\(^{23}\) The reaction


\(^{21}\) De Ware Tijd, 27 April 2007, ‘Stichting pleit voor vriendschap met Taiwan’ (Foundation argues for friendship with Taiwan); Times of Suriname, 28 April 2007, ‘Bekendmaking Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation’ (Announcement Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation); ‘Taiwan biedt bijkans 200 miljoen dollar hulp in ruil voor “vriendschap”’ (Taiwan offers almost 200 million dollars in exchange for ‘friendship’).

\(^{22}\) De Ware Tijd, 14 July 2007, ‘Alendy zegt af voor Taiwan’ (Alendy no longer going to Taiwan).

\(^{23}\) De Ware Tijd 14 May 2007, ‘Ingrijpen Sardjoe bij STVS niet in staatsbelang’ (Sardjoe’s intervention in STVS was not in the interest of the State); 16 May 2007, ‘Venetiaan over censuur Suriname Vandaag: “Ik complementeer [sic] de vp”’ (Venetiaan on censoring Suriname Vandaag: ‘My compliments to the Vice President’). On 15 May 2007 Reporters Without Borders / Reporters sans frontières called the cancellation of the Suriname Today programme an act of censorship; strategic interests between the Republic of Suriname and the PRC could never be grounds for interference in news media programming, even if it happened to be public media
of the PRC was limited to carefully worded protests and some offers of aid. The huiguan organized a concerted response aimed at the PRC, reaffirming huaqiao loyalty to China (see Paragraph 9.4.1 for a discussion of the Taiwanese offer following the 2005 legislative elections).

5.2 The PRC: Foreign Investor or Aid Donor?

As the One-China Policy is increasingly less of an issue in Latin America and the Caribbean, the PRC is taking the next step and promoting itself in the region as a model of development. This foreign policy goal is achieved through outward foreign direct investment (FDI), investments abroad by PRC multinational companies. The PRC’s outward foreign direct investment (FDI) started increasing around 1987, and rose sharply after 1991. Whereas PRC outward FDI was only US$ 0.7 billion in 2001, in 2004 it was US$ 5.5 billion. In 2005 the figure stood at US$ 6.9 billion, 25.5% higher than the previous year. In terms of value, most (about 40%) outward-bound capital went to Hong Kong, and almost a quarter went to developed Western economies (North America and the USA in particular, the European Union, Australia / New Zealand). The ASEAN countries received a little more than African countries (both more than 8%), followed by Latin America (almost 6%) and the Russian Federation (almost 5%). Under increasing competition from foreign multinationals at home, PRC enterprises will continue to invest abroad. Investment will also continue to be strategic, as outward FDI serves the PRC’s economic goals of economic strengthening and growth, as well as its foreign policy

(RSF press release: Surinam TV Programme's Withdrawal at Vice-President's Behest Condemned as Censorship).

24 PRC companies are latecomers to transnational commerce compared to their Western and Asian counter-parts. European and American companies started modern multinational operations in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by Japanese companies in the 1970s and 1980s, and Korean companies in the 1990s. Following its ‘Open Door’ policy, the PRC government started a ‘Go Out’ policy in the early 1990s to start internationalization of PRC enterprises. Between 1991 and 1997, a ‘national team’ of 120 state-owned companies from strategic sectors (energy, mining, automobiles, electronics, iron and steel, machinery, chemicals, construction, transport, aerospace and pharmaceuticals) were provided with protection and financial support from the state, and special rights with regard to management autonomy, profit retention and investment decisions (Wu 2005).

25 UNCTAD 2003
26 PRC Ministry of Commerce 2005
goals. The motivations of PRC enterprises themselves are not political; most are driven by the search for new markets, with the next important reason being to “secure resources,” rapid urbanization, rising car ownership and accelerated construction of infrastructure is driving the PRC’s resource companies to scour the world for energy, building materials and minerals.

Besides strategic considerations (reflected in military cooperation projects), this search for resources is the basic motivation behind PRC outward FDI in Latin America. Most Caribbean states are not rich in resources; PRC outward FDI in the Caribbean appears to be motivated by perceived indirect access to North American and EU markets. Apparently, the trade volume between the PRC and the Caribbean totalled US$ 2 billion in 2004, a 42.5% increase over the previous year. In February 2005 the first Ministerial Meeting of the China-Caribbean Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum 2005 was opened in Jamaica by PRC Vice President Zeng Qinghong. Representatives from the PRC and 11 Caribbean countries, including Suriname, signed an action plan for bilateral economic and trade cooperation. The forum, initiated by the PRC in 2004, is to be held every three to four years. It included parallel sessions, a business conference and a trade fair.

Suriname is much richer than the Caribbean Islands in natural resources such as timber and minerals, but less so compared to larger Latin American countries. It is therefore no surprise that PRC resource extraction projects have been established in Suriname, but few if any of these could be considered PRC outward FDI. In the 1990s the Venetiaan I administration saw the entry of foreign resource extraction projects, conducted by North American (mostly Canadian) gold mining companies and Asian logging companies notorious for human rights and environmental violations.

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30 The adjective ‘Chinese’ does not cover the full spectrum of links to the PRC and ethnic Chinese. Some companies are Chinese in the sense that they are based in the PRC, Hong Kong or Taiwan, others because they are controlled by ethnic Chinese. The meaning of ‘Chinese’ could be stretched to include companies that are not based in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, or that are not headed by ethnic Chinese, but that do work directly for Chinese interests. Such links are not particularly transparent, and so projects fitting this last sense of the word ‘Chinese’ are not easily identified.
in the third world countries in which they operate. The logging companies are Chinese resource development projects in the sense that they are commercial projects to harvest and / or process natural resources for the purpose of supplying the Chinese market, organized through transnational Chinese personal and business networks. Unlike the technical assistance projects, resource extraction projects are not touted as diplomatic successes by the PRC, though some resource extraction projects have enjoyed a measure of political and financial support from within different levels of government in the PRC.

However, the relationship between the PRC and Suriname remains worded in terms of recognition, equality, mutual political support, and Third World solidarity, from the pre-1990s era of rapid development in the PRC. Surinamese national discourse, with its rejection of colonialism, also makes it very difficult for the relationship with the PRC to be rearticulated in terms of the PRC’s discourses of development and reemerging power, and so resource extraction projects do not become the public focus of PRC activities in Suriname. The relationship with the PRC remains dominated by technical cooperation programs, which is basically a continuation of the “pocketbook diplomacy” of the One-China Policy. As in the rest of the Caribbean, PRC technical cooperation projects in Suriname

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31 Blue Diamond Resources, Canarc Resources Corp., Savanna Resources Ltd., Homestake Mining, Newmont Mining, and Golden Star Resources Ltd. conducted feasibility studies or obtained gold mining concessions. Only Cambior Inc. from Canada operated a mine in Suriname in the early 2000s: the 14,000 tonne-per-day Rosebel mine, about 100 km south of Paramaribo. It has replaced the depleted Omai gold mine in Guyana as Cambior’s most productive mine. Involved in the Rosebel project since 1994, Cambior acquired full interest in the project from Golden Star Resources Ltd. in 2002. Construction of the Rosebel mine was completed on 11 February 2004. Cambior Inc. owns 95% of the participating share capital of the Rosebel Gold Mines N.V. while the remaining 5% is held by the Government of Suriname (www.cambior.com). Cambior has a history of environmental failings. The dam of the tailings pond of the Omai gold mine in Guyana, leaking since its construction, catastrophically breached on 19 August 1995, resulting in a 3.2 billion litre spill of cyanide-laced effluent into the Essequibo River, Guyana’s largest river. The mine was reopened in 1996. In Suriname there were regular problems with cyanide spills and mercury pollution related to the Rosebel mine. Cambior’s relationship with local communities is also not spotless; economic and land rights of tribal groups have not been respected. In September 2006 Cambior was taken over by the Canadian IAMGOLD mining company and became IAMGOLD Corporation, with very little impact on its Surinamese operations. (De Ware Tijd 16 September 2006, ‘IAMGOLD neemt Cambior over’ (IAMGOLD takes over Cambior); 19 September 2006, ‘Geen consequenties Rosebel Mines bij overname IAMGOLD; Suriname grote verliezer’(No consequences of ISMGOLD takeover of Rosebel Mines; Suriname will be the main loser)).
are not real PRC outward FDI. PRC multinationals are not actually
directly investing their own capital in Suriname, but are indirectly
funded by PRC government loans to Suriname. Furthermore, the
PRC is not accumulating foreign currency (US$) through its tech-
nical cooperation projects in Suriname, PRC companies have never
attempted to acquire local interests, PRC technical cooperation pro-
jects are not creating local employment (local labour and subcon-
tractors are rarely employed and workers are mostly imported from
the PRC), so the PRC is not out to control local markets, etc.

Though the PRC (indirectly) presents itself as an alternative
source of funding for Surinamese development projects, this fund-
ing is not primarily given in the form of grants, but rather as (soft)
loans for projects that are designed and implemented by PRC com-
panies, in keeping with the policy of boosting the position of PRC
enterprises in the global arena. On more than one occasion Surina-
mesec government officials misrepresented a PRC project as a deve-
lopment grant, perhaps dictated by political expediency or maybe
even genuine misunderstanding (inability to fully appreciate the
differences between traditional Dutch development projects and the
PRC’s technical cooperation projects, as well as general lack of
transparency at the Chinese side). The rationale behind technical
cooperation was diplomacy in the context of the One-China Policy,
and so technical cooperation projects were mainly selected for their
symbolic value. PRC representatives, government officials and
members of the political opposition would strategically use the term
‘investments’ to refer to them, mixing and confusing its various
meanings.

As a result of such official misconstruction the general
public never fully appreciated the nature of the relationship be-
tween the PRC and the Republic of Suriname. People made up their
minds about the role of the PRC through the rhetoric of decolo-
nization combined with images of China as the Yellow Peril: the
Chinese were replacing the Dutch as the new colonizers, the Chi-
nese were not actually doing anything for the Surinamese, just
taking advantage of them. Because of the lack of transparency,
successive Surinamese administrations risked being taken to task
about appearing to elevate the interests of a foreign power over
those of the people. The only government views on the relationship
with the PRC that filtered down to the general public were official
foreign policy and diplomatic discourse reflected in the press, aimed
at the representatives of the PRC in Suriname. Chinese organiza-
tions in Suriname did not effectively mediate the ‘peaceful rising’
image of the PRC to the Surinamese public, as the PRC appealed to
the patriotic pride of Overseas Chinese, which risked casting them as outsiders and collaborators in the eyes of non-Chinese Surinamese.

5.3 Technical Cooperation Projects

Technical cooperation is jargon from the world of development aid for “the transfer of skills and provision of advice to developing countries in various fields: administrative, scientific, professional, and technical.” Technical cooperation projects are generally result-based projects, and when carried out by international NGOs, local needs and sensitivities, as well as sustainability would ideally be considered. In the context of PRC-Suriname relations, technical cooperation projects are basically any PRC project that is not a resource extraction project. They are usually not PRC grants, and they are usually carried out by (more or less clearly) state-owned companies from the PRC. Surinamese participation in the earliest of these PRC projects was minimal; Surinamese experts were not consulted on the best way to embed designs and construction activities in local cultural and environmental contexts.

As stated earlier, these projects generally serve a diplomatic purpose, and some are clearly primarily intended to elevate the prestige of the PRC in Suriname. The clearest examples of these are the reconstructions of the Anthony Nesty Gymnasium in the late 1980s and the Surinamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs twenty years later. These PRC technical cooperation projects however often do increase Surinamese infrastructural capital. The clearest example is the road rehabilitation projects facilitated by soft loans and carried out by firms from the PRC, though other PRC projects have included low-income housing, energy (biogas, electricity from rice husk and coal gas), freshwater shrimp farming, upgrading of equipment at the Surinamese State TV (STVS), cold storage and freezer facilities at the Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport. To illustrate the nature of PRC technical cooperation projects in Suriname, we will elaborate on the two prestige projects mentioned above, as well as the public housing and road rehabilitation projects.

5.3.1 Prestige Projects

The first large-scale project of the PRC in Suriname was initiated in the early 1980s; a gymnasium, the *Anthony Nesty Sporthal*. The idea apparently originated in the PRC, though the military regime in Paramaribo saw the project as a tangible revolutionary achievement. In any case the gymnasium project was fully carried out by the PRC, without Surinamese input; the building was designed by PRC technicians and built by construction workers from the PRC who worked and lived on the construction site. It was not well known at the time, but the construction of the gymnasium was funded through a PRC loan to Suriname, which is why it was described as built with ‘Chinese assistance’. In June 1987 Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Lu Peijian went to Suriname to attend the completion and hand-over ceremony of the *Anthony Nesty Sporthal*.

In 1990, during a visit by Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu, a number of documents were signed in Paramaribo on assistance grants from the PRC Government to the Government of Suriname. In 1994, President Venetiaan paid a state visit to the PRC at the invitation of President Jiang Zemin; the first visit by a Surinamese head of state to the PRC. During the visit, the two sides signed an agreement on loans, an exchange of notes on providing some general goods by the PRC government to Suriname, and an exchange of notes on postponing the reimbursement of China's loan for the construction of the Anthony Nesty gymnasium. In May 1998, President Jules Wijdenbosch also paid a state visit to China at the invitation of Chinese President Jiang Zemin. During the visit, a Trade Agreement, an Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation,

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34 The workers’ barracks were never torn down. Not long after the gymnasium was completed, Maroon refugees from the 1986-1992 war between the military government and Maroon insurgents moved into the barracks, where they still live without basic amenities.
35 Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Suriname on Loan Provided by China to Suriname in the Construction of a Gymnasium, was signed in Paramaribo on September 7, 1984, by Charge d'Affaires a.i. Yang Daqun of the Chinese Embassy in Suriname and Surinamese Minister of Finance, Marcel J.B. Chehin.
36 The Anthony Nesty Sporthal (named after Suriname’s first and only Olympic gold medal winner in 1988, and the first non-white Olympic gold medallist ever, Trinidadian immigrant Anthony Nesty) is actively used for local and international sports events, music performances, fairs, etc. Its Chinese background does not figure in the public consciousness.
and a Framework Agreement on the PRC Providing a Preferential Loan to Suriname were signed.

At the end of his term in January 2001, PRC Ambassador Li Jianying, announced that his government would be donating US$ 2,500,000 for the reconstruction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that had burned down on 1 August 1996.\textsuperscript{37} The donation was doubled to US$ 5 million, when a soft loan for the construction of refrigeration facilities (capacity 64 tonnes) at the Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport was discussed during a visit by Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Sun Guangxiang to Suriname in August 2001.\textsuperscript{38} In contrast to the Anthony Nesty Sporthal, the new building would be a gift from the PRC government. It would also be designed in the original Surinamese colonial style and though it would be built by PRC technicians, Surinamese counterparts were involved in adapting the design to local norms and conditions.\textsuperscript{39} Construction started on 16 October 2004,\textsuperscript{40} and it was carried out by Weihai International Economic and Technical Cooperation Co. Ltd.\textsuperscript{41} (also responsible for the Pokigron and Wakibasu low-income housing projects, see below). The project was completed in June 2006.\textsuperscript{42}

\textbf{5.3.2 Public Housing}

Public housing is a huge problem in Paramaribo; between 1950 and 2005 about 7,500 social dwellings (\textit{volkswoningen}) and 400 low-

\textsuperscript{37} De Ware Tijd, 19 January 2001: ‘\textit{China bouwt nu ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken}’ (China currently building Ministry of Foreign Affairs). A fire on the night of 1 August 1996 destroyed the buildings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Assembly and the former Ministry of General Affairs. The loss of three beautiful examples of colonial architecture near the Presidential Palace, as well as important historical documents (including an original of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century deed of the trade of Manhattan Island for Suriname), amounted to a national calamity.

\textsuperscript{38} De Ware Tijd, 10 August 2001: ‘\textit{China schenkt US$5 miljoen voor bouw nieuw ministerie Buitenlandse Zaken}’ (China donates US$ 5 million for Construction new Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

\textsuperscript{39} De Ware Tijd, 18 December 2001: ‘\textit{Buza wil maart eerstesteenlegging nieuw gebouw}’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs wants construction of new building to start in March).

\textsuperscript{40} NIBA Suri Magazine Nieuws, http://www.suriname.nu/0niba/niba17.html: ‘\textit{BUZA krijgt nieuw gebouw van China}’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs gets new building from China).

\textsuperscript{41} 中國威海國際經濟技術合作股份有限公司.

income houses (*sociale woningen*) were constructed, most of these were built before 1985. Since then housing construction has decreased dramatically,\(^{43}\) as the sector was heavily reliant on donor funding, which virtually dried up after the 1982 December murders. Many different housing projects were started through the years, for instance in Albina, Helena Christina, Nieuw Weergevondenweg, Voorburg, La Paix, Coronie, etc, though none were completed as planned. In 1996 the Wijdenbosch Administration mentioned a shortage of up to 30,000 houses.\(^{44}\) The government started a social housing project for 2,500 homes on the outskirts of Paramaribo, for which it contracted a company called Sunny Point. It was the visible result of an extremely convoluted corporate construction. The company was basically a cooperation between Hongkongese and PRC counterparts, with an unquantified Surinamese (huaqiao) component. Sunny Point Investment Suriname Co. N.V. had a locally registered subsidiary, Sunny Village Investment Corp., running the project from its headquarters in northern Paramaribo. Sunny Point Investment Suriname Co. N.V. contracted Nanjing Overseas Construction and Engineering\(^{45}\) to build 1000 homes.

It is unclear exactly how funding of the construction project had been visualized, or by whom and during which period. The Sunny Point project seems to have been conceived of during the previous Venetiaan I administration, which had been faced with financial trouble after the Structural Adjustment Programme imposed by the IMF.\(^{46}\) During the Venetiaan I administration foreign resource extraction projects started up in Suriname: Canadian gold-mining companies and Southeast Asian and PRC logging companies, some of dubious reputation. In any case, the Wijdenbosch administration described the funding of the Sunny Point project as a US$ 37.5 million loan from Sunny Point Ltd. All labour was to be imported; when the issue of local labour was raised, it turned out that local workers were neither cheap enough,


\(^{44}\) *De Ware Tijd*, 30 November 1996: ‘Minister Brunings bezorgd om woningsituatie’ (Minister Brunings concerned about housing situation).

\(^{45}\) 南京海外建築工程總公司.

\(^{46}\) Documentation relating to Sunny Point is exceedingly rare. The Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation was unable to find any relevant documents in connection to a report on the background of the Sunny Point project in Sophia’s Lust in November 2005.
nor able to meet the labour requirements set by the company. Eventually about 200 construction workers from the city of Nanjing were housed (under very questionable conditions) at the building site, while varying numbers of employees from various places in the PRC were brought in for specialist worked at the company headquarters.

Construction work started in 1997, but it had stalled by 1999 after the government failed to pay Sunny Point. Faced with spiralling foreign debt, the cash-strapped Wijdenbosch Administration could not shake off allegations of monetary financing. In March 1999, the National Audit Office published an overview of loans, collateralizations and promissory notes registered during 1998. There were US$ 40.1 million plus about US$ 7.58 million, which added up to US$ 47.68 million worth of newly registered financial obligations, which would determine the limitations of new foreign loans. However, in an attempt to downplay foreign debt the National Audit Office did not include the US$ 37.5 million loan from Sunny Point Ltd. for the construction of low-income housing, the US$ 2.5 million Inter-American Development Bank loan for institutional strengthening, the US$ 5.1 million Islamic Development Bank loan for the construction of polyclinics in the interior, the US$ 10 million Islamic Development Bank Loan for limited payment of fuel debts, the US$ 5 million PL-490 wheat credit, and the US$ 12.5 million loan granted during the visit of President Wijdenbosch to the PRC.47 The exact nature of the Sunny Point loan remains unclear; at the time, rumours had it that there was no loan, but that the project was being paid for with state funds. Apparently the Wijdenbosch administration planned to use timber in lieu of money payments in an attempt to save the Sunny Point deal and to negotiate a deal for the Dalian road rehabilitation project (see below).48

At this point, Surinamese counterparts misconstrued the Sunny Point project as a type of development aid, while various groups within the company frantically tried to find alternative sources of funding. Certain Chinese stakeholders (in Suriname and Hong Kong) took advantage of this vulnerability. For instance, an entity called Ningsheng Construction and Engineering Cooperation

48 Reformatorisch Dagblad, 10 May 1999: ‘Paramaribo bevestigt geheimzinnige deal; China bouwt huizen in ruil voor Surinaams hout’ (Paramaribo confirms mysterious deal; China to build houses in exchange for Surinamese timber).
Ltd.⁴⁹ was registered in Suriname by the main office of Nanjing Overseas Construction and Engineering as a corporate entity called Hong Kong Sing To Investments Ltd.; it is unclear what exactly the role of this organization was, though it was suggested that it was established to make investments.

There were allegations of irregular migration; corporate links to the Surinamese authorities and local government levels in the PRC were used to obtain exit and entry visa and work permits. Even so, the number of irregular immigrants linked to Sunny Point was not spectacular, and most seem to have continued on to other destinations. Most of the construction workers from Nanjing eventually returned to China, after they rebelled against management because they had not been paid. Eventually it became clear that the project was a failure. Despite the government’s promises of 2,000 new houses annually, which has been a goal of Surinamese governments since Independence in 1975, only 288 were built by 1999.⁵⁰ Of the 1,000 houses promised in the Sunny Point project, 275 houses were partly finished and have been occupied by squatters since 1999.⁵¹ Most of the squatters were Maroons, many of whom had fled to Paramaribo during the 1986-1992 Jungle War.

Roughly parallel to the Sunny Point episode, there was a plan to construct low-income housing in the interior of Suriname, the District of Sipaliwini. During a visit by then State Advisor Desi Bouterse to the PRC and Hong Kong in 1997, Beijing reserved US$ 2.4 million for technical cooperation projects. In a document signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Errol Snijders and Ambassador Li Jianying on 27 September 1997 the funds were allocated for electrification of villages in the District of Brokopondo and refrigeration facilities at the Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport. Construction of low-income housing in the interior was also approved, and in May 2003, 40 houses were completed in Pokigron, District of Sipaliwini, followed by 30 houses (40-60 m²) in Wakibasu, Brownsweg in the District of Brokopondo, in 2004.⁵² The Surina-

⁴⁹寧盛建築工程合作有限公司.
⁵⁰Grote behoefte aan woningen in Suriname (Great housing shortage in Suriname), http://www.waterkant.net/cgi-bin/wk/nieuws/_old/archives.cgi?category=1&view=5.17.01-5.24.01
⁵²De Ware Tijd, 12 May 2003: ‘Chinezen dragen 40 volkswoningen Pokigron over; Awana-lo komt in aanmerking voor toewijzing’ (Chinese present 40 low-cost houses in Pokigron; Awana-lo eligible).
mese counterparts were responsible for preparing the building sites, security, water and electricity, while building materials and labour were imported from the PRC, which apparently doubled the costs of construction compared to complete local production.53 The Pokigron and Wakibasu projects were carried out by Weihai International Economic and Technical Cooperation Co. Ltd., who had also built STVS television transmitters in Paramaribo, Nickerie, Wageningen, Moengo, Coronie and Brokopondo, and the reconstruction of the offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see above).

The Surinamese government was the counterpart in the Chinese housing projects, and the results are very uneven. Whatever the quality of the construction work, the Surinamese government is responsible for the actual houses, but it failed to provide a coherent urban development vision. In 2001, low-cost housing and urban planning were on the agenda again.54 By 2004, traditional housing policy was becoming more diversified, with activities ranging from Dutch development aid projects, through international technical cooperation projects to private sector projects.55 In February 2004, President Venetiaan paid his second state visit to the PRC; a specific goal during that trip was to discuss funding for social projects.56 Eventually agreements were signed on loans for the construction of public housing by PRC companies; these construction companies won out over local and other foreign, particularly Dutch, companies.57 Basically, the PRC loan that was freed from a transmission line project (see below) was allocated to the housing projects; construction of 200 low-income homes in Tout Lui Faut would cost US$ 5 million. Two other soft loans were

54 De Ware Tijd, 24 February 2001: ‘Sozavo en HI willen binnen 5 jaar 10.000 prefab-woningen opzetten; Commewijne wordt vrijhandelszone’ (Ministries of Social Affairs and Trade and Industry want to build 10,000 prefab houses within 5 years.)
56 De Ware Tijd, 3 February 2004: ‘Regering bestudeert obligatielening internationale kapitaalmarkt’ (Government looking into debenture loan on international capital market.)
available for other housing projects, which meant that a total of
US$ 16.4 million was available for all housing projects. While the
design of the 10 one-bedroom houses, 60 two-bedroom houses,
and 130 three-bedroom houses was in Surinamese hands, PRC
companies would do the construction work with labour to be
imported from the PRC. In February 2006 the work was put out to
tender in the PRC, and construction was planned to last from the
second quarter of 2006 to 2007, but it only started in late 2008.

5.3.3 Road Rehabilitation

The city of Dalian in Liaoning Province was on the itinerary of Presi-
dent Wijdenbosch’s state visit to the PRC in May 1998. There a
letter of intent was signed with the China Dalian International
Cooperation (group) Holdings Ltd. (popularly referred to as ‘Dalian’
in Suriname) for the rehabilitation of 270km of road infrastruc-
ture. With agreements on trade, economic and technical coopera-
tion and a preferential loan signed, there was some confusion
about the nature of the deal signed with Dalian. Dalian was por-
trayed as a PRC-funded company that would start the refurbish-
ment work in November 1999 under the supervision of a local
company, Suriname Anneng Construction Company N.V., under
management of the Suriname International Engineering Consultant
(Sintec, owned by Member of the Assembly for the DNP, and
former NDP member Frank Playfair). The Surinamese counterpart
would provide all necessary materials and equipment. Minister
Rudolf Mangal of Public Works told the Assembly that the project
would be funded by the PRC, as it was a technical cooperation
project, but he later changed that story and claimed that there was

58 De Ware Tijd, 3 January 2006: ‘China betaalt volkswoningen Tout Lui Faut’ (China
pays for low-cost housing in Tout Lui Faut).
De Ware Tijd, 14 January 2006: ‘China verlicht woningnood’ (China alleviates
housing shortage).
59 ‘Woningbouwplan Tout Lui Faut vordert gestadig’ (Tout Lui Faut housing
construction plan progresses steadily), posted 16 February 2006, http://www.dbsuri-
name.com/archief/nat/2006/febr06/16-02-06/Nat_Woningbouwplan%20Tout%20Lui
%20Faut%20vordert%20gestadig.asp.
60 The Surinamese government explained the fact that the PRC dominated the whole
project to the Surinamese public as resulting from the terms of the original grant.
schenking”’ (Minister Setrowidjojo: ‘Construction of 200 houses is a grant’); 19
November 2008, ‘President geeft startsein bouw 200 woningen’ (President announ-
ces start of construction of 200 houses).
a deal with a PRC state-run company. Chen Ribiao, spokesperson for the PRC embassy, stressed that the PRC government had not in any way been involved in the negotiations for the contract, after which Minister Mangal admitted that it was a private company that would be subcontracted by a Surinamese counterpart and paid with Surinamese state funds. Moreover, Suriname Anneng Construction Company (parallel Chinese name unknown) which was in the process of establishment, and headed by a shadowy person with double PRC and Surinamese nationality and did not have any background in road construction, had petitioned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for assistance in acquiring visa for 61 labourers from the PRC.

As an opposition party under the Wijdenbosch administration, the NPS was highly critical of the Dalian contract; opposition leader Otmar Rodgers spoke of “thieves and murderers” in the Assembly, while Ronald Venetiaan noted that the company was a holding, which implied that at least one intermediate link was still invisible. The relationship between the various players was eventually settled; the road rehabilitation project was a joint venture between China Dalian International Cooperation (group) Holdings Ltd. and the Government of the Republic of Suriname, who would provide capital and preferential treatment, while Sintec would be the local counterpart for Dalian. The project started in 2002, and was completed in 2003 after some delay. The Venetiaan II administration negotiated a second contract with Dalian (the Dalian II Contract), and in March 2004, the company started with the

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62 http://www.parbo.com/dwt/nov0599.html, ‘Startschot asfaltingsproject te Abrabroki op 19 november’ (Starting Signal for Asphalting Project on Abrabroki on 19th of November). The Dalian Investment Group was totally unaware of the ‘asphalt scandal’. On 13 September 1999 a delegation from the Dalian Group held a presentation in Hotel Torarica to interest local investors in various other possible joint ventures. This did not go well; not only did the Surinamese expect to hear an explanation for Dalian being involved in a corrupt deal, but they had expected the Chinese to have come as investors.

63 http://www.parbo.com/daily/n250899.html, ‘Minister Mangal kent zijn Chinese contractpartner niet eens’ (Minister Mangal does not even now his Chinese contract counterpart).

64 http://www.parbo.com/daily/n270899.html, ‘Minister Mangal jokt er in het wilde weg op los’ (Minister Mangal lying like crazy).

65 De Ware Tijd, 11 January 2003: ‘Nog 30 meter van de Meursweg ingezakt’ (Another 30 metres of the Meursweg collapses).
rehabilitation of a further 275 km of roads in Paramaribo.\textsuperscript{66} 85\% of the cost would be financed through a loan (approximately € 42 million)\textsuperscript{67} from the Export Import Bank of China.\textsuperscript{68} The opposition accused the Venetiaan II government of using the road rehabilitation project as a political stunt in the run-up to the 2005 elections. Despite the obvious goodwill Dalian’s activities generated, the relationship with the Surinamese authorities was not always smooth. The Surinamese were responsible for preparing the infrastructure for the roads, such as public facilities, with varying success. After a section of a recently resurfaced road collapsed, conflict over responsibility for its repair erupted between the authorities and Dalian, eventually warranting a visit from China Dalian International Corporation Holdings Ltd. Vice President Liu Shengde in October 2002.\textsuperscript{69} Eventually a Dalian III contract was signed in April 2008 for the rehabilitation of 500 km of roads outside Paramaribo.\textsuperscript{70}


\textsuperscript{67} De Ware Tijd, 15 November 2003: ‘Asfalteringsdeal beklonken’ (Road refurbishing deal closed). De West Nieuws online, www.dewestonline.cq-link.sr/main.asp?id=14076. Established in 1994 and wholly owned by the central government, The Export-Import Bank of China is a state export credit agency under the direct leadership of the State Council. The loan is a Loan to Overseas Construction Contracts; a loan, either in Renminbi or foreign currencies, that China Exim Bank provides to Chinese enterprises for financing their construction projects implemented in foreign countries, which may result in the export of Chinese equipment, machinery, building materials, technology, and labour services.

\textsuperscript{68} 中國進出口銀行.

\textsuperscript{69} De Ware Tijd, 22 October 2002: ‘Vice-president Dalian en DNA-voorzitter bespreken samenwerking’ (Dalian Vice President and Speaker of the Assembly discuss cooperation). Another issue was rent. In 1999 Dalian rented 2.4 ha of the Bruynzeel property for US$ 3,000, to store machinery and house workers. After the term expired in 2002, the Venetiaan II administration extended the lease for another three years. Dalian, however, never paid the rent.

\textsuperscript{70} De Ware Tijd, 22 April 2002: ‘Dalian III-asfalteringsproject gestart; China verzekerkt kwaliteitswerk af te leveren’ (Dalian III road rehabilitation project starts; China guarantees quality work). The Dalian III project which started in April 2008 caused controversy when it became known that the company wanted to import 450 labourers from the PRC and was intending to mine laterite itself instead of using Surinamese producers. De Ware Tijd, 22 April 2008: ‘Dalian wil 450 Chineseen importermen’ (Dalian wants to import 450 Chinese); De Ware Tijd, 1 August 2008: ‘Dalian wil eigen laterietconcessies; NH voorstander gebruik lokale componenten’ (Dalian wants its own laterite concessions; Ministry of Natural Resources prefers use of local components). Further controversy arose when the renovation of the road south from Paramaribo to Afohaka (which was included in the Dalian III contract as
Dalian is not exclusively involved in road construction in Suriname, despite the information listed on the company webpage. Staatsolie Suriname N.V. provided the bitumen for the project, but the rocks were originally imported from Guyana. In early 2001, Dalian started mining for the rocks in Brokopondo District as a cheaper alternative.71 Dalian also diversified into forestry with Dalian International Corporation Timber Suriname N.V. (listed as exporter; see Resource Extraction Projects below). About 30 labourers were imported from the PRC for the initial road rehabilitation project, mainly from Liaoning Province. Many of these original contract labourers remained in Suriname for the second rehabilitation contract, connecting with the earlier Manchurian (Liaoning and Jilin Provinces) forestry workers.

The Dalian road rehabilitation project is the only example of a Chinese enterprise that produced positive images of Chinese in Suriname. Reactions from the public were initially negative. The allegations of corruption involving Frank Playfair's Sintec consultancy and the scandal over the government's ignorance about the exact nature of the Dalian deal were potently useful to the opposition. The political opposition to the Wijdenbosch administration focused its attacks on government spending in large-scale infrastructure projects. Pro-opposition publicists and media tended to describe the Dalian deal as a financial disaster for Suriname. Some anti-PRC sentiments also surfaced; some suggested that the PRC embassy and the Communist Chinese government had tried to mislead the Surinamese, finding the idea that the PRC government might not have been fully aware of the deal completely implausible. 72 Dalian's credibility was also questioned, and it was described as an obscure entity, even non-existent, that had unde-

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71 De Ware Tijd, 18 May 2001: 'Nationale Leger: Dalian moet gebruik springstof aan hem overlaten' (Armed Forces: Dalian should leave use of explosives to them). Surinamese army officials warned Dalian that its use of explosives did not follow international safety rules. About a quarter of the article in De Ware Tijd was a description of mining accidents in the PRC, implying that Chinese / Chinese companies are not concerned with mining safety.

servedly acquired preferential treatment, and in many ways could be considered an exploiter.73

Responses ranged from anti-government sentiments due to concerns over the Dalian deal itself and distrust of the PRC, to ranting against Chinese immigrant labour. The general impression was of masses of Chinese coming to Suriname to work on the roads, taking jobs from locals.74 Communication was a persistent problem, especially at the start of the project; the Surinamese counterparts had trouble communicating the resurfacing schedule to the public, and the Chinese crews were faced with language barriers. The police even accused the Chinese road crews of randomly changing the traffic situation without consultation, and threatened to halt the project.75 However, as work progressed local attitudes towards the workers from the PRC changed. The public was generally impressed by the speed at which the Chinese crews worked, and the quality of the resurfaced road.76 By the start of the second refurbishing contract, the Dalian presence at least appeared not to be increasing, and Surinamese companies also clearly profited from the plans to upgrade the road net. The ‘Asfaltchinezen’ (Asphalt Chinese), as they were now commonly known, were admired for their willingness to work hard and suffer hardship. At worst they were ignored, at best they were held up as an example of what local Surinamese seemed incapable of achieving.77

74 For example: “...No places were created in the current road rehabilitation project. Chinese came here en masse to do the work” De Ware Tijd, 31 October 2001: ‘C-47 bereidt zich voor op nieuw leiderschap’ (C-47 prepares for new leaders).
75 De Ware Tijd, 26 April 2001: ‘Politie overweegt werkzaamheden Dalian stop te zetten’ (Police considers stopping activities Dalian).
76 For example: “We hope they learn from the example with regard to road resurfacing that the Chinese have given us (foundation, thickness, quality), because everyone now realizes what it should be like.” De Ware Tijd, 31 January 2002: R.A. Sweet in Opinion Section, ‘Onze “wegens”, mijn God!’ (Our ‘roads’, my God!).
77 For example: “If the Brazilians can get at the gold in the dirt by working ridiculously hard in the interior, why can’t we? If the Chinese from Dalian can work hard day and night resurfacing the roads, why can’t we? We don’t appreciate our own Surinamese TV and radio productions, but we eagerly watch and drool over the plastic babes and hunks in American films.” Column on the Radio 10 homepage, http://www.radio10.sr/ giwani_2.php: G.K. Zeggen, ‘Voor iets, krijg je heel wat terug!’ (For something you get back a lot).
5.4 Resource Extraction Projects

PRC resource extraction projects in Suriname are commercial projects to harvest and process timber for the purpose of supplying the Chinese market. Unambiguously PRC-owned logging enterprises started operating in Suriname in the late 1990s, their presence should be viewed in the context of the Surinamese activities of Southeast Asian logging companies in the early 1990s. One reason is that the track record of the Southeast Asian companies shaped the response of the Surinamese state to the strategies of subsequent PRC companies. In late 1992, Malaysian and Indonesian companies which were invited to invest in neighbouring Guyana, started to scout for investment opportunities in Suriname. In the face of economic collapse, the promise of the South-east Asian companies to invest US$ 26,000,000 in Suriname was too good to resist. When the Indonesian companies Mitra Usaha Sejati Abadi (MUSA) IndoSuriname N.V. and Suri-Atlantic, and the Malaysian Berjaya Timber Industry Suriname N.V. applied for huge concessions covering 40% of the country against the guidelines of the Surinamese Forest Act, a huge international outcry followed. The result of pressure from the transnational environmental field to the threat of these disreputable logging ventures was the establishment of the Central Suriname Nature Reserve in 1998.

78 MUSA’s entry was said to have been facilitated by KTPI (Kerukunan Tulodo Pranatan Inggil) chairman Willy Soemita during the Venetiaan I administration (De Groene Amsterdammer, 13 March 1998: Iwan Brave, ‘Goud, coke en malaria’ (Gold, cocaine and malaria)). In 1993 MUSA acquired a 150,000 ha logging concession in western Suriname, but in 1994 it became known that the company was buying timber from local concession holders in other parts of the country. MUSA got into trouble a number of times for felling protected timber species. In 1995 the team negotiating with MUSA advised the government against signing the contract, as MUSA had been unable to provide information about its parent company, the Porodisa Group. A visit by MUSA director Irawan Imoek to Suriname did not change the minds of the Surinamese authorities. According to some sources Suri-Atlantic of the Antang Group was “another name for MUSA”. Just as MUSA was linked to the Javanese KTPI, Suri-Atlantic was said to have links to the Creole NPS, while Berjaya was said to be linked to the East Indian VHP (De Ware Tijd, 4 January 1995: ‘Terugblik of 1994 (3); Uitverkoop natuurlijke hulpbronnen en de moordende inflatie’ (Looking back at 1994, part 3; The selling out of natural resource and the killing inflation)).


80 Comprising 1.6 million hectares of virgin rainforest in the Upper Coppenam e River watershed, the CSNR was designated a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO in November 2000.
There is also a strong link between the PRC logging enterprises of the late 1990s and early 2000s and the Southeast Asian companies because the PRC logging enterprises more often than not rely on transnational personal and business networks of ethnic Chinese individuals. Uncovering the formal identities of all Asian logging companies in Suriname has been fraught with difficulty, as business affiliations and ownership ties have proven to be very murky. The business ties of these companies often seemed to overlap with Chinese transnational networks that linked ethnic Chinese businessmen in Southeast Asia with the government of the PRC on the one hand and individual ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Suriname on the other. They run their Surinamese operations in such a way that the PRC state-owned enterprises formed something of a continuum with companies that were more indirectly related to ethnic Chinese, hence the phrase ‘PRC or Chinese-related’ in this chapter. By blurring the distinction between the interests of the Chinese state and ethnic Chinese individuals, the lack of transparency which was a business asset for such enterprises operating in Suriname contributed to the image of ‘shady Chinese coming to exploit Suriname’, which is the constant theme confounding the positioning of Chinese in Suriname, as we shall see in the next chapter.

China’s post-reform economy was fuelling a steadily increasing demand for wood, but logging had been banned in China following the flooding of the Yangzi, which was blamed on deforestation along the upper reaches of the river between Tibet and Sichuan Province. Chinese companies first obtained wood closer to home in South-east Asia, and then moved on to Africa and South America. In August 1994, following the state visit by President Venetiaan, a PRC Government Forestry Delegation headed by Forestry Vice-Minister Wang Zhibao visited Suriname, where a memorandum on forestry cooperation was signed. By the mid-1990s, with the South-east Asian Financial Crisis in full swing, Chinese-owned and more subtly Chinese-linked logging companies started entering Suriname; the governance void that had initially attracted the Southeast Asian companies still existed, and there was a significant ethnic Chinese population that could provide middleman services as well as access to migrant networks.

Virtually none of the companies had any real experience in tropical forestry. Seizing fleeting opportunities for quick profits is their basic motivation. As a result, forestry operations are not based on proper forest surveys and forest management plans, entry into Suriname and investments are badly planned, and opera-
tions may quickly prove to be unprofitable or unsustainable. The more successful companies generally obey the letter of local regulations, and copy local practices, both legal and illegal (e.g. manipulating export statements, not declaring timber cutting, etc.). Chinese globalization is inextricably intertwined with Chinese overseas migration, and so some companies may enter Suriname via contacts made in other contexts with ethnic Chinese in Suriname, while others become facilitators of Chinese migration. Use of personal and/or business networks may be a necessity (institutional weaknesses and language barriers may require mediation) or an added value (easier and quicker access to information and other networks, fostering outward obscurity as an asset).

The PRC or Chinese-related logging companies form business networks with other PRC or Chinese-related companies involved in timber processing and marketing. Some of these relationships are formal business links with logging companies, sawmills and exporters sharing individual Chinese investors or board members or owners. Their business practices are meant to be adaptable rather than stable, and most switch between logging and exporting. A few logging companies are apparently attempting to diversify, for instance into manufacturing wood products, or possibly other natural resources. The relationships between local subsidiaries and parent companies on the one hand and governments on the other can be very opaque.

An important pull-factor for the PRC or Chinese-related timber companies is the weakness of the Surinamese forestry management. In the mid-1990s only about 6% of the forests within the Surinamese Forestry Service’s area of operation were considered to be ‘managed’ or ‘partly managed’. Even though the forests were in fact being over-harvested, the Forestry Service did not move to reduce allowable cuts in the system of managed concessions. The Forest Management Authority (SBB, successor of the Forestry Service) grants concessions and permits, and thus registers the location and size of the logging concessions, as well as the different timber species harvested and production volumes. But it is incapable of assessing or proving the impact of logging operations on biodiversity, the environment in general, and local communities.

Forestry, if properly carried out, does not quite have the potential that Surinamese politicians or Chinese loggers wishfully assume it has. As all forest sector revenue (taxes on logging, milling and exports) as well as other public funds are used up in regu-

81 Sizer & Rice 1995
latory costs, the foreign currency from exports is the only contribution of the forestry sector to the coffers of the state. Export-led growth through FDI in logging is not promising, and in fact the tax incentives and favourable concessions that would be needed to promote FDI fosters speculation. At the beginning of the Millennium, there was evidence which suggested that Chinese logging companies might be “speculating on potential prices for less well-known species, without concrete financial information on viability of harvesting these species.” 82 Forest conservation was one possible policy alternative with regard to forestry. This basically involves allowing conservation groups to compete with loggers for concessions, and so be paid for leaving the forests intact. The formation of the Central Suriname Nature Reserve in 1998 was seen a first step in that direction.83

No other (reliable) sources of data on the effects of PRC or Chinese-related timber operations and other resource development projects exist. What can be said is that the lack of tropical know-how is causing problems in the field, with extraction of timber currently the main problem. In the past locals were subcontracted to cut specific timber species (the most valuable timber) on the company concession or on private concessions, and without planning, supervision or control in the field, trees that were too young or unusable were also felled and left to rot.84 When companies work the concessions themselves, they often do it without proper timber surveys or timber extraction plans. Consequently haphazard felling of trees and extraction of the logs from the concession causes a lot of damage to the forest. Trucking these logs to the coast has also proven to be a burden on road infrastructure and a danger to the public.85

The larger companies are somewhat well documented, but there is very little information available on the smaller PRC or Chinese-related timber companies. SBB has data only for a few of these companies, and they only include export figures. Some companies are only recorded for a single year in the available SBB data; some of these operations may have proven unprofitable or unsustainable, while others are perhaps in the process of starting up. According to data derived from SBB and Surinamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at least 18 timber companies were

82 Hardner & Rice 2001: 263.
83 Hardner & Rice 2001: 270.
84 Ibid.
85 De Ware Tijd, 15 September 2000, ‘Chinezen in houttrucks een gevaar op de Afobakaweg’ (Chinese in timber trucks a danger on the Afobaka road).
involved in logging, timber processing and trade in Suriname between 1995 and 2005. Tacoba Forestry Consultant N.V., Finestyle Investments (Suriname) N.V., and Suriname Ji Shen Forestry and Timber Industry N.V. may be considered typical of Chinese / Chinese-linked lumber companies. Tacoba Forestry Consultant N.V. is a subsidiary of China International Marine Containers (Group) Co., Ltd. (CIMC), a joint venture company principally engaged in the design, manufacturing and marketing of ISO containers. In 1999, CIMC had two other subsidiaries in Suriname: Topco-Forestry Consultants N.V. (an investment company) and Lumbrex Suriname N.V. (logging, timber processing and trade; no longer registered with the Suriname Chamber of Commerce), both were represented by one Mu Feng. CIMC timber processing initially consisted of the production of wooden floor linings for containers, and the primary processing of raw timber, but it gradually shifted towards value-added processing. CIMC had logging concession of 76 hectares in Surinam and Cambodia.

According to an article by Mark Jaffe, which is often quoted online, the Cambridge-based NGO Forest Monitor claimed that Tacoba was owned by Jin Lin, a Chinese timber company. According to a 1998 annual report, CIMCHK, a CIMC subsidiary, bought 88% of the shares of Highfield Development Corp. through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Goldbird Holding Inc. Highfield in turn owns Tacoba Forestry Consultant N.V. and Topco Forestry N.V. Tacoba was incorporated in May 1996, and was originally founded by Paulis K. Todirijo, Chatoerdew Ramgoelam and Zhang Xuequan. Its board currently consists of two Chinese nationals: Jin Jianlong (Zhejiang Province; chairman, manager and legal representative of Highfield Development Corporation), Yuan Jun (Henan Province; manager). Its activities include forestry, timber processing and trade, and it is registered as a company that exploits and explores timber for exports. In 1997 the Surinamese CIMC subsidiaries obtained a 20-year timber concession rights to 150,000 acres of a large area beginning near the Bronsberg Nature Reserve and

86 特高霸林业顾问有限公司.
87 中国国际海运集装箱(集团)股份有限公司.
89 http://www.csrc.gov.cn/CSRCsite/eng/ebshare/e1998ar/e2039/e2039_08.htm
90 Surinamese Chamber of Commerce & Industry file no. 265764
southward to within three kilometres of the Maroon village of Pokigron. By 2003 this concession was being withdrawn. SBB data for Tacoba only show actual timber production in 2002. The same data show constant exports from 1997 through 2003, with Tacoba the largest (recorded) Chinese timber exporter in Suriname during that period. No activities were formally recorded after 2003, so it is not exactly clear how Tacoba obtained the timber it exported.

Finestyle Investments (Suriname) N.V., and Suriname Ji Shen Forestry and Timber Industry N.V. are both from Jilin Province, in Manchuria. Finestyle Investments (Suriname) N.V. was the local counterpart of Finestyle Wood Industrial Company Limited, a Hong Kong-based company engaged in marketing and trading hardwood swan timbers and logs from Latin America. In August 2000, Luen Cheong Tai Engineering Limited acquired full ownership of Finestyle Investments (Suriname) N.V. Due to financial troubles, Luen Cheong Tai Engineering Limited was reorganized as Baker Group International Holdings Limited in June 2002, but it was eventually liquidated in April 2005. Finestyle’s current ownership is unclear. Finestyle Investments (Suriname) N.V. was founded by Gilbert J. Kuik and Jimmy D. Kasdjo and incorporated in June 1999. In 2005 its board consisted of two Chinese nationals: Ma Jiaqi (chairman-manager; Liaoning Province) and Sheng Hui (manager; Shandong Province).

Despite its Hong Kong origins, most of the Chinese expat workers at Finestyle are from Liaoning and Jilin Provinces in Northeast China. Its activities include logging, timber processing and trade, transporting timber, building, trading in and exporting houses, and importing company equipment. It is registered as an exporter, but engages in timber harvesting and running a sawmill near Paramaribo. It holds 30,000 ha of forest concessions at Brownsweg granted by SBB in 2001, but in 2000 and 2001 it used the concession of a Surinamese national with official approval. SBB was aware of the financial troubles faced by Finestyle with the demise of its parent company. Finestyle has continued to meet its obligations and maintains a (comparatively) unremarkable track record. Controversy did surface in 2002, when Suriname tax authorities discovered that Finestyle and Suriname Ji Shen Forestry and Timber Industry N.V. had evaded some US$ 3,000,000 in

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91 联昌泰工程有限公司.
93 倍可集团国际控股有限公司.
export duties by manipulating statements of timber categories. Finestyle stopped exporting timber after that. It never achieved its goal of producing pre-fab housing and hardwood floors, and its annual timber production is steadily decreasing.

Suriname Ji Shen Forestry and Timber Industry N.V. – also spelled ‘Suriname Jisen Forestry and Timber Industry N.V.’ – is a subsidiary of Jilin Forestry Industry Joint-Stock Company Ltd. Ji Shen was founded by Hoi Sjauw Rick Chou and Standard International Trading N.V. and it was incorporated in December 1999. Its activities include forestry, timber processing and trade, and it is registered as an exporter, owner of a sawmill and seller of timber products. Its Managing Director is Chinese national, Tang Ping (Jilin Province). Ji Shen works three concessions of 10,350 ha. Ji Shen and Finestyle are virtually neighbours, with their sawmills along the same road near Paramaribo. Just as it is the case for Finestyle, Ji Shen’s Chinese expat workers are from North-eastern China, most from Jilin Province.

According to a Ji Shen spokesperson, the parent company had acquired a loan from the provincial branch of the Bank of China and backing from the Jilin Provincial Government for overseas logging ventures. In September 2001, Vice-Chairman of Jilin CPPCC, Liu Xilin, visited Suriname at the head of an economic and trade delegation from Jilin Province. During the visit which was described as a Sino-Surinamese joint venture, Liu visited Jisen. However, the operations in Suriname were not successful; though experienced in timber processing, the company had no prior experience in tropical forestry, there were also problems with local labour, and work in the concessions was hampered by lawlessness (one ex-pat worker was kidnapped and one murdered, and equipment was stolen). In 2002 Ji Shen’s operations in Suriname were geared to repaying the Chinese State loan, after which they planned to exit Suriname.

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94 De West, 22 August 2002, ‘Chinese houtgiganten lichten Suriname voor miljarden op’ (Chinese lumber giants cheating Suriname out of billions).
95 蘇里南吉森林工業有限公司.
97 Surinamese Chamber of Commerce & Industry file no. 31034
5.4.1 China Zhong Heng Tai Investment Co. Ltd.

The activity of China Zhong Heng Tai provoked so much controversy in the Surinamese public debate, that it deserves separate treatment. Between 1975 and 1980, Dutch development aid funds were invested in developing a palm oil industry, and about 10,000 ha of oil palms were planted in Victoria, Phedra, and Patamacca, Eastern Suriname. The sector eventually collapsed: development aid was withdrawn in the early 1980s, leaving the government unable to continue investments. The global market prices for palm oil were lower than initially projected, harvests were lower than expected, labour was scarce, and finally the plantations were destroyed by spear rot and the civil war. Therefore it was decided to stop investing in the palm oil sector.\footnote{2004 Plan for the Agricultural Sector, Ministry of Agriculture}

In 1996 the new Wijdenbosch Administration declared that it wished to salvage the palm oil sector.\footnote{De Ware Tijd, 11 November 1996: ‘Regering wil oliepalmindustrie behouden; Miljoeneninvestering noodzakelijk’ (Government wants to preserve palm oil industry; investment of millions required).} In 25-26 May 1998, President Wijdenbosch paid a State Visit to Malaysia, where a trip to the Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (PORIM) was on the agenda.\footnote{http://domino.kln.gov.my/KLN/events.nsf/0/9d9c1b6e93aa9dafc825660f001f60fb?OpenDocument} An assessment by PORIM in October 1998 singled out Suriname as offering the best conditions in the region for a palm oil industry.\footnote{De Ware Tijd, 4 September 2003: ‘Suriname regionaal uitermate geschikt voor palmolieindustrie’ (Suriname particularly suited for palm oil industry in the region).} A month later, Minister Saimin Redjosentono of Agriculture visited Malaysia for a PORIM seminar. Zakariah Ismail and Professor Jalani Sukaimi, Deputy Director PORIM, visited Suriname from 4 to 7 April 1999, after which a memorandum of understanding was signed between Santri Holdings (M) Sdn Bhd and then Ministers Redjosentono of Agriculture and Robby Dragman of Trade and Industry.\footnote{De Ware Tijd, 8 April 1999: ‘Suriname en Maleisië openen palmolierafinaderij’ (Suriname and Malaysia open palm oil refinery). Zakariah Ismail was the contact person for Santri Holdings, a company involved in blended oil, ghee, margarine, palm oil, palm oil based products, sawn timber. (http://freeweb.wtexpo.com/200306/santriholdingsm/index.php.) Both Ministers were members of the Javanese KTPI party, led by Willy Soemita.} No Malaysian investments ever materialized.

On 25 July 2002, a company called China Zhong Heng Tai Investment Company Ltd. and the Surinamese Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries signed a memorandum of understanding on a
new palm oil project in Marowijne District in eastern Suriname. 104 During a press conference a week earlier, president Venetiaan had hinted of investments in Marowijne. Although this was the first time that China Zhong Heng Tai was publicly mentioned, the same conglomerate had apparently applied for a concession to the previous government. 105 The new investment proposal was welcomed by the Surinamese government as a way to revive the palm oil sector and generate foreign exchange. The company would construct factories, plant palms, and do some logging, and would therefore be granted a concession that would incorporate the former oil palm plantations of the Landbouwmaatschappij Pata-macca agricultural company and old logging concessions of the Bruynzeel Houtmaatschappij lumber company.

Details of the project remained sketchy, but the forestry aspects were more concrete than the palm oil plans. 106 An attempt by China Zhong Heng Tai to show its willingness to abide by the rules and regulations of the Republic of Suriname, in particular with regard to labour and the environment, hinted at plans to import foreign labour. 107 China Zhong Heng Tai Investment Company Ltd. submitted its business plan on 3 March 2003 to Minister Geeta-persad Gangaram Panday of Agriculture. 108 The business plan basically described an agreement with the Surinamese government for a palm oil enterprise to be established with funds generated from the sale of timber cut from the palm oil concession. In his column in De Ware Tijd of 1 September 2003, Drs. A.C. Jethu of Jetinvestments cautioned that there was a well-documented link between PRC or Chinese-related palm oil projects and deforestation in South-east Asia, and that China Zhong Heng Tai was an unknown entity without any track record in the palm oil industry, and explicitly warned that the project might be a cover for logging

104 De Ware Tijd, 25 July 2002: ‘Marowijne krijgt nieuwe palmolie-industrie’ (Marowijne District gets new palm oil industry).
105 De Ware Tijd, 26 April 2005: ‘Chinese investeerder afgewezen door vorige regering’ (Chinese investor tur-ned down by previous administration).
106 De Ware Tijd, 4 January 2003: ‘Chinese investeerders positief over investeringen palmoliesector’ (Chinese investors positive about investments in palm oil sector).
107 De Ware Tijd, 27 May 2003: ‘ATM informeert Chinese investeringsgroep over arbeidswetgeving’ (Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and the Environment informs Chinese group of investors about labour laws).
108 De West, 4 March 2003: ‘Chinees bedrijf biedt businessplan oliepalmproject aan’ (Chinese company submits business plan for palm oil project).
activities. On 2 September 2003 two members of the government’s negotiating committee, Paul Rellum and Iwan Krolis, and the economist Winston Ramautarsing, discussed the plan during a public meeting organized by Agriforum, a think tank of Surinamese agricultural specialists. The conclusion was that the state could only expect income from taxes on timber exports, while there were no guarantees that the project would create jobs for locals or that China Zhong Heng Tai would not withdraw from Suriname after logging was completed.

Maroon communities in Marowijne, who had been neither consulted nor actively involved, were opposed to the project, which they considered to be primarily a plan to clearcut the area. During a visit to the Surinamese plant breeding centre Phyto Tech, representatives of China Zhong Heng Tai indicated that their core business in Suriname would be timber felling, and were not able to answer technical questions on oil palm propagation.

Controversy only increased when the terms of the agreement became known. The agreement described the workings of the ‘integrated palm oil enterprise’. China Zhong Heng Tai would be granted a concession of 526km² in the Patamacca area (the former palm oil plantation of Victoria) near Moengo in Eastern Suriname, of which 400km² would be for palm oil production. The concession would be granted for the term of 38 consecutive years. The forest would be cleared, and the timber would be used to fund the establishment of a nursery with an initial capacity of 160,000 plants. The actual oil palm plantation would start in the third year, and the palm oil factories would be opened between the sixth and 12th years. Ten percent of crude palm oil production would be purchased by Suriname, to be resold in the region and processed into cooking oil for the local market. Suriname could also claim

110 De Ware Tijd, 4 September 2003.; ‘Eigen inbreng investeerder oliepalmproject rond 110 miljoen US dollar’ (Contribution of investor in palm oil project about US$110,000,000).
111 De West, 20 December 2003: ‘Overeenkomst met Chinees oliepalmbedrijf in behandeling bij DNA’ (Agreement with Chinese palm oil company discussed in the National Assembly).
112 De Ware Tijd, 7 February 2004: ‘Activiteiten oliepalm-investeerder pas vierde kwartaal merkbaar’ (Activities of palm oil investor to be noticeable only in fourth quarter). Quoting Phyto Tech general manager Tony Zuiverloon.
25% of timber production.\textsuperscript{113} The following is a description of the financial terms of the agreement:

The agreement will provide the China Zhong Heng Tai Company with a timber supply for the first 12 years of the agreement with a total projected value of US$ 946 million. Part of the income generated will be invested in setting up the palm oil industry. Total Palm oil income generated from year 6 - 38 is estimated at US$ 1,480 million. The company will receive a tax holiday for six years. Total net profit during the life cycle of the project is projected at US$ 490 million. Besides providing both timber and palm oil for its domestic market, the company will expand its market share on the regional markets. Both governments have international obligations for environmental protection and the Chinese company has therefore agreed to immediately replant the deforested area from year one with oil palms.\textsuperscript{114}

The deal seemed to be more about clear-cutting than about revenues from palm oil. The paradox of a foreign investment company that would finance its operations in Suriname by exploiting Surinamese natural resources was not lost on the public, who were now squarely against the “oil palm Chinese”. According to China Zhong Heng Tai, replanting the abandoned palm oil plantation implied risking reinfection with spear rot, but no analysis had been made of the actual situation to support this claim. Although such studies were promised\textsuperscript{115}, no assessment was made of potential environmental impacts, which, besides deforestation, may include erosion, sedimentation, soil compaction, surface water pollution, and loss of soil productivity and biodiversity.\textsuperscript{116} The only positive impact of the project would be the generation of direct and indirect employment. According to China Zhong Heng Tai’s business plan, full production required 5,550 workers, 4,440 of whom would be recruited locally. The business plan did not clearly provide for locals working in management or technical jobs. But wages proposed by China Zhong Heng Tai for local workers (US$ 8 - US$ 16 a day)

\textsuperscript{113} De Ware Tijd, 4 September 2003: ‘Suriname regionaal uitermate geschikt voor palmolieindustrie’ (Suriname particularly suited for palm oil industry in the region).

\textsuperscript{114} Essed-Fernandes 2003.

\textsuperscript{115} De Ware Tijd, 30 September 2003: ‘Milieustudie is voorwaarde voor oliepalm-consessie van Patamacca; “Er wordt geen boom eerder geveld”’ (Environmental assessment condition for Patamacca palm oil concession; ‘No tree will be felled before then’).

were lower than those of unskilled labourers in Suriname. It was also unclear how 4,440 Surinamese workers would be recruited to work in the sparsely populated Patamacca area. Under these conditions, suspicions that China Zhong Heng Tai would use the project to facilitate Chinese overseas migration by importing cheap labour only increased, and the increasing numbers of New Chinese in Paramaribo did not help make China Zhong Heng Tai’s denials about importing Chinese labour any more believable. In short: the business plan as it was submitted was too vague, costs estimates seemed too high while income from timber appeared to have been downplayed, stakeholders had not been involved, the exact identity of China Zhong Heng Tai remained unknown.117

On 6 January 2004 the agreement with China Zhong Heng Tai, which was now called simultaneous exploitation of timber and oil palms, was discussed in the National Assembly.118 After intense discussion of the agreement, a narrow majority (56,9%) of the National Assembly approved the agreement with China Zhong Heng Tai. The opposition parties (Millennium Combinatie) refused to cooperate in setting up the legal framework for the Patamacca deal, leaving the government parties to approve the Act on Approval of the Marowijne Palm Oil Industry Development Project on 8 January.119 On 16 January 2004 the “Agreement on the Set-up and Exploitation of an Integrated Palm Oil Enterprise” was signed by Minister of Agriculture Geetapersad Gangaram Panday and Minister of Natural Resources Franco Demon for the Surinamese government, and Mr Liu Jiang representing China Zhong Heng Tai Invest Co. As soon as the agreement came into effect, China Zhong Heng Tai had to present the Surinamese state with a first bank guarantee for US$ 16,200,000. In June 2005, six months after the deadline, the company still had not come up with the guarantee. According to Paul Rellum, chairman of the government-appointed steering group that is supposed to monitor and supervise the

117 De Ware Tijd, 9 January 2004: George Orie, ‘De zwakke punten van de oliepalm-overeenkomst (1)’ (The weak points of the palm oil agreement).
118 De Ware Tijd, 2 January 2004: ‘Concept-overeenkomst obéplamindustrie dinsdag in parlement’ (Draft agreement palm oil industry to be discussed in parliament on Tuesday).
119 Times of Suriname, 7 January 2004: ‘Millennium Combinatie wil niet tegen elke prijs ontwikkeling’ (Development at any price not acceptable to Millennium Combinatie). The MC position was explained during a press conference by Jenny Geerlings-Simons of the NDP and KTPI chairman Willy Soemita. Interestingly, the KTPI had been behind the earlier Malaysian initiatives for the Patamacca area.
deal\textsuperscript{120}, the Chinese embassy in Suriname said that the PRC government is now more wary of companies working abroad with state funds.\textsuperscript{121} In the meantime, China Zhong Heng Tai had started to export wood, acquired from other producers. According to SBB data: 500m\textsuperscript{3} (4.4% of total timber exports) worth US$ 56,919 (2.4% of total export value). In January 2006 China Zhong Heng Tai was given a reprieve of 90 days to produce the bank guarantee, but it failed to do so at the end of that period.\textsuperscript{122}

The exact identity of China Zhong Heng Tai Investment Company Ltd. is still unclear. In keeping with Surinamese law, China Zhong Heng Tai Suriname N.V. was set up as a local counter-part of Beijing Zhong Heng Tai Investment Co. Ltd.,\textsuperscript{123} a company specifically set up for the Patamacca operation. It was founded by one Snake Wang and China Zhong Heng Tai Investment Co. Ltd., and incorporated in April 2004.\textsuperscript{124} On its board are three ethnic Chinese: Sun Liang (General Manager; US citizen born in Heilongjiang Province), Snake Wang (Vice General Manager; holder of Nauru passport, born in Anhui Province; according to one source, his original name was recorded as ‘Wang Chou Lung’\textsuperscript{125}), Liu Jiang

\textsuperscript{120} The Steering Group for the Development of the Marowijne Palm Oil Industry (Stuurgroep Ontwikkeling Oliepalm Industrie Marowijne). De Ware Tijd, 24 November 2004: ‘President Venetiaan bij installatie stuuurgroep oliepalmindustrie: “Toeziên op Surinaamse belangen allereerste opdracht”’.
\textsuperscript{121} http://www.waterkant.net/nieuws, Still no Bank Guarantee from Chinese Investor
\textsuperscript{122} De Ware Tijd, 28 March 2006: ‘Zhong Heng Tai heeft weer geen bankgarantie’. Ten days later China Zhong Heng Tai managing director Liu Jiang announced that a new partner had been found in Hong Kong, and that the US$ 16.2 million bank guarantee had been obtained. The new partner was named as NSW Holding, a real estate company (market capitalization US$ 3 billion). (De Ware Tijd, 6 April 2006: ‘Patamaccaproject China Zhong Heng Tai gaat door; Bankgarantie rond’ (China Zhong Heng Tai’s Patamacca project to proceed; bank guarantee settled)). During the press conference, the Royal Bank of Trinidad & Tobago (RBTT) was named as guarantor for two years. A representative of the PRC embassy thanked the Surinamese government. Rumours interpreted the latest developments as a smokescreen to keep the project alive for another player waiting in the wings to take over the contract.
\textsuperscript{124} Registered capital was increased to SRD 30,000,000, and participation in issued capital was set at 5,999 shares for Beijing China Zhong Heng Tai Investment Co. Ltd, and 1 share for Snake Wang.
\textsuperscript{125} De Ware Tijd, 21 January 2004: Henry Carbière Falls, ‘Naamsverandering mede-oprichter Chinese olie-palm-investeerder dubieus’ (Name change of co-founder Chinese palm oil investor suspicious). Located in the South Pacific, Nauru is the world’s smallest independent republic. Its phosphate reserves depleted, Nauru faces virtual bankruptcy. It moved into off-shore banking and passport sales. The Financial
Chairman of the board of Supervisory Directors and legal representative; (Chinese citizen, born in Guizhou Province).

By January 2004 the activities of the company had still not been registered with the Surinamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, but two years later they were finally registered to include: investing in and exploitation of oil palm and other enterprises in agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries and forestry, processing of and trading in vegetable oils, and trade in agricultural, animal, fishery and forestry products. Its parent company was apparently a conglomerate of six companies from the People's Republic of China. Initially a seventh company seemed to be involved: the Djajanti Group from Indonesia. Owned by Burhan Uray, a former general who is linked to the Suharto family, it started out as a forestry company in 1956. It is strongly diversified with many subsidiaries, and remains one of Indonesia's biggest timber groups. It holds 25 forest concessions totalling 2.8 million ha in Kalimantan, Maluku and West Papua (Irian Jaya). The Djajanti group is hounded by accusations of forestry crime. According to local sources, the Djajanti group was present at a meeting in Suriname with government and business people in August 2002. The press was not allowed to attend. Apparently, the Djajanti Group was asked “by the Chinese government” to carry out this project in Suriname.

The names of the six Chinese companies only became known when the agreement for the Patamacca project was presented publicly, but confusion about the status of China Zhong Heng Tai persisted. In a publication of the European Commission, China Zhong Heng Tai is listed in a donor matrix as a project of the PRC government, valued at approximately € 90,000,000. The company has also been described as wholly state-owned and set up by the PRC government for the express purpose of the oil palm project. It was apparently using state funds, as it claimed to have started with an initial capital investment of US$ 40,000,000.

Action Task Force (FATF/GAFI) removed Nauru from its list of non-cooperative countries and territories in 2005 after the country made substantial moves to address money-laundering (http://www.fatf-gafi.org/dataoecd/13/36/35497629.pdf). Nauru is now looking to the Far East for assistance. About 8% of the population or roughly 1,000 people are Chinese. In 2002, Taiwan severed its 22-year old ties with Nauru after the Nauruan prime minister established diplomatic ties with the PRC. In 2005 ties with Taiwan were restored, after which the PRC severed diplomatic ties with Nauru.

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126 Surinamese Chamber of Commerce & Industry file no. 38285.
provided by the PRC government. But public questions about the company’s creditworthiness and the actual source of its capital were never completely answered. On its website (2005 / 2006), China Zhong Heng Tai identified the Chairman of its Board as Mr. Zhang Han, and stated that its shareholders were “five state-owned large and medium enterprises”:

- Zhong Tai Investment Company; its sole purpose is development of palm oil projects outside the PRC. Branches in Hainan, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Malaysia.129
- Suntime International Tech-Economic Corporation.130
- China Petroleum Oriental Geophysical Prospecting Co., Ltd.131 Major businesses in the PRC, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Iran, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Mexico, among other places.
- China National State Forest Farm Development Corporation.132 Forestry development group affiliated with the State Forestry Administration.133
- Shenzhen Weiji Investment Development Co., Ltd.134

China Zhong Heng Tai is a compact example of everything that could go wrong with PRC or Chinese-related development projects in Suriname. The company has no clearly proven experience in either palm oil production or tropical forestry, its exact busi-

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132 中國國營林場開發總公司. http://www.cnsffdc.com/englishV.html; inactive link

133 Originally, Zhong Heng Tai listed the China State Farms Agribusiness (Group) Corp. (中國農墾集團總公司, http://www.csfac.com; link inactive).

134 深圳緯基投資發展有限公司. Zhong Heng Tai originally listed a company called Shenzhen Zhong De Tai Investment Development Co, Ltd. (no Chinese orthography available).
ness links are unclear, it obfuscates the nature of its link to the PRC government, it may very well have entered Suriname via Overseas Chinese networks, it seems to be motivated by the prospect of quick profits from uncontrolled resource extraction, and so on. The difference with previous projects is the almost immediate critical reaction from civil society, despite it having a more subtle entry strategy than earlier companies. The government of the People’s Republic of China is apparently also more wary of supporting this project, which might indicate a new trend. It is unclear if, and how this project will proceed. Four years later the project had yet to start despite the fact that China Zhong Heng Tai had agreed to import no more than 100 Chinese workers in the first five years, to pay salaries according to Surinamese standards, and not to clear-cut all of the 40,000 ha concession in one go, but to develop 1,000 ha first. Local Maroon communities, supported by the Maroon A-Combinatie coalition partner, remained fiercely opposed.

This chapter has not been intended as an encyclopaedic listing of or a black paper on PRC activities in Suriname, but instead as a historical context for discussing the relationship between Chinese migrants and the Chinese State and its repercussions in Suriname. Reflexive Chinese group identity is sinocentric, and the ‘China’ cur-

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135 Interestingly, by August 2008 three foreign entities had shown interest in palm oil production in Suriname: China Zhong Heng Tai, Food Fast and Fertilized from India, and Quality Palm Oil Suriname consisting mainly of Dutch investors. There is very likely a political dimension to the Quality Palm Oil Suriname proposal. It does not entail logging, but redevelopment of the old Mariënburg sugar plantation near Paramaribo which has a majority ethnic Javanese population. Soewarto Moestadja, Press agent for Quality Palm Oil Suriname, was an ex-minister and member of the Javanese D21 party. As such he was a rival of Paul Somohardjo of the Javanese coalition party Pertjajah Luhur, which had courted the Chinese in the 2005 elections (see Paragraph 9.1.1). The future of the initiative is unclear, though a memorandum of understanding has been signed and Mariënburg NV has ceded 3,500 ha of land to Quality Palm Oil Suriname. De Ware Tijd, 11 August 2008: ‘Derde palmolie-investeerder dient zich aan’ (Third palm oil investor presents itself).

136 De Ware Tijd, 18 October 2007: ‘Geen wijziging in oliepalmovereekomst Patamacca’ (No changes to Patamacca palm oil agreement); 1 February 2008: ‘Volksvertegenwoordigers Marowijne niet positief over Patamaccadeal’ (Marowijne representatives not positive about Patamacca deal); 3 May 2008: ‘Voortgang palmolieproject Marowijne in gedrang’ (Postponement of Marowijne palm oil project likely); 24 January 2008: ‘Regering wil spoedig uitvoering Patamacca-deal’ (Government wants execution of Patamacca deal soon).

By the end of 2008 it was clear to the Surinamese government that the Patamacca deal was off. President Venetiaan indicated that local opposition in Marowijne District, encouraged by ‘lower echelons’ of the Maroon parties (ABOP and BEP of the A-Combinatie coalition), was the reason. De Ware Tijd, 15 January 2007: ‘Patamaccaoliepalmproject van de baan’ (Patamacca palm oil project shelved).
rently at the centre of that view is the PRC. Publicly articulated Chinese group identity in Suriname is not based on Chinese nationalism, but patriotic pride does determine the style of intra-ethnic public events. Such group identity is not inclusive; it depends on clear ties to a Chinese ‘motherland’ and while it can incorporate mixed Chinese as huayi, it is basically a migrant identity. Its articulation is strongly limited to settings that are (intentionally or not) segregated by the use of Chinese language. Resinicization in the sense of re-imagined ties with the PRC never produced a publicly articulated, inclusive and instrumental Chinese group identity that was useful for migrant positioning in Surinamese society.

The Chinese of Surinamese readily volunteer public shows of loyalty to the PRC, though there are few indications that the PRC embassy systematically demands such loyalty, not since the beginning of diplomatic ties between the PRC and the Republic of Suriname, and more particularly not since the appearance of New Chinese migrants in Suriname. The ethnic Chinese population of Suriname is too marginal and the number of its citizens in Suriname is too small. Suriname is of interest to the PRC in a regional context for geopolitical reasons (i.e. strategic interest in securing access to natural resources); the Chinese of Suriname are not really necessary to achieve that purpose. To the PRC embassy in Paramaribo, New Chinese are xin yimin (New Migrants); like the older term huaqiao, xin yimin is a political category that serves to link migrants with the Chinese state, the PRC. However, New Chinese have not proven to be of special interest to the embassy.

When Surinamese backing of the One-China Policy seems under threat, the PRC embassy in Paramaribo does try to mobilize ethnic Chinese support in terms of sinocentric nationalistic discourse, often via huiguan institutions. However, PRC nationalism is not an effective basis for resinicization in Suriname. There are basically two aspects of PRC nationalism: state-sponsored nationalist discourse which features narratives of resurgent pride after ‘a century of humiliation’ (the mid-18th century to the mid twentieth century), and popular nationalism which separates the Chinese Communist Party from the ‘motherland’ of ‘the Chinese race’ (Gries 2004). Both contrast Chinese national identity with the West, which makes for an aggressive positioning that only exacerbates anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname. New Chinese are very much aware that Chinese patriotic pride can backfire in Suriname, and Tong’ap and Laiap confine expressions of ethnic pride to closed arenas, just as other ethnic groups tend to do.
The link between ethnic Chinese in Suriname and the PRC should not be assumed to mean transnationalism. Transnationalism in the sense of socio-political participation of migrants with their homeland, insofar that it is actually possible, is not a public issue in Suriname. PRC interest in the individual Chinese of Suriname is also limited; it no longer actively courts huaqiao as sources of investment, nor does it actively approach New Chinese as its expat representatives in Suriname. The PRC also does not actively promote a new (globalized) discourse of Chinese identity and modernity in Suriname. In turn the attitude of Chinese migrants in Suriname to the PRC embassy most resembles appeasement; Fuidung’on Hakka migrants engage with the embassy by approaching it as a huiguan, while New Chinese migrants depend on its goodwill in consular matters. The embassy’s approach to the Chinese of Suriname is not tight control, but more that of guarding the recognition of the unity of the Chinese state, as it funnels the same patriotic rhetoric that serves to mobilize loyalty to the PRC state to the ethnic Chinese in Suriname.

The centrality of the PRC in patriotic Chinese identifications is an important reason why Chinese ‘groupness’ evokes negative images among non-Chinese audiences in Suriname. It is safe to say that there would have been PRC technical cooperation and resource extraction projects in Suriname with or without the presence of New Chinese. However, the controversy engendered by these projects, in particular the logging companies, reflects on New Chinese and even affects the image of Chineseness in Suriname. Surinamese patriotic discourse frames the interests of foreign states in terms of colonialism. In this view the new superpower PRC is eroding Surinamese sovereignty through resource extraction and technical cooperation projects, migration, and cheap commodities.

Surinamese discomfort with the increasing global influence of the PRC will continue to combine with the ongoing process of ‘othering’ Chinese in terms of old Yellow Peril and Contamination stereotypes, to produce an image of Chinese migrants as the ultimate outsiders and the new colonizers. As an ascribed identity, Chineseness becomes monolithic and homogenous, and Chinese ethnic identity is a holographic shard of a Yellow Peril image. Individuals – migrants, PRC nationals, ethnic Chinese – are irrelevant in this outside view of Chineseness. In the next chapter we will explore the negative image that has recently grown around Chinese identity in Suriname, which is necessary to understand the choices made by ethnic Chinese with regard to political participation.
6 MIGRATION AND CHANGING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

Overseas Chinese in general can be easily labelled problematic. According to Rothschild, who had Southeast Asia in mind, Overseas Chinese fit the pattern of politically significant ethnic stratification as an economically strong but politically vulnerable pariah / outsider ethnic minority, usually part of a wider, trans-sovereign diaspora, ‘performing commercial and entrepreneurial functions that are conspicuous, remunerative, important, but socially disparaged, versus politically dominant but economically unskilled majority’.¹ He notes that the entrepreneurial skills of such minorities are readily considered ‘polluting and corrosive’ by the host society. Anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname and the Caribbean as a whole also focus on the image of Chinese entrepreneurial chain migrants as parasites, but they are not quite as institutionalized as in Southeast Asia.

Anti-sinicism in colonial Southeast Asia has its roots in the relationship between Chinese trading minorities and Western colonial overlords, but it is exacerbated by issues of modernization of the Southeast Asian states and China. Moreover, communal separation is not an option in the Western concept of the nation-state. In the post-colonial states of Southeast Asia, Chinese have the choice of being either outsiders (foreign residents, non-bumiputera, etc.) or assimilating and becoming non-ethnic.² On the one hand unfavourable Western colonial views of the Chinese minorities deeply impacted attitudes towards Chineseness in the post-colonial states. On the other, anti-colonial movements in Southeast Asia were often anti-Western (and to some extent anti-Christian in the case of Indonesia), which also did not bode well for those Chinese who were associated with modernization / Westernization. Modern anti-sinicism in Southeast Asia is also related to resinicization among successful younger generation who are abandoning an ancestral regional identity in favour of a general ‘Chinese’ identity; this resinicization meshes with outsider stereotypes of a monolithic Chinese group.³

¹ Rothschild 1981: 74-75.
Anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname are also typified by a conflation of Chinese migrants with Chinese ethnicity, but anti-sinicism is not quite applicable to the way Chinese are viewed in the particular brand of Surinamese multiculturalism. Immigrants from the PRC and people with an ethnic Chinese background in Suriname are guided and limited in their articulation of identity – which can seem exclusively ethnic under the strong influence of apanjah ideology in Surinamese society – by the way Chineseness is viewed by non-Chinese. This view acquires structure through outsider stereotypes of Chinese. Actors wishing to manipulate Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname instrumentally have to take into account this structured view of Chineseness, as otherwise Chinese identity would not be recognizable and any completely new articulation would not only be difficult to imagine but also potentially threatening precisely because it is new. Ascribed Chineseness is more clearly constructed along Chinese stereotypes in Suriname. Historically, this ascribed identity has been articulated instrumentally by elites in local media as a reaction to perceived competition by socially mobile Chinese migrants, although recently it is articulated by non-elites as a form of anti-government (anti-establishment and to a certain extent anti-globalist) protest.

In fact, recent popular and official responses to renewed Chinese migration in Suriname are shaped by such strong anti-immigrant sentiments. The style of anti-Chinese statements is based on the pattern of Chinese stereotypes in Suriname mentioned above, but their content is determined by four underlying issues relating to the renewed Chinese presence in Suriname. Cheap PRC-made commodities were discussed in Chapter 4 and the issue of increasing influence of the PRC was raised in Chapter 5. Two other issues relating to the entry of New Chinese will be discussed in this chapter: irregular migration and violent crime. In the mind of the Surinamese public the PRC, Chinese migrants and cheap Chinese-made commodities all boil down to the same thing: a massive, unstoppable wave from the East – a Yellow Peril. New Chinese migrants are directly associated with illegality and are perceived as a Contamination which will be explained later.

6.1 Historical Precedents

Anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname are as old as Chinese immigration. During the late nineteenth century, colonial authorities regularly voiced objections to any large-scale Chinese immigration,
often describing Chinese as a moral, social, and hygienic contamination. Historically, anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname are mild in comparison with other countries. In the Caribbean region, the most remarkable anti-Chinese sentiments were found in Jamaica. As noted earlier, anti-Chinese violence occurred on three occasions in Jamaica during the twentieth century (in 1919, 1938 and 1965), the scale of which was unique in the British Caribbean. The ethnic Chinese of Jamaica, who were mainly Fuidung’on Hakkas, dominated the retail trade as a middleman minority between the Afro-Jamaican majority and the small White elite. Antipathy between Afro-Jamaican clientele and Chinese shopkeepers is usually presented as the source of anti-Chinese violence, but an alternative explanation points to White resentment of Chinese social mobility. Through their control of the media, the White elite promoted the image of Chinese as parasitizing the Afro-Jamaican population, and pushed for tighter restrictions on Chinese immigration and stricter regulations to prevent Chinese dominance of the retail sector.

Ethnic Chinese were similarly targeted by the colonial elite in Suriname. Although Chinese were not portrayed particularly favourably in nineteenth century Suriname, they were not proscribed either. In the early twentieth century the colonial media systematically began to portray Chinese shopkeepers in Suriname as too numerous, unhygienic, opium and gambling addicts, as well as parasitic, and the established business community called for limits to Chinese migration. The piauw affair of 1930 revealed strong anti-Chinese sentiments in colonial society, and the willingness of the authorities to accommodate the colonial elite in eradicating Chinese competition. The colonial elite of Dutch expat officials, white, Jewish and mulatto upper and middle class resented the change in the colonial status quo caused by ‘free migration’ (i.e. migrants who were not bonded labour). The distinct group of wealthy Chinese merchants that were leading the development of a huaqiao community symbolized social change.

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4 Ankum-Houwink 1974: 47-49. Non-migrant Chinese and the Chinese Empire, however, were not necessarily depicted negatively. The Koloniaal Nieuwsblad of 28 October (no. 86) and 1 November 1853 (no. 87), the year the first Chinese indentured labourers arrived, carried an extensive article on Chinese culture which described Chinese as completely alien and civilized.
5 Bouknight-Davis 2004; Li 2004.
7 Ibid.
Piauw (piauw or piao, from Kejia: piao ‘ticket’; an abbreviation of the Kejia name of the lottery: pak hap piao, ‘White Dove Tickets’) was a type of lotto that flourished in Suriname between 1912 and 1947 due to the lack of regulations with regard to non-Western gambling. Tickets were sold by agents from private homes and shops, who were backed by the Kong Ngie Tong huiguan. The piauw ‘bankers’ were well-off Chinese who supported the game as a way of providing a livelihood for Chinese tickets sellers, often unemployed immigrants have no choice but to get involved in the game. The colonial authorities had tolerated Chinese gambling and lotteries as long as these were exclusive to the Chinese ethnic group, which in practice meant people visiting the huiguan. However the urban Creole majority were the main buyers of piauw tickets, and soon real addiction set in.

The government moved to ban Piauw in 1926, but the game went underground in a reduced form and in 1928 the bankers were back in the huiguan. In 1930 things came to a head: Kong Ngie Tong was determined to continue piauw as a migrant coping strategy, and the government was determined to assert its authority. Huiguan resistance steadily grew; government officials were not invited to huiguan events, no cooperation was given to extradite Chinese piauw agents, foreign attention was sought for the Chinese point of view, and eventually the huiguan premises were fortified and police raids were repulsed. In 1930 articles appeared in De West (the newspaper of the colonial elite) attacking the Chinese in blatantly racist terms using the piauw issue. According to De West, the problem of piauw was Chinese immigration, and the most obvious long-term solution was to forbid all Chinese immigration.

On 27 June 1930 the colonial government stripped Kong Ngie Tong of its corporate capacity because of illegal gambling and drugs (opium), and the huiguan building was closed and its assets auctioned. According to government critics, the dissolution of Kong Ngie Tong had clearly been the goal of the colonial government, and Piauw had been used to criminalize the Chinese intentionally. When the government became serious about eradicating piauw in

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9 De West, 20 June 1930: ‘Een Oplossing?’ (A solution?).
10 De Surinamer, 1 May 1990: ‘Pipo uitgezet’ (Pipo extradited); De West, 6 May 1930: ‘Waarom een waarborgsom?’ (Why demand a deposit?); De West, 4 April 1930: ‘Kong Ngie Tong’; De West, 6 June 1930: ‘Inval in Kong Ngie Tong’ (Kong Ngie Tong raided); De West, 4 July 1930: ‘Slechte raadgevers’ (Bad advisors).
11 e.g. De West, 17 January 1930, 24 January 1930, 28 January 1930.
12 Suriname, 6 January 1933: ‘Piauw’.
1934 / 1935, many Chinese immigrants (often married to local women) seem to have fallen on hard times. This success of the Surinamese elite may have saved the ethnic Chinese from violent prosecution. In Jamaica the elites also targeted Chinese gambling practices, but when that proved unsuccessful they directly targeted Chinese businesses and eventually got the support of small Afro-Jamaican shopkeepers to make the charge that Chinese were the cause of job losses among the working class. Violent attacks on Chinese soon followed.

6.2 Chinese Stereotypes

No increase in anti-Chinese reporting can be found in the Surinamese media for almost seventy years. Then the first text identifying New Chinese as a threat to a stable Surinamese economy and nation appeared in De Ware Tijd of 8 January 1999, and already contained the basic objections against modern Chinese immigration. The writer worried about Chinese construction workers (apparently those imported for the Sunny Point housing project) threatening the livelihood of local, non-Chinese, workers. The article describes these Chinese as barely visible in daily life, but working as massive, close-knit teams on construction sites. Hard-working, never resting, more productive and cheaper than local labour, these people threaten annihilation of segments of the Surinamese work force. The tone of the article is generally anti-immigrant; not only Chinese construction workers are problematic, but also Haitian agriculturalists and Brazilian prospectors, and the government is urged to step in now to protect locals against these foreigners.

This chapter will discuss these facts and fantasies that made New Chinese symbolic of government failure, and ethnic Chinese symbolic of foreign threats, as well as the response of the elites of the established Fuidung’on Hakkas to these anti-immigrant

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13 De West, 21 November 1934: ‘Gevolgen van de stopzetting van piauw’ (Consequences of ending piauw).
15 De Ware Tijd, 8 January 1999, E. Goudzand: ‘Chinezen’ (Chinese).
anti-Chinese sentiments. Anti-immigrant sentiments are obviously not unique to Suriname, and are not even new to Surinamese history, but they need to be considered in the local context of civic discourse. Randy Kluver describes civic discourse as

...the self-conversation within a society that defines the nature of the society and its people. Civic discourse serves as the defining rubric of national identity as the participants in the social order define the nature of that order as well as their places within it. Civic discourse ultimately helps to create the society of which it is a part, as it is through discursive practice that the society articulates its expectations, assumptions, and norms, and ultimately becomes its own articulated ideal, within the bounds of human nature.17

The ubiquitous, animated, male-dominated discussions of Surinamese politics, typically fuelled by the local Parbo Beer, define and bind Surinamese in a community of victims of inept rulers, and locate specific phenomena such as migration in the context of governance failure. By the turn of the millennium New Chinese migrants had became symbolic of immigration in Suriname, and protesting against (Chinese) immigration was linked to indirect criticism of the government.18 Just as it was not always apparent which came first, objections to immigration / New Chinese migrants or resistance to the Surinamese government, anti-immigrant sentiments could also seem to target anything Chinese.

Orientalist stereotypes determined the style and vocabulary of popular objections to Chinese migrants in Suriname. This reflected the institutionalized way Surinamese think about Chinese which describes as well as prescribes Chineseness, making facts at once irrelevant and controversial. Stereotyping of ethnic Chinese in the media coverage of the ‘problems’ posed by ‘Chinese’ (New Chinese migrants and the PRC) is obvious. Chinese stereotypes in Suriname fit in complementary negative and positive sets in six domains (based on the contents of the negative set: contamination, busi-

17 Kluver 1999: 11-12.
18 Chinese-language texts produced in Suriname on piauw and the final days of Kong Ngie Tong only appear almost two generations later, e.g. Guang Yi Tong Baizhouian Jinian Tekan 广义堂百週年紀念特刊 (Commemorative Edition on the Hundredth Anniversary of Kong Ngie Tong Sang). S.l., 1980; A Short Biographical Sketch of Afoeng Chiu Hung / 丘鸿先生八八壽辰紀念特輯. S.l, s.a. In some of these stories, Kong Ngie Tong is the victim of persecution, and the auction of the huiguan’s assets becomes the plunder of the folk religion shrine on the third floor.
ness, submissiveness, inscrutability, alienness, and civilization; see Appendix 1, Table 6); the most important domain is ‘contamination’, in the form of the Yellow Peril stereotype and various stereotypes of Chinese as vectors of disease, sources of food contamination, and morally problematic. Most apply to Chinese migrants, although there are also some stereotypes of Chinese and China in general. Some stereotypical images of Chinese in Suriname are based on the way the older immigrants adapted to local conditions, so they are not always meaningful to non-Surinamese: Chinese language is the staccato sound of Kejia; Chinese surnames are tri-syllabic transcriptions of Dutch and English approximations of Kejia and Cantonese readings; the Chinese homeland means Hong Kong, Chinese are outsiders and must therefore be reached through Sranantongo. Most Chinese stereotypes may be listed in two complementary sets. The positive set consists of patronizing statements that keep alive the image of Chinese as innocuous outsiders. The negative set consists of a more extensive set of specific negative statements, that keep alive the vision of China / Chinese as a threat, but both sets exist in a limited number of narrative domains where race, gender and class intersect: contamination, crime, submissiveness, etc.

According to a socio-anthropological definition, stereotyping, “the consistent application of standardized notions of the cultural distinctiveness of a group”¹⁹ with its significant power inequalities, is widespread in polyethnic Surinamese society. Stereotyping in polyethnic societies helps “define one's own group in relation to others by providing a tidy ‘map’ of the social world, and it can justify systematic differences in access to resources.”²⁰ Stereotypes are the performative content of Chineseness in Suriname. They generate labels and narratives that reaffirm Chinese subjectivity: “Chinese are...” What makes Chinese stereotypes particularly insidious is the fact that they continue to shape everyday opinions. One example is that the way the adjective ‘Chinese’ is used as an illocutionary speech act - by saying ‘Chinese’, one ‘does’ Chinese - both reflects and imposes blindness to complexity and change, in virtually all languages in Paramaribo. Generally speaking, the negative and positive images that have accumulated around ethnic Chinese as a consistent part of the multicultural landscape remain unchallenged despite changes in the status quo of ethnic Chinese in Suriname. The negative set of Chi-

²⁰ Eriksen 1993: 25
Chinese stereotypes reflect abjection; they are consistently dehumanizing and signal that Chinese identity in Suriname is separate and largely unacceptable.

6.3 New Chinese Migrants as a Problem: Irregular Migration

Stereotypical views of Chineseness were revived when New Chinese migration came to be associated with irregular migration, also known as illegal, undocumented, and unauthorized migration. Association does not mean a proven link; migration data in Suriname are unreliable and no detailed data on Chinese migration are systematically compiled, and so nothing is known with any degree of certainty with regard to absolute or relative numbers of irregular Chinese migrants entering Suriname or remigrating to other destinations. In other words, the fact that New Chinese were being associated with illegal activities had less to do with independently confirmed facts than with public willingness to link observations of an increased Chinese presence (migrants, maoyi gongsi, PRC projects) with Yellow Peril-type stereotypes.

The Surinamese public first became aware of changes in the Chinese ‘community’ in the late 1980s, and this was not only because of the construction of huge supermarkets by the latest Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh. Advertisements containing names of Chinese nationals in the unfamiliar Hanyu Pinyin orthography started appearing in De Ware Tijd; the advertisements were all about PRC citizens asking the public for help in finding their lost passports. Sino-Surinamese names were based on approximations of Kejia and Cantonese pronunciations in Dutch and English orthography, but the Mandarin pronunciations made these new Chinese names seem completely alien. Suspicions that the paspoort-Chinezen (‘Passport Chinese’) were involved in some sort of identity fraud linked to illegal immigration were eventually borne out.21

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21 Apparently, this initial influx of New Chinese immigrants started when a number of earlier Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants in Paramaribo began using the business networks of Chinese travel agencies in Hong Kong to promote Suriname as a possible destination / transit point for irregular migrants. Those wishing to continue to other destinations could illegally obtain travel documents from corrupt officials at the Civil Registry Office in Paramaribo. The migrant would ‘lose’ his or her passport, and the procedure to obtain new – and different – travel documents required the migrant to file a police report and to place an advertisement in the local papers asking the public to keep an eye out for the ‘lost’ or ‘stolen’ passport. Following a number of arrests at the Civil Registry Office, this particular scam ended.
There was trade in forged passports and travel documents in Suriname long before the arrival of the New Chinese, but it is apparently becoming more widespread and internationalised, as forgery implies some sort of professional network. The most common forms of identity fraud used to involve recycling the documents of deceased Chinese in China for use by new migrants, and forging identification certificates used in lieu of Chinese birth certificates. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, Fuidung’on Hakkas attempting to travel abroad along their traditional qiaoxiang network, found themselves to be political refugees on the traditional first leg of the journey to the port of Hong Kong. There they needed to build up formal identities to continue journeying, which could require an extended stay in Hong Kong. The number of undocumented Chinese immigrants seems to have been relatively substantial. In 1958 a general pardon was granted to all Chinese illegals in Suriname, this was the first and last time Chinese illegals were pardoned (see Paragraph 3.3).

Though the ‘Passport Chinese’ impacted the image of Chinese in Suriname, the public only firmly linked New Chinese to illegal migration after 2 October 1999, when the Surinamese police detained 35 Chinese after the chartered plane they were boarding turned out to have the wrong passenger list. Apparently they were to be smuggled out of Suriname, probably to Brazil. The Venezuelan pilot testified that he had flown to Suriname to transport Chinese four times before. Brazilian and Surinamese authorities suspect that this was part of a wider, organized practice of smuggling Chinese to Brazil and other countries in the region. All the detained Chinese pointed to a non-local Chinese as the

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22 De Ware Tijd, 7 August 2003: ‘Valse paspoorten nu een trend’ (Forged passports now a trend).

23 Identity fraud was extensive at the time, including forged identity papers, and fictitious family relationships. Modern identity fraud usually means forged passports, but any document that migrants might need in Suriname can be forged, such as driving licences and credit cards. Moreover, closely linked to immigration fraud is marriage fraud. This usually involves one transaction: a Surinamese citizen accepts a one-time payment to actually marry the foreigner. The foreigner becomes a legal resident and has the possibility of eventually even acquiring Surinamese citizenship. Cases of New Chinese immigrants marrying Surinamese nationals - ethnic Chinese as well as non-Chinese - are not uncommon, and the Surinamese authorities are aware of the problem. It is unusual for Chinese in Suriname to be paid to secure fake fiancés for the sons and daughters of people in China, as the Surinamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not issue special fiancé visas.

24 De Ware Tijd, 5 October 1999: ‘Politie verijdelt smokkel Chinezen’ (Police prevent smuggling of Chinese).
organizer, who was also later detained along with 16 other Chinese nationals managing a system of safe houses outside Paramaribo.\footnote{The authorities had no idea what to do with the 35 Chinese, as they had not actually done anything illegal under Surinamese law. They were placed under house-arrest for a number of months in a house on the Fred Derbystraat, but eventually released, after most had quietly slipped away. Not long after, a number of them turned up in Guyana as illegal aliens.}

But already in 1998 a network was discovered that had smuggled at least 235 Chinese nationals to the USA, mostly via Suriname and St.Maarten, Netherlands Antilles. In the same year a Korean from New York was also caught smuggling Chinese from Suriname to the USA via Bermuda and the Bahamas, apparently all Fujianese\footnote{The Daily Herald, 1998, exact date unknown, (http://www.thedailyherald.com/news/daily/B147/chin147.html): ‘Flow of Chinese illegals may end; Migrant smuggling ring busted in Suriname’; Don Burgess: ‘Bermuda figures in U.S. immigrant smuggling case’. Bermuda Sun Newspaper, 15 July 1998; The Associated Press, via Nando.net, 12 July 1998 (http://www.nandotimes.com): ‘More charges emerge in smuggling of Chinese immigrants’. The Chinese illegals who were caught said they paid between US $2,000 and US $3,000, but only US $45 was required to obtain a visa for Suriname. This prompted the Surinamese authorities to summon home the diplomat responsible for issuing visas at the embassy in China. Rumours that the embassy in Beijing was involved in smuggling Chinese to the USA via the Johan Pengel International Airport in Suriname had already been circulating for some time.}

Having paid large sums of money for the trip to Suriname, Chinese illegal immigrants needed to invest more in the next leg of the trip if Suriname was not their final destination.\footnote{Fees in excess of US$ 10,000 were routinely mentioned by Chinese informants and repeated by non-Chinese Surinamese, though that number might be related to the Chinese (in any variety) word for ‘ten thousand’ (萬), which has the additional meaning of ‘a lot’.} Only very rarely did they directly travel to the USA, but more commonly to the Caribbean islands, French Guiana, Guyana, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile or other places in Latin America.\footnote{Another group smuggled Chinese to Guyana in small fishing boats or by land, so that they could continue to Venezuela and Argentina. One family-run smuggling ring would arrange housing for groups of irregular migrants and transport them to French Guiana by sea; there were stories of people being thrown in the sea or suffocating after being hidden under planks in the bottom of the boat.}

More and more reports of Chinese irregular migrants followed, and by the early 2000s the reputation of Suriname as a staging area for the smuggling of Chinese to the Caribbean islands (particularly St.Maarten) and beyond grew.\footnote{Verhoeven et al 2007: 55. On 28 August 2000, four Chinese nationals were arrested trying to leave for Brazil with stolen passports, and the next day eleven Chinese nationals entering Suriname with forged passports on a flight from the Netherlands were turned back. In March 2001 the police helped US officials in St.Croix who were investigating a group smuggling people to the USA via St.Maarten,
Although the cases of Chinese irregular migrants signalled a new trend in international migration for Suriname, local authorities conducted no studies and produced no data on irregular migration in Suriname. Strictly speaking, nothing was formally known about final destinations of migrants, their numbers, and any changes in those numbers. The local press did not investigate the wider phenomenon of irregular migration and Suriname’s position in this form of globalizing migration, focussing instead on police reports of illegal Chinese. The media fed the public updated versions of persistent negative (international) Chinese stereotypes, such as the image of a flood of smuggled Chinese threatening Suriname, vehicles and victims of a Chinese mafia. But despite persistent rumours of Chinese immigrants working themselves to pulp in order to pay off the ‘loans’ involved in their irregular migration, there is no reliable evidence of trafficked Chinese or that any Chinese migrants were ever exploited by the persons who got them into Suriname.

Netherlands Antilles, from Suriname to arrest seven Chinese suspects (4 men and 3 women) in Paramaribo who were involved in forging travel documents for Chinese clients. (De Ware Tijd, 15 March 2001: ‘Chinezen aangehouden in verband met mensenomhekkel’ (Chinese arrested for people trafficking)). In 2003 the FBI investigated another smuggling route from Suriname to the USA via St. Maarten, after reports that 15 Chinese drowned at sea when a boat carrying 25 illegal migrants capsized. A Chinese couple was arrested in Miami who admitted to having smuggled thousands of Chinese into the USA during the previous 20 years. Clients would be charged more than US$ 50,000 to get to the USA; US$ 15,000 was paid in advance, a further US$ 15,000 was paid by the client’s family in China when the Caribbean leg of the journey was completed, and the remainder was to be paid once the client arrived in the USA. The American authorities claimed that this snakehead couple headed a network that extended from Suriname, St. Maarten, Jamaica, the Bahamas and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean to Thailand and the Philippines in South East Asia.

Though irregular migration remains unquantified and intangible, Chinese nationals do not make up the bulk of illegal residents in Suriname, nor are they the only foreigners smuggled or trafficked to or via Suriname. Most illegal residents are from neighbouring Guyana and Brazil, but there are also irregular migrants from West-Africa, the Caribbean and India. The only media reports on non-Chinese organized irregular migration were on Indian nationals. In October 2001 seven employees at the Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport were dismissed, including the head and the acting head of Airport Operations, who had been paid to help seven Indian nationals without US visa and only tickets to Trinidad, to reach the USA. After arrival in Trinidad, the Indians switched boarding passes with Surinamese in an attempt to transit to the USA. Numbers of passengers in transit flights are normally not counted, but heightened controls after ‘9-11’ meant that all passengers had to disembark as the plane could not continue to the US. The illegals were caught and sent back to Suriname. (Brabants Dagblad, 12 October 2001).

Definitions from Skeldon 2001: 7-8. Apparently, remigration of Chinese migrants in the Caribbean region (irregular or otherwise) to Suriname is developing into
On a larger scale Chinese irregular migration may be organized by ‘big snake-heads’ who control the transnational networks of ‘small snakeheads’, enforcers and debt collectors, but there is no evidence that the Chinese human smuggling business is controlled by “organised crime”. There is no hard evidence of transnational or local organized crime behind illegal Chinese immigrants in Suriname. Chinese migration in Suriname used to be a network-based individual enterprise. Individuals were helped by a third party in Suriname, and this assistance might at times have been semi-legal, with relatives or employers in Suriname at times willing to bend the rules to obtain visa and work permits. It is difficult to estimate the assistance provided by the Surinamese Chinese huiguan; their original purpose was to facilitate Chinese migration and if they were not directly involved in undocumented migration, they were at least aware of it.

But Chinese migrants were now firmly associated with illegal migration, which was assumed to be human smuggling – ‘the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person(s) across an international border, in violation of one or more countries laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents’ as defined by the USA State Department. Human smuggling came to be confused with human trafficking, where the goal of the smugglers is to profit from the exploitation of their victims, typically through debt bondage, slave labour, and / or commercial sex work. The system of loans in the Fuidung’on Hakka chain migration network could be abusive, but hardly ever seems to have spiralled into human trafficking. Unsubstantiated rumours of debt bondage and servitude quickly arose with regard to New Chinese migration networks. When ethnic

people trafficking. According to a Laiap informant in Paramaribo, in January 2006 Surinamese police had made arrests in the case of a Chinese national who had imported New Chinese migrants from Trinidad & Tobago to be exploited in local Chinese enterprises.

33 Classical victims of Chinese snakeheads do exist in Suriname. One 35-year old man from Liaoning Province readily admitted to having paid a snakehead US$ 7,000 to get him to Suriname, about which he knew absolutely nothing. Desperately lonely and deeply disappointed, unable to land a decent job as he spoke only Mandarin and had little access to Chinese networks, he was fed up with the place and was just trying to earn enough by waiting tables in the little Korean restaurant where I met him to pay for a flight back to China.
34 http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/fs/2005/57345.htm
35 The website of the USA State Department stresses that human trafficking is primarily exploitation, and does not require people to be smuggled across international borders.
Chinese women sex workers were spotted, they were assumed to be trafficked.

Though marginal in the broader contexts of Chinese migration and prostitution in Suriname, Chinese sex workers contributed to the image of Chinese migrants as illicit and influenced the government's response to the issue of irregular migration. It is often assumed that Chinese sex workers are victims of people trafficking. Most Chinese women engaging in paid sex are part of a network involving men; they work for pimps in the karaoke bars and undocumented brothels, or perhaps male relatives in informal massage parlours and beauty salons. It might even be possible to view them as sex workers in a family network that pools its resources for the purpose of survival or future migration. If they are victims of trafficking, that would imply infiltration of some sort of organized crime in the system of home brothels. Though they are not particularly hard to identify, Chinese prostitutes are understandably extremely unwilling to talk about the place of this coping strategy in their lives. New Chinese immigrants retain the same attitudes towards prostitution which they had held in their homeland, and assume that the Surinamese State holds the same basic views on prostitution, but local judicial and popular attitudes are different.

36 Foreign women are trafficked via Suriname to Europe, most are from Latin America and the Caribbean. However, no reliable data are available on foreign Chinese sex workers, and in fact numbers of foreign sex workers are unclear, as they enter Suriname under tourist visa. According to some reports, there were 35 formal and more than 200 informal sex clubs in Suriname in 2000, and current numbers are probably significantly higher. Most of their sex workers were foreigners from Brazil, Santo Domingo, Guyana and Colombia, with lesser numbers from Curaçao and Haiti. (Juanita Altenberg of Stichting Maxi Linder, an NGO working for prostitutes in Suriname, quoted in De Ware Tijd, 27 June 2003, 'Geen verplichte hiv/aidstest voor buitenlandse prostituees' (No compulsory HIV/AIDS tests for foreign prostitutes)).

37 Their regional and linguistic backgrounds are varied; in 2002 there was a single Kejia-speaking Vietnam-born ethnic Chinese prostitute working fulltime, while prostitutes from Manchuria and Eastern China working were more common in small enterprises (massage parlours, beauty salons) were more common.

38 One bilingual Chinese and Dutch sign on a house in de Koningstraat in Paramaribo has advertised Chinese massage since 2002, with a sign in broken Dutch ‘Chinese meisje doet het’ (A Chinese girl does it) added for clarity. Like Suriname, the People’s Republic of China is also a signatory to Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), but it has been unwilling to decriminalise prostitution as sex work. Prostitution was claimed to have been eradicated from mainland China by the 1950s, and it’s ‘return’ was linked to the introduction of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms, as a result of Western investments and ideas. The maintenance of the ban on prostitution is mainly about moralistic assumptions about sexuality (Evans 1997, quoted in Jeffreys 2004: 118) and ideological posturing in the
Sex is a normal alternative coping strategy for women in the Caribbean, and practices range from local women occasionally supplementing income by sex for favours, through freelancing prostitutes, prostitutes working with pimps or brothels, to debt-bonded foreign sex workers. Faced with the same harsh reality as their Surinamese sisters, New Chinese prostitutes are simply choosing a familiar coping strategy. But their pragmatism has not reduced the stigma attached to ‘being a whore’ in conservative Overseas Chinese culture in Suriname. The New Chinese prostitutes shattered the myth among non-Chinese Surinamese of an ethnic Chinese social safety net, and challenged the ‘Old Chinese’ self-defining view of Chinese women as virtuous, hard-working shop-keeper’s wives, but they also fed the local stereotype of the irredeemably morally corrupt Chinaman.

6.3.1 Government Responses to New Chinese Irregular Migration: The Trafficking in Persons Reports

It should be stressed that no modern Surinamese government was ever inherently opposed to Chinese migration, and in fact Chinese migrants have not always dominated migration policy. Despite the ruling Chinese Communist Party (Jeffreys 2004: 117). Prostitution is now widespread in the PRC, in various forms that readily adapt to changing situation, and defy any attempt to narrowly define the women involved. The term ‘sex worker’ might not entirely fit Chinese prostitutes in China, because they are still used and exploited by men and cannot be considered independent economic and sexual actors (Jeffreys 2004). Prostitution (defined as sexual favours provided by women working in brothels) does not constitute a legal job under Surinamese labour law, but as a signatory to the CEDAW, Suriname is obliged to adapt its labour laws to recognise prostitution as an economic strategy. This dovetails with the use of the term sexwerkers (sex workers) as a politically correct term for prostitutes in Suriname, which was introduced by local and Dutch NGOs working with street prostitutes. The term is not used in Suriname to indicate independent economic and sexual actors (foreign prostitutes exploited in sex clubs could hardly be considered independent workers).

40 Like Chinese, Brazilian immigrants are stereotyped as polluting outsiders, who are in Suriname in huge numbers, and like Chinese there are no accurate migration and demographic data for Brazilians in Suriname. Most Brazilian migrants are artisanal gold miners (Brazilian Portuguese: garimpeiros), and the Wijdenbosch administration tried to capitalise on and perhaps harness their gold production by easing immigration procedures for Brazilians. The Venetiaan administration ended preferential treatment of Brazilian immigrants, partly in response to public concerns about the negative impact of their presence (environmental degradation through their prospecting activities, spread of Malaria and AIDS, increasing crime as perpetrators or as easy victims), but mainly in the context of dismantling the
widely shared belief that immigration has the potential to upset the
delicate apanjaht consociationalist balance, no administration has
challenged the basic liberal approach to free migration. Suriname
remains open to immigration, with few measures to either dis-
courage or encourage immigration or emigration. In accordance
with the same logic, and despite the substantial numbers of ‘Over-
seas Surinamese’ in the Netherlands, the Surinamese state never
institutionalized dual allegiance with regard to migration. ‘Overseas
Surinamese’ are accorded special treatment in view of historic ties
and demand special status because of transnational ties with
Suriname, but the government is unwilling to formalise this trans-
nationalism any further.

But by the early 2000s, public outrage at the problem of
irregular migration was mounting. Still, the official response to the
issue of Chinese irregular migrants was relatively muted. On the
one hand restricting migration under Suriname’s liberal tradition
was not up for discussion, and the state had no real reason to act
on Chinese irregular migration. Irregular immigrants and illegals are
no real burden to the state as they are effectively absorbed by the
informal economy, and there is no evidence that Chinese immi-
grants (both legal and undocumented) have a negative impact on
(unskilled low-income) employment. On the other hand, the slow
and sometimes confused reaction of Surinamese officials to some
of the more serious problems related to the presence of New
Chinese (crime, illegal migration from Suriname to other destina-
tions) is usually explained as the result of the general institutional
weakness that hampers any government response to societal
developments, though political influence is sometimes an important
factor\textsuperscript{41}.

Previous administration’s policies. It was decided to register and legalize the
Brazilian illegals in consultation with the Brazilian embassy, but even long-term
Brazilian residents who could only renew their residency status by leaving and re-
entering the country, found it completely unclear what procedures had to be
followed at what locations. (De Ware Tijd, 27 January 2005: ‘Braziliaanse
ambassadeur niet “content” met registratie illegalen’ (Brazilian Ambassador not
satisfied about registration of illegals)). Moreover, although artisanal gold miners
were formally categorized as individual entrepreneurs, the Aliens Department now
demanded employer’s statements, and as a result, virtually all Brazilian nationals in
Suriname, except diplomatic personnel and employees of Brazilian companies (such
as Camargo Corrêia, a subcontractor for the Biliton Mining Company), suddenly
became illegal.

\textsuperscript{41} No Surinamese political party has an anti-immigration agenda, and the different
parties that dominated government since the late 1980s could not be considered
distinctly pro- or anti-Chinese, though political opposition to immigration of non-
Westerners reflects the idea that such immigration would serve to strengthen certain

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The official response was bureaucratic and fragmented, and focussed on Chinese illegal immigrants; these were the stereotypically ‘real’ illegal immigrants who were more easily tracked because they were more visible in society, and because they almost exclusively entered the country via the international airport. Different ministries independently targeted Chinese illegals, mainly by tightening existing procedures regarding foreigners. Actions were not always well-informed or correctly communicated to the public. Around 1999 the Visa Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs started paying special attention when handling visa applications involving people from Fujian Province, mainly because Fujianese were the main illegal immigrants in the USA, and not because they were the most prominent applicants for entry visa. In 2002 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it had temporarily stopped issuing entry visa to Chinese nationals.42

Poor communication with the general public and the Chinese target groups (New Chinese migrants, Tongap who were not Surinamese nationals, and the various huiguan) made the government appear to be criminalizing ethnic Chinese. Certain departments of the Ministry of Justice and Police were more alert to the kinds of irregularities that they might face when dealing with Chinese immigrants, for instance the possibility of marriage fraud in divorce cases involving Chinese nationals and Surinamese. So the Aliens Department of the Ministry of Justice and Police added a number of requirements to tighten the procedure for obtaining residence permits by non-Dutch foreigners (e.g. health insurance, but no language tests, educational requirements, etc.). This exacerbated long-standing problems of Chinese immigrants (Hakka as well as New Chinese) who legally entered Suriname but who often wait years before extending their residence permits, despite meeting all legal requirements.

Some Chinese believed that the Surinamese government intentionally delayed issuing residence permits, so that Chinese nationals would become illegal if they decided to travel. This view...
was initially voiced by disenfranchised Hakka immigrants and it was soon reproduced by New Chinese immigrants. In the early 2000s, there were rumours among the Chinese that the order had come from East Indian Vice-President Jules Ajodhia.\(^{43}\) Despite the fact that his party, the East Indian VHP, was part of the ruling grand coalition including the Creole NPS, the general view among Chinese was that he was obviously looking out for the interests of East Indian entrepreneurs – the commercial rivals of the ethnic Chinese. In November 2004 the Aliens Department eventually invited the leaders of the huiguan and the embassy officials of the PRC to discuss a solution to the problem; Chinese nationals with residency problems could submit their papers to huiguan who would serve as intermediaries to the PRC embassy and the Aliens Department\(^{44}\).

Other ad hoc responses to illegal Chinese immigrants were less subtle. Around 2002, PRC nationals leaving Suriname for the USA or Europe had their passports apparently confiscated, only to be returned without much explanation. The reason was that since Chinese nationals on those flights were known to destroy their passports on board, and Surinam Airways would be held liable for such passengers, so the travel documents of Chinese nationals checking in at the Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport were photocopied. Airport staff were not trained in handling language complexities that could be expected to arise when dealing with holders of Chinese passports and did not explain the reasons for unequal treatment, but no Chinese client at the airport ever formally complained. Customs officers and the Alien Police at the airport began to ask intrusive questions of Chinese nationals entering on tourist visa, such as “Who is coming to collect you at the airport?” and “Where will you be going once you leave the airport?” Stories of rough treatment by officials at the airport are not uncommon among New Chinese migrants.

The tightening of procedures by the Visa Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially with regard to Fujianese, was at the prompting of US; illegality might not have been much of an issue for PRC nationals entering Suriname, but those leaving Suriname tended to try to enter other countries (such as the USA) by illegal means. But Surinamese attempts at structural measures to fight illegal immigration only came after firm American pressure. After the Golden Adventure incident in 1993, when a ship carrying

\(^{43}\) Vice President during the Venetiaan I (1991-1996) and Venetiaan II administrations (2000-2005).

\(^{44}\) ZHRB 18 and 23 November 2004.
illegal Chinese immigrants was intercepted in New York harbour (which aroused public attention to Chinese illegal immigration in the USA), American authorities realised that the Caribbean was a very important transit area for alien smuggling into the USA, this was even before the Surinamese link surfaced in 1998. In the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Report, Suriname was labelled a country whose government does not fully comply with the minimum standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and are not making significant efforts to do so (Tier 3). For the first time, such governments faced potential sanctions, including loss of certain types of U.S. assistance. The report criticized poor border controls, widespread corruption, the bureaucratic stance of the police, and the general indifference of the government towards the concept of human trafficking.

The assumption that Chinese prostitutes were trafficked was the basis for placing Suriname in Tier 3 in the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Report. As human trafficking was defined mainly as the trafficking in women and children, the data were derived from the Situational Analysis of Women in Suriname and the single relevant NGO working with prostitutes. In the section on Suriname of the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Report, Chinese are mentioned in only one sentence (“Suriname is a transit country for Chinese smuggled to the United States, some of whom may be trafficked.”). The local newspapers reported that the Surinamese authorities were not seriously going after prostitution but were instead focussing on Chinese illegal immigrants, apparently taking ‘irregular migration’, ‘smuggling’ and ‘trafficking’ to mean the same thing.

The Surinamese government managed to take a number of actions and enact measures that were acceptable to the US authorities and before the October deadline, and in September 2003 Suriname was moved to Tier 2. The Surinamese government had publicly recognised that human trafficking was a problem, an interagency task force was installed, a special prosecutor was appointed

47 UNIFEM 2000; Stichting Maxi Linder.
48 http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/
49 De Ware Tijd, 13 June 2003 ‘Suriname riskeert sancties VS omtrent mensensmokkel’ (Suriname risks US sanctions because of human smuggling); 15 July 2003 ‘Aanpak mensensmokkel was geen prioriteit’ (Dealing with human smuggling was no priority).
50 Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the Act’s minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards. (http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/).
to tackle government corruption, and a police and border control operation called *Veilig Suriname* (Secure Suriname) was launched to rescue victims and arrest traffickers. The public remained convinced that the numbers of Chinese immigrants – and thus illegal immigrants – were increasing, but investigative reporters could uncover no evidence to substantiate the rumours that Chinese illegals were still arriving.

The 2005 Trafficking in Persons Report claimed that “Chinese nationals transiting Suriname risk debt bondage to migrant smugglers who place them into forced labour.” The Surinamese government was criticized for enforcing the law against traffickers poorly and in particular for failing to investigate illegal migration. But in the 2006 TIP Report, Suriname was moved from “Tier 2 Special Watch List” to “Tier 2” status. This signified that Suriname was considered to be making significant efforts to fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking as outlined in U.S. legislation, while not yet fully meeting those standards. In the eyes of the US State Department, the Surinamese government had increased law enforcement actions, improved efforts to identify and assist victims, and launched new training and public awareness efforts. However, the one-line statement on Chinese migrants was extended: “Chinese nationals transiting Suriname risk debt bondage to migrant smugglers; men are exploited in forced labour and women in commercial sexual exploitation.” Haitians were also

51 [http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/). Though it was generally welcomed by the public, the police warned against rushing into such a project because of institutional weakness of the police and judicial system, and in fact *Veilig Suriname* ran aground three weeks after its implementation on 23 May 2004, precisely because of a lack of funds, material and manpower. (De Ware Tijd, 31 July 2004: ‘Operatie Veilig Suriname opgeschort’ (Operation Safe Suriname suspended)). Activities remained restricted to Paramaribo, and the porous southern and western borders where most illegal immigrants (Brazilians and Guyanese) entered remained unpatrolled. Military involvement was reduced (initially more soldiers than policemen were involved), and eventually the surveillance, roadblocks and raids came to resemble regular traffic controls and police crime fighting. It is unclear what impact *Veilig Suriname* had on illegal immigration in Suriname.

52 Carla Tuinfort, De Ware Tijd, April 2004: ‘Geen waarneembare toename illegale immigranten’ (No measurable increase of illegal immigration)


54 [http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65990.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65990.htm). The US embassy in Paramaribo provides the State Department with information on the Surinamese situation, based on interviews with local resource persons. Interestingly, De Ware Tijd (8 June 2006, ‘Justitie gaat dwangarbeid aanpakken’ (Ministry of Justice to tackle forced labour)) noted that: “In virtually all reports on human trafficking and smuggling Washington claims that Chinese immigrants, especially men, become victims of
now mentioned as non-trafficked illegal migrants. Suriname remains in Tier 2 to this day, and its country narrative now states that: “Chinese men are subjected to possible debt bondage in Suriname, and are subject to forced labour in supermarkets and the construction sector. Chinese women reportedly are exploited sexually in massage parlours and brothels.”

The experiences with the US 2003 Trafficking in People Report notwithstanding, nothing to eliminate irregular migration was incorporated into national migration policy. Calls to rethink Surinamese immigration and emigration policies were triggered by immediate, local concerns, and usually start among the Surinamese business community (fearing unfair competition from immigrants) and politicians (usually attacks on ruling coalition parties who, in the context of partisan-political racialization of immigration, are considered pro-immigration). The link between irregular migration and local government policy is to be found in assumptions about whether irregular migrants are temporary residents or settlers and the question of how much political support can newcomers provide for them.

On the one hand Chinese settlers could eventually become voters, on the other managing large-scale temporary residency could alienate Laiap and Tong’ap support as it could be construed as an attack on ethnic Chinese interests. The challenge for Surinamese politicians was how to control fluctuations in the size of the electorate and manage ethnic support by controlling short-term residency. In the 1990–2005 period, elements in the Wijdenbosch administration were said to have facilitated Chinese irregular migrants, while the ruling coalition of the Venetiaan II administration depended on Chinese support through the Javanese Pertjaya Luhur party. But the treatment accorded to Chinese immigrants was roughly the same during both administrations, as neither had implemented overtly pro-Chinese policies for the other to dismantle, and as neither had a particularly anti-Chinese stance (both with regard to ethnicity and the PRC or Taiwan).

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forced labour in Suriname in order to pay back debts related to their departure from China. The scope of this problem is unclear, as hardly any research has been done.”


56 Regionalization also adds to the pressure to review immigration policy, for instance the obligation to harmonize Surinamese immigration law to accommodate free circulation of labour in the Caribbean single market and economy (CSME).

57 E.g. De Ware Tijd, 9 December 2004: ‘Kruisland wenst aanpassing immigratiebeleid’ (Kruisland calls for change in immigration policy).
6.4 New Chinese Migrants as a Problem: Violent Crime

It did not take long before New Chinese migrants were associated with a number of remarkable cases of violent crime, and public opinion turned on them as importers of crime. There are no illegal activities that are really unique to the New Chinese, though some activities (such as prostitution) take different forms among these newcomers as coping strategies. Moreover, despite an old stereotype that holds that Chinese in Suriname are less inclined to crime than other groups, there is no evidence that Chinese have a lower arrest rate for various reported crimes, or that – conveniently disregarding illegal immigrants – legal Chinese immigrants commit fewer crimes than other immigrants. But real and perceived inaccessibility of the Chinese helped reinforce the idea that there is a lot more going on behind the scenes than one might suspect. Increasingly populist media coverage of illegal activities associated with New Chinese shaped the image of the migrants, but they also strongly influenced the way ethnic Chinese in Suriname were coming to be perceived. Things were based less on facts (e.g. police communiqués, crime statistics, social research) than stereotypes, and prompted established Fuidung’on Hakkas to respond through the same public media.

Reports of violent crimes committed by ethnic Chinese (local or foreign) were scarce before 2002, and ethnic Chinese were seen, and saw themselves as victims of crime rather than as perpetrators. The Surinamese Police Corps published statistics on robberies in Paramaribo and peri-urban areas (District of Wanica) in 2002, which incorporated ethnicity as much as possible. In this publication, Chineseness was strictly defined as Chinese citizenship – basically Tong’ap and New Chinese. According to the police, the

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58 As is the case with all data that could involve ethnicity, data on current Chinese criminal activity in Suriname (usually limited to listings of various crimes and misdemeanours) are unreliable. The state consciously blinds itself to ethnicity with regard to crime, and sees attempts by politicians to racialize violent crime (for instance by associating violent street crime with young Maroon males) as a vindication of this stance. But lack of ethnic data complicates the interpretation of illegal activities from the viewpoint of social development; illegal activities associated with Chinese (prostitution, gambling, etc.) might better be approached as coping strategies, comparable to ROSCAs, migrant networks and family labour. There are also no criminological studies of illegal activities in Suriname, and so the existence of transnational criminal networks in Suriname is unofficially noted, but Russian, Turkish, Dutch, Chinese or other crime syndicates are not analysed as non-state actors.
data verified the idea that Chinese shopkeepers were more likely to be victims of violent robberies: in 2001 there were 64 robberies of Tong'ap and New Chinese, 7.5% of the total number of robberies, and 58.9% of these 64 robberies was committed in shops and supermarkets. Chinese immigrants were victims of 31, about 18%, of the robberies at gunpoint. The police worked with the ‘Old Chinese’ huiguan in an attempt to achieve more efficient communication with ethnic Chinese shopkeepers, and were aware of the language barriers between ‘Old Chinese’ and New Chinese and also of the fact that written Chinese bridged the communication gap with the New Chinese.59

All through 2002 the Surinamese media reported cases of kidnapping, armed robbery and murder committed by Chinese. One widely documented example was of a Chinese gang that stole US$ 70,000 from a Chinese shopkeeper in downtown Paramaribo in broad daylight.60 After consulting representatives of the “Chinese community” – Tong’ap and Laiap – the police concluded that this unusual Chinese crime spree was linked to New Chinese immigrants. Hakka immigrant informers could recount rumours of gang-related crime, such as groups of young men demanding protection money from Chinese shopkeepers, as well as other activities suggesting organized crime, such as loan sharks, drugs-related murder and cases of kidnapping that were never reported to the police. Unidentified corpses of Chinese-looking men would sometimes be found, as happened occasionally before 2001, but murder investigations are hardly ever pursued. Poor access to Chinese networks and institutional weakness prevent the authorities from studying the phenomenon of Chinese gangs in any detail. No new reports of possible Chinese gang-related crime is not a proof of the absence of Chinese gangs or criminal enterprises, nor is it proof of heightened sophistication and adaptation to the Surinamese context.

The presence of Chinese gangs / Triads in Suriname is not unimaginable; there are fairly direct links between the Chinese of

59 De Ware Tijd, 6 March 2002: ‘Zware criminelen teisteren Chinese gemeenschap’ (Chinese community plagued by violent criminals).
60 De Ware Tijd, 28 February 2002: ‘Recherche brengt klaarheid in brute beroving Gravenstraat’ (Criminal investigation sheds light on violent robbery in the Gravenstraat). After two women and a man from the PRC were arrested, 23 million Surinamese guilders and 4,400 US dollars were discovered buried in someone’s yard, and another US$ 10,000 was transferred to a relative of one of the suspects in the PRC via a money changer. There were no reports of non-Chinese victims of crimes, but there are indications that non-Chinese may sometimes be involved as henchmen (De Ware Tijd, 28 February 2002: ‘Vierde verdachte in onvoeringszaak Chinees aangehouden’ (Fourth suspect in kidnapping of Chinese arrested)).
Suriname and Hong Kong, and indirectly through the Netherlands, where for instance the 14K gang is present (Chin 1990: 39). One persistent story circulating among the established Fuidung’on Hakkas describes gangs in Hong Kong and Southern China sending members who are in trouble with the authorities to Suriname, to be sent back when things blow over. Stories of Chinese gangs in Suriname are more likely stereotypical assumptions: Chinese migration is undocumented migration, facilitated by a Chinese criminal organization based in an isolationist and self-reliant Chinese enclave. A chain of assumptions loops back on itself, there are self-reliant and isolationist Chinese enclaves wherever there are Chinese immigrants, there are Snakeheads (the persons in Chinese organised crime responsible for organising illegal emigration) and organised crime wherever there are Chinatowns, and thus making every Chinese immigrant into an irregular migrant.  

However, Chinese gangs are not something one would expect in Suriname. Typical Chinese gangs in the USA are youth gangs. American-born Chinese youths could grow up estranged from their constantly working parents at home and isolated from wider society in the Chinese enclaves where they were born. Such disaffected and unemployed youths formed gangs, typically well-organized, usually by emulating Tongs and Triads. Earlier Chinese immigrants families in Suriname tended to be just as preoccupied with work as American Chinese, but they were not geographically isolated in a Chinese enclave. Their local-born children had no lack of employment, as they were guaranteed at least a livelihood in their parents’ shop or eventually in their own business. In the early 2000s Chinese gangs in Suriname were said to consist of rough and dangerous young males, but it was unclear if these gangs were hatchet men for criminal organisations or ad hoc gatherings of disenfranchised antisocial young men, or even how many gangs there were. The types of activities they were involved in (robbery, 

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61 Outside China the facts are often informed by ‘Yellow Peril’ and ‘Mysterious Chinaman’ stereotypes. Cases of smuggled Chinese are suggested to be the tip of an iceberg; thousands of other illegal migrants probably evaded detection, themselves just a fraction of the thousands more who are waiting to leave China. Chinese organised crime is a secretive and well-organized network called a Tong or Triad. In Suriname the opposite seems to have happened; instead of assuming the existence of Chinese gangs as a convenient model with which to approach violent crime among ethnic Chinese, authorities seemed perplexed by the possibility that such gangs operated in Suriname, and were at a loss how to approach the problem. Instead, discussions of such crimes were allowed to strengthen racial discourse and criticism of immigration policy.

62 Chin 1990.
extortion) fit the pattern of Chinese gangs, but this is all that can be said about them.

The murder of the Fu children in 2005 is a particularly gruesome example of the way violent crime was associated with New Chinese. On 19 July 2005 two Zhejiangese brothers, Fu Wei (12) and Fu Tewei (6), were found brutally murdered in a bathroom of what used to be a restaurant named Sheraton at the David Simonsstraat in Northern Paramaribo (De Ware Tijd, 20 July 2005).63 One had been bludgeoned, the other's throat had been slit, after which they had been decapitated, scalped, disembowelled and hacked to pieces, their body parts collected in pails with some flushed down the toilet. A New Chinese immigrant who had been living in Suriname for some nine years, Chen Shaoxian (61), was also found dead, having apparently hung himself in the living room.64 The boys had failed to return home from the Chinese school the previous evening, when a man called the family on the phone, demanded US$ 200,000 for the release of the two boys, and warned that the police must not get involved.65 Chen Shaoxian’s son, Chen Jie (33), a remigrant from Hungary, was arrested and charged, but evidence against him remained elusive.66

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63 De Ware Tijd, 20 July 2005 ‘Barbaarse moorden in Paramaribo-Noord: “De jongens zijn afgeslacht als varkens” (Barbaric murders in Northern Paramaribo: “The boys were slaughtered like hogs”).
64 Times of Suriname, 23 July 2005 ‘Waarom deze man niet de moordenaar kan zijn’ (Why this man cannot have been the murderer).
65 http://www.cq-link.sr//modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1008, 20 July 2005, ‘Chinees vermoordt gegijzeld en pletgt zelfmoord’ (Chinese murders hostages and commits suicide); Times of Suriname, 23 July 2005 ‘Waarom deze man niet de moordenaar kan zijn’ (Why this man cannot have been the murderer); De Ware Tijd, 13 January 2006 ‘Moordzaak Chinese broertjes aangevangen’ (Trial in the murder of Chinese brothers starts); De Ware Tijd, 20 July 2005 ‘Barbaarse moorden in Paramaribo-Noord: “De jongens zijn afgeslacht als varkens” (Barbaric murders in Northern Paramaribo: “The boys were slaughtered like hogs”).
66 Chen Jie spoke no English, Kejia, Sranantongo or Dutch. Chinese translators were reluctant to get involved and the Chinese lawyer Chen Jie had requested spoke Kejia but no PTH. (De Ware Tijd, 5 September 2005 ‘Taalbarrière stagneert onderzoek moord Chinese jongens’ (Investigation into murder of Chinese boys hindered by language barriers)). In September Chen Jie was finally charged with kidnapping and murder, and his trial started on 12 January 2006 (De Ware Tijd, 13 January 2006 ‘Moordzaak Chinese broertjes aangevangen’ (Trial in the murder of Chinese brothers starts)). Six months into the trial, prosecutors still only had circumstantial evidence (De Ware Tijd, 24 June 2006 ‘Bewijslast slachting Chinese jongens zwak’ (Case of slaughter of Chinese boys weak)), and eventually he was acquitted on the grounds of insufficient evidence. (De Ware Tijd, 21 July 2006 ‘Vrijspraak verdachte Chinese slachting; Moeder slachtoffers hysterisch’ (Suspect in Chinese massacre acquitted; mother of victims hysterical))
Not unexpectedly, the public reacted with horror and indignation at what was one of the most horrific murder cases in Paramaribo’s history. The media fueled the developing public discussion with a good measure of populism. The day after the story broke, an article based on an interview with an anonymous “member of the Chinese community” was published in De Ware Tijd. The source reiterated stereotypes of New Migrants in a narrative: there is a Chinese community, inaccessible and secretive; a clear distinction should be made between Surinamese Chinese and new immigrants who have been arriving since the early 1990s; weak national immigration policy means that there is nothing to prevent undesirable Chinese immigrants from entering Suriname; new immigrants are responsible for crime, and they commit more crimes than the Surinamese public is aware of — kidnappings, blackmail, assault, disappearances, etc (Times of Suriname, 21 July 2005).

67 De Ware Tijd, 21 July 2005 ‘Lid chinese gemeenschap over gruwelijke moord jongens: “Zo een drama zat er aan te komen”’ (Member of Chinese community on horrific murder of boys: “A drama like that was in the making”).
68 Four days after the murder, the Times of Suriname tabloid carried an article based on a source claiming to be close to the Wenzhounese group, explaining why Chen Shaoxian could not have been the murderer. The real murderer(s) – who must have suggested the kidnapping ruse to Chen – killed the boys and Chen to cover their tracks (Times of Suriname, 23 July 2005 ‘Waarom deze man niet de moordenaar kan zijn’ (Why this man cannot have been the murderer)). This was rebutted in De Ware Tijd a few days later (De Ware Tijd, 28 July 2005 ‘Vriend vermeende moordenaar: “Chen heeft de twee jongens zelf vermoord.”’ (Friend of suspected murderer: “Chen murdered the two boys himself”)). One ‘LGM’, Chen’s ‘friend and member of the leadership of a major Chinese association’ pointed out that the ransom call had originated from Chen’s residence, and Chen’s distinct speech impediment had been recognized. The medical examiner had also failed to find evidence of a struggle on Chen’s body, which pointed to suicide. Chen must have been driven to his actions by his insurmountable money problems and personal distress. ‘LGM’ clearly had little to lose by suggesting that Chinese criminal gangs were active in Suriname, as the reason for and the consequence of the presence of New Chinese. The Times of Suriname article was more seriously damaging to the image of Chinese, as its source was supposedly a well-informed New Chinese immigrant. But more interestingly, the linguistic identification of the mysterious male caller in the story (‘a dialect from south-eastern China rarely heard in Suriname’) seemed designed to shift attention away from the Wenzhounese – despite the fact that Wenzhounese language could also be described as a south-eastern Chinese dialect – at the cost of suggesting the presence of violent and possibly organized criminals among the New Chinese. LGM’s identification as someone from the top of a major Chinese association is interesting, as that usually refers to one of the three Fuidung’s Hakka huiguan. The article was not translated in the two huiguan newspapers, Xunnan Ribao and Zhonghua Ribao. The central point of the article was that the affair was not about organized Chinese crime. The source of the Times of Suriname article was very likely Laiap, as the piece contained little else than established anti-newcomer stereotypes, the interview
Then on 2 December there was a second murder case involving ethnic Chinese, this time the victims were Fuidung’on Hakka migrants. Harry Mo Tin Sung, owner of a shop selling bicycle and motorcycle parts, and his wife, Hoi Oi Lin, were found murdered (De Ware Tijd, 3 December 2005). Both were in their sixties and had moved to Suriname from Guangdong Province more than 40 years earlier. He was found in the bedroom, and his wife in the bathroom, tied up, with their throats slit (De Ware Tijd, 20 December 2005). The feelings of shock in the Blauwgrond neighborhood and anxiety about increasingly violent crime were fanned by the sensational handling of the affair by the media. An emotional wake and a silent procession (stille tocht) were organized in the neighborhood. The family tried to keep the funeral service and cremation as quiet as possible. It was attended by Vice President Ramdien Sardjoe. Father Gerard Gijskens praised the couple as good people, “real Surinamese Chinese.”

With the murder of the two children in July fresh in the mind of the public, the Mo Tin Sung murders gave rise to talk of “Chinese triad-style” executions. “They’re looking down on us now, because we’re Chinese after all,” Max Man A Hing commented in De Ware Tijd (6 December 2005) four days after the murders. Once more he stressed the difference between Old Chinese and New Chinese, focussing particularly on differences in upbringing and outlook. He typified New Chinese as ambitious and hard, often unable to handle freedom. About a week later, George Findlay, the editor of the evening paper, De West, and known for his anti-Chinese articles, more explicitly suggested in his weekly column (10 December 2005) that organized Chinese crime was behind the was conducted in Dutch, and the source seemed to flaunt his or her status as insider privy to Chinese matters.

69 De Ware Tijd, 3 December 2005 ‘Mysterieuze dubbele moord schokt Blauwgrond; Bejaard Chinees echtpaar gekneveld en met mes bewerkt’ (Mysterious double murder shocks Blauwgrond; elderly Chinese couple tied up and stabbed).

70 De Ware Tijd, 20 December 2005 ‘Echtpaar Mo Tin Sung beroofd, maar niet van geld’ (Mr and Mrs Mo Tin Sung robbed, but not of money).

71 This was not the first unsolved murder of an older Fuidung’on Hakka shopkeeper in 2005. On 31 January Lou Ying Joe (62) was found murdered in her shop, where she had been living alone for two months while her relatives were abroad. No public outcry followed. De Ware Tijd, 1 February 2005 ‘Chinese winkelierster gedood’ (Chinese shopkeeper killed).

72 De Ware Tijd, 6 December 2005 ‘Brandkast vermoord Chinees echtpaar leengo- roofd; Blauwgrond nog steeds in greep van angst’ (Safe of murdered Chinese couple plundered; Blauwgrond still embraced by terror).
murders (De West, 10 December 2005). According to him, the presence of Chinese criminals from Chinese and Hong Kongese triads was common knowledge in Suriname, and this was murder rather than robbery committed by professionals and not the typical Surinamese criminals. But he denied that there was much difference between ‘Old’ and New Chinese, as both closed ranks against the outside world.

The Old Chinese establishment clearly felt that Chineseness was under attack in Suriname. On 29 January 2006, the first day of the Year of the Dog, President Ronald Venetiaan and Minister of Justice and Police, Chandrikapersad Santhoki, attended the public Chinese New Year’s Celebrations at the Chung Tjauw Huiguan. In his speech, Chou Joe Jin, chairman of Chung Tjauw and Fa Tjauw, the Chinese organization within the NPS, said that it was important for the Chinese community to work at improving its image. He referred to the murders and the issue of immigration, and though he spoke of new and established groups, he carefully avoided suggesting a major split. He complained that Chinese believed that the media was often biased against them, for no fact-based reasons.

There were nine online commentaries to the report in De Ware Tijd of 31 January 2006 on President Venetiaan’s visit to Chung Tjauw. Only one was positive, contrasting the Surinamese approach to integration with that of the Dutch. Six contained attacks on Venetiaan, accusing him of discriminating Surinamese-born citizens in favour of foreigners. Five of these contained anti-Chinese remarks:

73 Keerpunt in De West, 10 December 2005 ‘Niet gepast zich met politieonderzoek in te laten’ (Not appropriate to meddle in police investigation) http://www.dewestonline.e.cq-link.sr/main.asp?id=14237
74 De Ware Tijd, 31 January 2006 ‘Chinezen willen nieuwe start naar imago verbeteren’ (Chinese want new start to improve image).
75 How texts on the Internet relate to opinions in the real world is obviously very important. There are indications that certain groups of online participants (scoring higher with regard to introversion and neuroticism) locate their ‘real me’ online and can appear more extrovert online than in regular life (Amichai-Hamburger 2005, 2008; Amichai-Hamburger et al 2002). Internet empowers its users by allowing them to reframe their identity, particularly those with poor social skills in real life. Then again, the possibility of participating anonymously encourages depersonalization, which can lead to the development of a kind of group identity by which people perceive their own group as superior to others (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna 2006; Tajfel et al 1971). Participation in the De Ware Tijd Online discussion forum is limited by computer access and not all readers actively comment on topics. Only a minority habitually post remarks, and even less dominate the discussion forum. Moreover, participants can hide behind multiple user names and even
The dog offers a good example through its faithfulness, vigilance and loyalty,” according to Venetiaan. But does he not know that those Chinese eat dogs??

Hey, Wreed Mang... YOU MAKE ME LAUGH, BOY!!! AIN'T HE GREAT?? THEN THERE WON'T BE ANY SICK DOGS LEFT, RIGHT? SO LET MISTER VENE BE FAITHFUL AND VIGILANT TO OUR PEOPLE OF SURINAME TOO!!

Good morning Surinamese. Generally speaking, the Chinese are foreigners, and foreigners have the last say. Only in Suriname do Chinese have the authority, yes, you could put it like that? Because haven't you read that Andy Lau said that young Chinese should also be educated and that the president immediately promised statutory regulations. Why doesn't he look out for his own people first who need his help most? Children who can't go to school, but want to. You keep reading about children who can't go to school, because the school bus broke down or because the roads are bad, yes but it's the young Chinese for whom the president will be drawing up statutory regulations, foreigners being pampered in Suriname, only in Suriname does this happen? In other countries foreigners come last, but in Suriname foreigners are put on a pedestal, I mean it's not the fault of the Chinese, but of the president who does nothing for his Surinamese children. It's just like a family, father, mother and children, doesn't the father care for his own children first.

appropriate the names of others. Lastly, the physical location of participants is unclear unless they choose to reveal it; in the case of De Ware Tijd Online, the opinions of expats in for instance the Netherlands are in many ways divorced from the experience of Surinamese in Suriname. Disagreements between participants in Surinamese internet forums reflect contradictions in Surinamese society with regard to politics, race (rather than ethnicity) and gender. However, the strongest conflicts online are framed in terms of patriotism, and divide people located in Suriname from Dutch nationals of Surinamese origin either in the Netherlands or in Suriname. An interactive survey on the De Ware Tijd Online site in July and August 2007 gave some indication of the proportion of Dutch-Surinamese participants: 45.5% of those who chose to answer the question, where they planned to spend their annual vacation replied ‘Suriname’, which might suggest that about half of the forum participants are based in the Netherlands. In any case, anti-Chinese remarks by Surinamese on the Internet are fairly typical of the kind of remarks heard on the street in Suriname, and are actually often even less extreme than one may encounter in Surinamese everyday life.
Yeah man, you all are right, because being from the interior I’m really upset that Vene is doing this. The man doesn’t have a drop of shame. We in the interior feel it too, the roads are so bad, we don’t go to school for days and lose so much. Our parents can’t go to Paramaribo either to buy some foodstuffs. Instead of him talking with the others in the Assembly about how to start repairing the roads, he starts talking about Chinese. Look at your children first, and then at other people’s children. What do you mean Chinese, those people just bring SARS and other diseases to infect people with, next we’ll be eating roast dog or we might even be eating that already because we can’t tell what it looks like. These aren’t human beings, they just look that way.

*What up !!! | 15-2-2006 23:14:20
Hey! I just think the government shouldn’t allow any more Chinese to enter Suriname!!! Don’t you remember what life was like in Suriname, everyone was like one big family in Suriname... In these last five years more and more Chinese immigrating from China, and Suriname has just changed!! Worse and worse and decline too... WE DON’T WANT ANY MORE CHINESE FROM CHINA!! Let them stay in China, OK????!! We live alright here with our Surinamese Chinese!!*

The common perception that violent crime in Suriname was on the increase heightened anxiety among Surinamese for quite some time. To be fair, not only Chinese migrants but migrants in general, including Brazilian prospectors, Guyanese adventurers, and disenfranchised Maroon men from the interior, were being blamed for the perceived rise. Whether or not Chinese organized crime was involved is irrelevant; the suggestion of its involvement would have arisen sooner or later through the stereotype of Chinese as members of maffia or triads. The two multiple murders blurred the distinction between various Chinese migrant cohorts in the public mind. Whereas the Fu murders were publicly located in the Wenzhou community by Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, the Mo Tin Sung murders were strictly speaking a Tong’ap issue; both crimes negatively impacted the image of Chinese in Suriname – Chinese meaning migrant. The Tong’ap establishment did not attempt to distinguish between a New Chinese murder case linked to migrant criminality and a Tong’ap murder case in the context of traditional victimization of established Fuidung’on Hakka entrepreneurs in Suriname, but stressed the unity of Overseas Chinese under attack. Laiap reactions were less mindful of loyalty to universal Chinese ethnicity. Instead, the pattern of labelling established ethnic Chi-
nese as Surinamese Chinese in contrast to New Chinese outsiders was repeated in the media.

6.5 Anti-Chinese Sentiments as Anti-Government Protest

Anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname are anti-immigrant sentiments, and it should be stressed that anti-Chinese sentiments did not encompass all Chinese as a distinct Asian group to be demonized. 54% of the population of Suriname is Asian (under a US definition of the term), which makes it the most ‘Asian’ country in the Americas. Anti-Chinese sentiments are often voiced by other ‘Asians’ in Suriname, such as some of the people in the large East Indian segment. Anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname may be widespread and persistent, but that does not mean that Surinamese are fundamentally ‘anti-sinitic’ or that anti-Chinese violence would be supported by the majority of the population. Elements of Chinese culture are deeply ingrained in Surinamese society, a large number of Surinamese have a Chinese ancestor, and the majority probably do believe that Suriname would not be the same without the Chinese.

By the early 2000s anti-Chinese sentiments were taking on the form of a conspiracy theory: the government was allowing Chinese, and even actually collaborating with them, to ruin the country. Even if intelligence on ethnicity and migration is gathered by the State, the information is usually not made available to the general public. Surinamese often remain completely dependent on what others claim to know about Chinese, and unsubstantiated facts and opinions become ever more plausible. Combined with the widespread sense of anomie in Surinamese, a feeling of dislocation from

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76 Affigne & Lian 1998: 10, Table 3. ‘Asian’ refers to people from East Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific.
77 Attitudes towards the two most controversial migrant groups were gauged in the January 2007 IDOS public opinion poll. Apparently, 69% of voters had a negative view of Brazilians, 61% had a negative view of Chinese; roughly 25% were positive with regard to Chinese, and about the same with regards to Brazilians. Remarkably, NDP-supporters (the NDP being a populist, nationalist, anti-aparjaht party) were more strongly opposed to these migrants; 75% held a negative view of Brazilians, against 70% with regard to Chinese.

The IDOS public opinion poll was carried out among 487 eligible voters in Paramaribo between 26-28 January 2007. Results were published in De Ware Tijd (3 February 2007, ‘IDOS-pelling 2: etniciteit, gronddeleid en 8 december’ (IDOS poll, part 2: ethnicity, land allocation, and ‘8 December’), but not on the IDOS website (http://www.parbo.com/idos/).
society and authority which made government incompetence indistinguishable from malicious intent, the chain of plausibility made it easy to see New Chinese migrants as a shadowy, secretive group with implied links to the government - the enemy.78 The theory of an adverserial government in cahoots with the Yellow Peril was woven around contemporary newsworthy events: cases of irregular migrants, instances of violent crime, scandals involving transnational companies. The theory was constructed from selected information, and items that did not fit were reinterpreted in line with the theory, and existing evidence was constantly questioned.

The conspiracy theory (re)produced the truth of a failing State via narratives of the Contamination / Yellow Peril stereotypes: no controls of food safety and health, lack of a strict immigration policy, and no integration policy. Patriotic narratives were incorporated into this picture, particularly about supposed preferential treatment of Chinese migrants over Surinamese citizens. One narrative lays the blame at the feet of the NPS, which was always too positive about Chinese immigration. Chinese migrants were said to acquire permits too easily, and driving licenses in particular became symbolic of preferential treatment. 79 With the addition of populist patriotism, anti-Chinese sentiments started to resemble naïve monarchic resistance; appealing to the conservative myths of Surinamese patriotism justified resistance to the ruling elite through attacks on a particular type of dangerous foreigner: being for

78 In 2002 the Venetiaan II administration was under fire for its foreign policy, particularly its handling of the border dispute with Guyana, which threatened to expand from the New River Triangle in the far south to all of the Corantyne River and the demarcation of territorial waters in the north. The Surinamese and Guyanese presidents met in 2002 to stress good relations in general and exchange conciliatory words (De Ware Tijd, 7 February 2002, joint statement of President Ronald Venetiaan and President Bharat Jagdeo). The border issue was not resolved, however, and it strengthened patriotic, anti-establishment sentiments among the Surinamese public. Opposition parties, in particular the anti-apanjaht NDP of ex-military strongman Bouterse, encouraged the feeling of general discontent by linking the Venetiaan administration to the general feeling of moral decline in Surinamese society (e.g. De Ware Tijd 26 February 2002, ‘Bouterse moet in spiegel kijken, zegt Somohardjo’ (Bouterse should look in mirror Somohardjo says)).

79 The narratives defined the truth. In 2006 the Surinamese traffic police observed that many ethnic Chinese actually did not drive with a license (De Ware Tijd 1 June 2006, ‘Chinezen moeten verkeersregels kennen’ (Chinese should be aware of traffic regulations)). This was followed by a rumour that the police had been ordered not to fine Chinese caught without a driving license (De Ware Tijd 9 June 2006, ‘Opdracht bureau Keizerstraat om Chinezen niet te beboeten’ (Keizerstraat station ordered not to fine Chinese)).
Involvement with regard to the problem of the Chinese is indeed also a responsibility of the National Assembly. It should be more than merely raising questions. A parliamentary inquiry is called for. This subject has been ignored for years. We the people see very strange things going on around us. No one understands the CSME [Caricom Single Market and Economy] in Suriname. By now they have given another meaning to the acronym of CSME (Chinese Super Market Economy). Our middle class, the shopkeepers, has been decimated and it just keeps going on and now the construction sector has also been badly affected through inferior materials and cheap labour. The ease with which Chinese shops and supermarkets are set up in neighbourhoods and districts is incredible. And our government seems to tolerate that by issuing permits without taking into account zoning plans or local market saturation. One is tempted to believe that the shop or supermarket is not the main business, but just a secondary activity. Another question on our minds is: are they paying enough taxes and where do they get the capital to run the shops and supermarkets? Where do the cash flows originate and are these cash flows legal? The privileges are great and it looks like organized crime with many social consequences. By now the new groups of Chinese have introduced many effects to our society (crime, murders and hit men, inferior goods, social tensions, changes to our towns and country, etc.). Political parties have already embraced this target groups and there are certain links there as well. The average Surinamese rightly wonders about having been demoted to second or third class citizen.80

The article specifically referred to the increasing number of Chinese-owned shops and supermarkets selling cheap consumer goods from Yiwu (Zhejiang) or building materials81, which for many people confirmed the contamination / Yellow Peril stereotype while reinforcing the image of a failing government. In private and in the street, opinions were remarkably uniform: the Chinese government (the PRC) is behind the Chinese (New Chinese immigrants) over-running Suriname, they (the PRC and the migrants) are taking over.

80 Suriname daily paper, 13 March 2005, editorial article: ‘Countering the Chinese invasion of Suriname?’
81 Data on Chinese enterprises are unreliable. De Ware Tijd (10 November 2006, ‘Veel Surinamers leveren winkelvergunning in’ (Many Surinamese returning business permits) quoted the Shopkeepers Association (Vereniging van Winkeliers): the number of shops increased from roughly 2,000 in 1995 to more than 7,000 in 2006.
they bleed Suriname of foreign currency without contributing anything to the country, and then leave Suriname for another destination without ever having integrated into Surinamese society in any way. Chinese, along with Brazilians for that matter, were spoken of as the new colonizers and colonials.

The case of China Zhong Heng Tai, the ‘palm oil’ enterprise, is a good example of the way criticism of Chinese links to criticism of the Surinamese government. Criticism of the China Zhong Heng Tai deal focused on, among other things, the government’s incompetence, or willingness to facilitate a deal that was so obviously flawed in many ways. The government persisted in referring to the Patamacca project as a ‘large-scale investment’ and a crucial alternative to donor aid, and the opposition continued to accuse the government of selling off Suriname’s natural resources. As expected there were oblique suggestions of government corruption, followed by direct statements about ‘the Chinese’ attempting to exploit Surinamese resources. As Richard Biswamitri Kalloe, columnist and former Minister of Trade and Industry (Venetiaan I) and Public Works (Wijdenbosch) put it:

The project is owned by Chinese, for Chinese and by Chinese. Our brothers in Marowijne can stand by and watch. It is a foreign colony and enclave, crude natural resources will be exported as in

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82 De Ware Tijd, 12 January 2004: Richard Kalloe, ‘Puntjes op de I van de Patamacca deal’ (Details of the Patamacca deal).
83 De Ware Tijd, 12 January 2004: ‘De strijd om survival behoeft een mentaliteitverandering’ (The struggle for survival requires a change in attitude). Interview with Minister Michael Jong Tjien Fa of Trade and Industry on the Free Trade Area of the America’s (FTAA).
De Ware Tijd, 17 January 2004: ‘Patamacca palmolie deal beklonken’ (Patamacca palm oil deal finalized). Quoting Minister Franco Demon of National Resources.
De Ware Tijd, 24 November 2004: ‘President Venetiaan bij installatie stuurgroep oliepalmindustrie: “Toezien op Surinaamse belangen allereerste opdracht”’ (President Venetiaan during installation of palm oil industry steering group: “First task is to protect Surinamese interests”). Quoting Minister Geetapersad Gangaram Panday of Agriculture.
84 E.g. De Ware Tijd, 8 April 2004: ‘Venetiaan wil Suriname als doorgang voor China naar FTAA’ (Venetiaan wants Suriname to be China’s gateway to FTAA). Describing President Venetiaan’s reaction to remarks by NDP chairman Desi Bouterse.
85 De West, 7 Februari 2004: Keerpunt: ‘De week in Retro…’ (Turning Point: Looking back at the week…); 25 June 2005: Keerpunt: ‘Chinese Patamacca-deal klonk vanaf het begin ongeloofwaardig’ (Turning Point: Chinese Patamacca deal was fishy from the start).
86 Kalloe also used to be director and project manager of the original palm oil project in Patamacca.
colonial times. This is not about the development of Suriname but China’s need for resources.  

The conclusion was that the only income the State could expect was revenue from timber exports, without any guarantee that the project would provide local jobs or that the company would not leave after clear-cutting the forest. The irony of a foreign investor financing its activities in Suriname with money made from Surinamese natural resources was not lost on anyone. Though the agreement provided for jobs, suspicions were that China Zhong Heng Tai would import more than a thousand Chinese indentured labourers. Against the background of the visible presence of New Chinese, no assurance from China Zhong Heng Tai that no imported labour would be required was believed or accepted.

‘Chinese guest workers’ are a target of particularly harsh criticism directed towards the government. Surinamese immigration procedures are predicated on livelihood and thus labour; residence permits are linked to work permits, and are not issued for any special social categories. This means that all immigrants from the PRC are technically workers, from chain migrants employed in family-run stores, supermarkets and restaurants, to construction workers imported from the PRC for the various PRC projects. However, ‘Chinese guest worker’ specifically refers to construction workers from the PRC, who are seen as a threat to the local construction sector. Already after the failure of the Sunny Point project some construction workers and technicians had remained in Suriname and set up private enterprises of their own. Ever since, guest workers imported from the PRC for various PRC building projects had the option of returning home or staying on in Suriname.

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87 De Ware Tijd, 12 January 2004: Richard Kalloe, ‘Puntjes op de l van de Patamacca deal’ (Details of the Patamacca deal).

me to continue working in construction when their contracts expired.

Not all PRC guest workers in Suriname were skilled labourers, as labour export could also be a migration strategy; PRC companies could help migrants by arranging documentation and permits, while Surinamese counterparts arranged labour and residence permits. Even without clear counterparts in the PRC, Surinamese companies and entrepreneurs can apply for labour permits on the grounds that specialized skilled labour is required. Korean-owned fishing companies used this method to import ethnic Koreans from Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning Provinces in the PRC, most of whom eventually moved on to join larger Korean communities in Chile and Paraguay.

It is unclear what percentage of PRC guest workers choose to stay in Suriname and for how long, so the current number of legal or illegal construction workers from the PRC is basically unknown. In response to the widespread idea that the Surinamese labour market was being swamped by Chinese migrants and that this was linked to illegal employment and people trafficking, the Surinamese Ministry of Labour investigated the employment of PRC citizens and observance of work permit requirements by enterprises employing these foreigners in early 2003.\(^{89}\) There were in fact real reasons for the Ministry to investigate; 36.6% of all applications for work permits in 2001, and 47.3% of these in 2002, were PRC citizens. In both years about two-thirds were seeking employment as cooks, fishermen, salespersons, and low-skilled labourers. In 2003, Chinese construction companies almost exclusively employed Chinese migrants, whereas fishery companies, and bars and restaurants employed more equal numbers of Chinese migrants and locals. However, bars and restaurants employed most Chinese migrants illegally. The survey seemed to indicate a certain measure of abuse of the work permit system; 46.8% of the total number of Chinese employees with a valid work permit were not working for the employer they had been registered with. However, illegality

\[^{89}\] Vreemdelingen met de Chinese nationaliteit op de Surinaamse arbeidsmarkt (Aliens with Chinese nationality in the Surinamese labour market). Paramaribo: Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and the Environment, 2003.) The year before, then Minister of Labour, Tourism and the Environment, Clifford Marica, indicated that there were no data available on illegal foreign workers in Suriname (De Ware Tijd 25 January 2002, ‘Bedrijven met illegale werknemers risken fikse boete’ (Companies employing illegals risk hefty fine)). ‘Foreign’ was a euphemism for Chinese; the issue of illegal foreign labour had come to the fore because of rumours that Chinese were illegally employed in construction and the Dalian road rehabilitation project.
was in part an artefact of bureaucracy; the most commonly mentioned reason for the lack of work permits was that the Ministry of Labour had not (yet) issued any.

The SARS crisis of early 2003 fuelled the Contamination stereotype and the anti-Chinese conspiracy theory. The disease was first reported in Asia in February 2003, and over the next few months it spread to more than two dozen countries in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia before the global outbreak was contained by late July 2003. Authorities in the People’s Republic of China initially tried to cover up the outbreak, but eventually joined international efforts to stop the epidemic. The Asian tourism and international aviation sectors suffered badly. The economic impact of SARS on Suriname was limited. Sales of plane tickets to Asian destinations dried up, but travel to Asia was not the main source of income for Surinamese travel agents. There were fears that chicken might become scarce, which would be a real problem in a country where chicken is the only meat that is consumed and shared by all ethnic groups, but that never happened. Chinese in Suriname put off travelling to Hong Kong and Guangdong Province, and tended to avoid recent arrivals from China. It slowly dawned on the Surinamese authorities and public that the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang is located in the Pearl River Delta, where SARS arose. Immigration of Chinese, which was now routinely being described as ‘an invasion’, gave the appearance to most people that it was only a matter of time before SARS came to Suriname. The Department of Public Health Care of the Ministry of Public Health acted to reassure the public that certain necessary actions was being undertaken. The Department’s Epidemiological Division correctly assumed that Chinese-speakers in Suriname were already well aware of what SARS was, and tried to overcome language barriers in communicating local procedures, which are

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90 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome is caused by a coronavirus (SARS-CoV) that jumped the species barrier, possibly from civet cats to humans, in Guangdong Province. The earliest known cases of this atypical pneumonia were identified in Foshan, Guangdong Province, in November 2002. (World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/csr/don/2003_07_04/en/). Once infected through close contact, victims got a high fever, followed by headache, diarrhoea, and eventually pneumonia. More than 8,000 became sick worldwide, 774 of whom died. (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/factsheet.htm)

91 In April 2003, halfway through the crisis, Morgan Stanley chief economist Stephan Roach estimated the global economic impact of SARS at about US$ 30 billion.

92 De Ware Tijd, 30 April 2003 ‘Suriname bereidt zich voor op SARS’ (Suriname preparing for SARS)
required to prepare for SARS, to newcomers by involving the huiguan.

Though SARS never reached Suriname, public distrust of the government sharpened as Chinese immigration was now linked to a physical danger. The stereotype of Chinese as polluters of food, environment and society seemed vindicated by the idea that Chinese came from abroad spreading deadly disease. A large photo of the counter of the Work Permits Office of the Ministry of Labour which was closed off with a board, was printed on the front page of De Ware Tijd, over an article claiming that personnel were refusing to help Chinese for fear of SARS.93 An unidentified employee said that personnel were unhappy that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was continuing to issue visas to people from Guangdong, where SARS originated, and had stopped field visits to recent arrivals from China. Questions were raised in the Assembly, and the Minister of Labour, Clifford Marica, denied that his ministry was boycotting clients on the basis of disease-spreading ethnicity, but admitted that there was some unease among the personnel about measures that should be taken.94 But in radio talk shows, on the streets and in private settings, SARS was firmly linked with New Chinese, and seemed to prove that the government was incompetent - unable to keep SARS out with a strict immigration policy. When avian flu was identified in China in 2004, the link between Chinese and disease became even firmer in popular anti-Chinese harangues. The following is an example from George Findlay’s weekly column in De West:95

The president is off to China for the second time, on a State Visit no less. Now look! What are we doing there? Are we looking for a bond loan or do we think we can get more donations out of it? It's all unclear, why they're over there, in that country that is being hit by all kinds of strange viruses. First there was SARS from cats and now here we have a chicken virus. We're scared, man! Just imagine those delegates meeting chicken farmers there, now that they spread this rumour in Suriname that chicken meat will be scarce.

93 De Ware Tijd, 17 June 2003 ‘Angst voor SARS bij afdeling Werkvergunning’ (Work Permit Department scared of SARS). It later appeared that the journalist was unable to reach senior staff who were attending a meeting of the Pan-American Health Organization, and decided to speak ‘informally’ with lower-ranking employees.
94 De Ware Tijd, 18 June 2003 ‘Minister weerspreekt SARS-boycot Chinezen’ (Minister denies SARS boycott of Chinese).
95 De West, 7 February 2004, Keerpunt: de week in retro (Turning Point: Looking back at the week).
Anti-Chinese, anti-government patriotism united Surinamese in Suriname and the Netherlands. The following is a typical posting on a Dutch-based Waterkant discussion board on Surinamese topics:

Marcel, posted 05 March 2003: 20:09 PM
And when the Surinamese borders open in a short while, after the arrival of the Free Trade Area of the Americas... Then we'll automatically have Air China from Peking in Suriname, with at least 550 one-way passengers per flight. So in a couple of years we'll just be a third Chinese country, in which we Surinamese are ethnic minorities. Thanks to our leaders. When next the Victoria Plantation is chopped up and oil palms are planted for palm oil, I wonder how many Surinamese will find jobs there compared with Chinese. I think not a lot. Chinese are asphalting the roads over there in Suriname, you know how many Surinamese work for the company, few if any... Where is the Minister of Labour... or is he blind for not wanting to see... 96

The xenophobic language was reproduced even at the government level. Minister Michael Jong Tjien Fa of Trade and Industry – the only ethnic Chinese cabinet minister in the Venetiaan II administration – publicly voiced support for a type of citizen examination (inburgeringsplicht) for Chinese immigrants. 97 The way the issue of dog meat has unfolded in the public debate was the most recent example of how the Contamination stereotype could lead to criticism of the government. In the course of 2000 the idea developed, without any clear reason, that eating dog meat reflected how abnormal and inhuman Chinese are. As an authentic Fui-dung’on tradition, 98 dog meat had been consumed by Chinese in Suriname for many years, but it was now closely associated with New Chinese. In De Ware Tijd of 6 January 2000, the columnist of ‘Dierenforum’ (Animal Forum) stated that she had warned in December 1999 that there is an increase in demand for dog meat and that this is associated with the ‘arrival of large numbers of Chi-

97 Albeit unintentionally. The minister intended to speak out for easing immigration procedures for Chinese, but in the course of the interview he agreed with and elaborated on the interviewer’s suggestion that Chinese should feel obliged to learn and understand ‘the language’. Interview with Minister Jong Tjien Fa on the six o’clock evening news on Radio Tien, 21 April 2005.
98 Qingqi Juan: 293, ‘Qingqi dog meat’.
nese in Suriname.’ By the early 2003 it was said that more and more Surinamese were eating dogs, apparently driven to it by poverty. Some of the postings on the Suriname Discussion Board’s internet discussion forum demonstrate the way the link is made with immigration: of 10 persons (14 postings) only one (2 postings) objected to the ethnocentrism of the discussion, while one person wrote openly and casually about eating dog. Here are some examples of the rest: 99

huh?, 29-03-2003
Is Suriname really so badly adrift? I wonder whether Suriname is in South America or in Southeast Asia. They are westernizing and Americanizing in Asia and we in Suriname are easternizing and Asianizing.

Stree, 27-05-2003
With hordes of Chinese coming to Suriname I’ve noticed how few stray dogs there are. Now why would that be, folks????????????????

c anijs, 10-7-2003
It’s no wonder, since the Chinese and the Haitians have been brought to Suriname (read smuggled), the dogs, ground lizards, mice, tree lizards, rats, geckos, cockroaches, wrens, black tegus, worm lizards, and let’s not forget the (huge) toads have no chance of survival. Haven’t you noticed, or do you also join the Ch’s and H’s? Yours truly, Redi-moessoe

The issue of dog meat was even raised in the National Assembly, framing an oblique attack on the government. The words of a member of the opposition during the discussion of a naturalization decree in April 2003 are typical of the generalizations which were made about Chinese immigration at that time:

Mister Chairman! I have nothing against any Chinese. I raised this point precisely because it is relevant right now. You should know that the way things are right now many companies face unfair competition. It would seem that companies spring up on almost every street corner, where a few people are then given jobs. It turns out that when these are Chinese businesses, cheap labour is employed. People who hardly understand the language. They are


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employed while established bona fide companies in Suriname have hundreds of employees. Those companies have to, for instance, pay benefits besides salaries and provide all kinds of things for their workers. I’m afraid that if no attention is paid to this, many bona fide established companies will find themselves in serious trouble. I would like to ask that the government look into this. As the people in the street say, that even doghouses, it would seem, are rented by people in order to set up supermarkets. Besides doghouses, the latest news is that our dogs are also under threat. I would also like to raise this issue, we have noticed that many restaurants also serve dog meat.100

The image of Chinese kidnapping pets or cruelly butchering strays proved infinitely fascinating. On the frontpage news of the Times of Suriname on 21 April 2006, there was an item on a Chinese who hunted dogs and sold the meat in plastic containers. An interview with a vet in De Ware Tijd (owned by an established Fuidung’on Hakka family) which was probably intended as a source of objective information, in fact reinforced the abjection of dog meat: it is rather unnatural to eat dogs (the Ultimate Other stereotype), the dogs are slaughtered in an unhygienic and cruel manner (the Contamination stereotype), Chinese eat dog meat as an aphrodisiac (Submissiveness – ‘Chinese men are obsessed by sex’).101

There is no real change in attitudes towards Chinese currently posted by Surinamese on the Internet with regard to content, style, and embedding in Surinamese civic discourse; anti-Chinese posts still outnumber pro-Chinese posts. The fact that anti-Chinese invective is easily found on important Surinamese Internet forums does not mean that there are no positive Surinamese images of

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100 Transcripts of acts of the National Assembly, April 17, 2003. Speaker is Djagendre Ramkhelawan of the Millennium Combinatie opposition party.
101 Public Chinese response came rather late. In 2006, Ling Nget Tet (deputy chairman of Kong Ngie Tong Sang, and self-appointed spokesperson for / gatekeeper to the ‘Chinese community’) explained that the earlier migrants were aware of negative Surinamese attitudes towards dog meat, but that more recent migrants did not know because of language barriers. In his opinion Chinese should be mindful of local sensitivities, even though processing and consuming dog meat is not illegal in Suriname. Eddy van Hoost of the Advisory Committee of the Surinamese Animal Welfare Society both criminalized and demonized dog meat consumption: dogs were ‘usually stolen’ and eating dog meat is ‘unethical’. (http://www.korps-politie-suriname.com/nieuws/nieuwsbronnen%20nationaal/archief%20nieuwsbronnen%20nationaal/2006/2006-04-nieuwsbronnen/2006-04-nieuwsbronne n.htm)
Chinese on the Internet; texts in praise of or sympathetic to the Chinese of Suriname simply do not have the same role as anti-Chinese texts in Surinamese civic discourse. People who are indifferent to or enthusiastic about Chinese have no reason to express their feelings in the same way as those with an axe to grind with the government. However, when Chinese are presented in a positive light in Surinamese postings, the content of the postings can be just as offensive as that of anti-Chinese texts. For example:

krontokoekoe | 4-9-2007 12:10:42
The negroes always have some problem. Instead of work they go and protest. Look at pictures or TV images of a protest march, picket line or party and all you see is negroes. It's as if there are only negroes in Suriname. If I have to choose between niggers and Chinese I choose Chinese. At least they work hard and are generally not known to be criminals. I REALLY MEAN THIS.
(response to De Ware Tijd 4 September 2007, ‘Chinezen hebben voorrang’ (Chinese get preferential treatment)).

lulubirds2 | 23-4-2008 01:34:05
The Chinese come to Suriname and they work very hard, rain or shine, day and night. But our Surinamese oh no, they are very lazy and just complain with their big mouths. I am convinced that if the government brings in the Chinese to clean the country, especially Paramaribo, then the country will be pretty and clean. Because what most of us do is look down on those hardworking Chinese, throw dirt and garbage everywhere and have a big mouth. BRING ON the Chinese, at least the work gets done.
(response to De Ware Tijd 22 April 2008, ‘Dalian wil 450 Chinezen importeren’ (Dalian wants to import 450 Chinese))

6.6 The Laiap Response: Hyphenating ‘Surinamese-Chinese’

In the years leading up to the 2005 parliamentary elections, ethnic Chinese in Suriname were faced with conflicting messages. On the one hand President Venetiaan of the Creole-dominated NPS coalition partner called Chinese ‘the most integrated group’ in Suriname, because many Suriname have some Chinese ancestry. On the

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102 De Ware Tijd, 13 February 2002: ‘President verleent Chinezen verblijfsvergunning’ (President grants Chinese residence permits). Venetiaan was speaking in Kong Ngie Tong Sang on the occasion of Chinese lunar New Year (the Year of the Horse).
other hand, Minister Tjong Tjin Joe, the ethnic Chinese Minister of Trade and Industry of the Javanese-dominated Pertjajah Luhur coalition partner, pressed on with Operation Hawk (Operatie Havik) to control prices in the retail sector and threatened shopkeepers who continued to cross the line with severe repercussions. In the mind of many if not most ethnic Chinese in Suriname, negative messages from the State added to the anti-Chinese sentiments and it tipped the balance toward the impression that Suriname was fundamentally opposed to Chinese. Laiap in particular felt that they had to respond to this.104

Anti-Chinese sentiments collided with different (established) Fuidung’on Hakka views of Chineseness to produce the beginnings of new (sub-)ethnic boundaries. Othering New Chinese was not difficult for Fuidung’on Hakka. Besides different regional and linguistic backgrounds, New Chinese had different outlooks. Such attitudes were difficult to judge in this study; informants were not particularly inclined to open up or chance offending me as either one of the ‘Old Chinese’ or a local. But it was clear that their attitudes were far more varied than those of the ‘Old Chinese’. Faster and more structural communication with their homelands along with the ability to travel easier make them seem like expats rather than sojourners, and very much less like ‘Overseas Chinese’. Adding to this, the growing public perception of “large numbers of Chinese flowing into Suriname” from other areas in China than those the first Surinamese Chinese came from are flooding into the country these last years.”105 combined with Tong’ap and Laiap view of themselves as victims rather than perpetrators to make New Chinese the real outsiders: New Chinese are non-Hakka, not Kejia-speakers, criminal, and transient foreigners instead of loyal Surinamese citizens. But language as a boundary marker was only meaningful to Kejia-speakers, as non-Chinese speaking ethnic Chinese and other Surinamese could hardly distinguish between various Chinese languages.106 These self-appointed representatives

103 De Ware Tijd, 2 February 2002: ‘Havik wil sluiting winkels voor langere tijd’ (Havik wants to close down shops for longer period).
104 It took a long time for ethnic Chinese respondents to venture beyond socially approved comments about life with anti-Chinese sentiments. Supportive statements from the government were generally taken as compliants given in a specific context, while negative comments were considered to be the ‘true face of the government’.
105 De Ware Tijd, 6 March 2002: ‘Criminaliteit neemt nieuwe vormen aan’ (New forms of crime appearing). Editorial article. Quote: “Large numbers of Chinese from other areas in China than those the first Surinamese Chinese came from are flooding into the country these last years.”
106 Some Kejia-speakers suggested that the most dangerous criminals among the New Chinese in Suriname were Fujianese, but as they were not able to explain what
stressed that the ‘Chinese community’ distinguished between ‘settled’ Chinese, who have been living and working in Suriname for years, and ‘newcomers, transients who were not Kejia-speakers from the Pearl River Delta’. The Tong’ap and Laiap were making sure that the public’s desire to search for outsiders to blame, was deflected away towards the ‘real’ outsiders. The police used the various media to reach the public for assistance in its investigations, and relied almost completely on the interpretations offered by the ethnic Chinese establishment who were obviously embarrassed by the problem and who preferred to see ethnic Chinese in Suriname as victims of crime, perpetuating the image of the hardworking Chinese businessman brutally robbed by non-Chinese.

Despite the general praise for educated, hard working, and successful individuals, ethnic Chinese have never had a particularly positive image in Suriname. Surinamese opinions of Chinese have not been measured recently, though a survey of Creole attitudes towards other ethnic groups in 1963 revealed a relatively low opinion of Chinese. Words referring to Chinese ethnicity in Surinamese Dutch/Sranantongo give some indication of how long that low opinion has been around. Sneisi is the normal Sranantongo word for ‘Chinese’, but a secondary meaning of ‘flea’ still survives. The human flea (Pulex irritans) was said to have appeared in Suriname only after 1858, as if it was spread by Chinese indentured labourers. The polite term to address shopkeepers, omu (‘uncle’) acquired the secondary meaning of ‘Chinese’ – or any man who can be labeled Chinese, through phenotype or culture, but it retains a negative meaning of backward, unassimilated. Most Surinamese are fully aware of the negative nuance of omu as ‘backward Chinaman’. In Surinamese Dutch and Sranantongo street slang omu becomes ‘oom’ (Dutch, ‘uncle’) in a kind of stylistic code-switching. Chinese women in shops are called vrouw (Dutch, ‘woman; madam’). Young Chinese women used to be commonly approached with the rather sexist term mis’ amoi (Sranantongo: misi, young lady, girl. In Sranantongo a moi would mean ‘she is pretty’, but it could also

that identification was based on, their opinion was possibly influenced by the international (Western-language and Chinese-language) media.

107 De Ware Tijd, 6 March 2002: ‘Zware criminen teisteren Chinese gemeenschap’ (Chinese community plagued by violent criminals).
108 Van Renselaar 1963: 103. About a third of Creole respondents were negative about Chinese (with about 45% claiming no opinion). A different survey indicated that East Indians generally had a positive view of Chinese – 46% of interviewees were positive (Speckmann 1963: 88).
reflect Kejia: a-moi, younger sister; girl; less than respectful male term of address for young women), but there is no unique word for older Chinese women.\textsuperscript{110} Other examples such as ‘A man na Sneisi’ (lit. ‘He is a Chinese’, meaning ‘He will try to outsmart you.’) and ‘No plei Sneisi’ (lit. ‘Don’t act like a Chinese’, meaning ‘Stop trying to fool us’), show that the discourse is negative.\textsuperscript{111}

The main difficulty facing Tong’ap and Laiap actors wishing to impose a positive narrative of identity is that Chineseness (the negative images associated with the Chinese label) is rather like a counter balance to Surinamese identity; as the Ultimate Other, Chinese provide the ground for defining Surinamese as central and human. In her analysis of Asian Pacific Americanness, Shimakawa views American Asian identity in relation to and as a product of ‘US Americanness’: ‘... the seemingly contradictory, yet functionally essential, position of a constituent element / sign of American multiculturalism and radical other / foreigner.’\textsuperscript{112} Shimakawa uses Kristeva’s concept of abjection to approach US Asian ethnic performativity: a state as well as a process in which things about

text

\textsuperscript{110} A similar pattern produced terms of address for the other Asian ethnicities in Suriname, all used in ethnic and racial stereotyping. In the case of Javanese: pa’-e (Sranantongo / Surinamese Dutch: ‘older Javanese man, in particular a salesman; term of address for older / rural Javanese man.’ It comes from Surinamese Javanese paké: ‘father; term of address for older male, or for husband; syntactic reference to father or older man.’); ma’-e (Sranantongo / Surinamese Dutch: ‘older Javanese woman; term of address for older / rural Javanese woman’. This comes from Surinamese Javanese maké: ‘mother, the mother of; term of address for older woman; syntactic reference to mother or older woman’). In the case of East Indians: baap (Sranantongo / Surinamese Dutch: ‘older / rural / traditional East Indian man; term of address for such a man.’ From Sarnami Hindi báp: ‘father’) and babun (Sranantongo: ‘red howler monkey; less than respectful term of address for East Indian males and occasionally women’. Approximation of Sarnami Hindi bápi; mài (Sranantongo / Surinamese Dutch: ‘older / rural / traditional East Indian woman; term of address for such a woman, in the past specifically saleswomen’. From Sarnami Hindi mài: ‘mother’). Information from the dictionaries of Surinamese Dutch (Van Donselaar 1989), Surinamese Javanese (Vruggink 2001), and Sarnami (Santhoki & Nienhuis 2004).

\textsuperscript{111} Examples suggested by Hans Ramsoedh at the Stichting Instituut ter Bevordering van de Surinamistiek (Institute for the Promotion of Suriname Studies Foundation) in the Netherlands. Chinese shopkeepers were not quite the innocently passive victims of abuse as the Fuidung’on Hakka self-image would have it. Bad feelings went both ways. The potent Sranantongo expletive nyan mi pima-tyau (lit.: eat my pima-tyau), closely related to another potent expletive yu m’na pima (lit.: your mother’s genitals), is usually explained as ‘originally Chinese’. It is in fact a corruption of a common Kejia expletive: nya mi bin ngai diao (lit.: your mother by me fuck), a more emphatic version of diao nya mi, “May your mother be abused!” (“The usual Hakka swear-word”, according to MacIver 1926: 853, under tiáu 屌.)

\textsuperscript{112} Shimakawa 2004: 151.
oneself that are considered objectionable are jettisoned to produce “perceptual and conceptual borders around the self”, “…the condition / position of that which is deemed loathsome and the process by which the subject / “I” is produced.” Shimakawa reads Asian Pacific Americanness as an effect of ‘national abjection’; the production of national identity through the designation of things deemed un-American.

The prevalent way of thinking about Chineseness in Suriname (the one that determines the positionality of any Chinese presence in Suriname) is based on the defining of Surinamese by national abjection of ‘Chinese’. This appears ambivalent because it is based on the binary set of Chinese stereotypes (see Table 1) – a dominant negative discourse that defines speech about Chinese in terms of contamination and threat, accompanied by its positive twin. But as a performative act (an illocutionary speech act), the use of the word ‘Chinese’ in the media described as well as prescribed Chinese as irregular migrants, associated with organized crime, exploiters, and pandemics. The lack of differentiation in the word meant that all Chinese in Suriname were actually or potentially problematic.

The word Chinese has gathered a huge variety of meanings in Suriname, and negative generalizations of Chinese do not distinguish between these multiple meanings. The noun ‘Chinese’ (Chinees) referred to a ‘person with East Asian features’, ‘Surinamese of Chinese descent’, ‘person of Chinese descent in Suriname’, ‘anybody anywhere who can be called Chinese’, ‘Citizen of the PRC or the Hong Kong SAR’, ‘Chinese shopkeeper’, ‘Chinese shop’, ‘Chinese restaurateur’, and ‘Chinese restaurant’. The adjective ‘Chinese’ (Chinees / Chinese) would refer to the meanings of the noun, and also to ‘traditional’ culture, any region in the PRC, the Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan, and to cheap PRC-made commodities, etc.

Despite the generalization inherent in the word ‘Chinese’, anti-Chinese sentiments could not legitimately be both universal and strong; nothing like “all Chinese are bad” is acceptable in Suri-


Abjection helps to reconcile the theoretical freedom of situational performative identity with the observed fact that there are limits to the freedom to choose identities; there is a gap between the identity one performs (calling oneself Chinese) and the identity one cannot shake off (being called Chinese). Different identities are not equal when race, gender and class are about power relations, so the question as Shimakawa puts is: does everyone have equal access to agency in choosing positional, multi-situated identities?
name. Because they could be labelled racist, direct public attacks on specific ethnic groups can backfire on the attackers, but patriotism allowed an acceptable distinction to be made between citizens versus foreigners – good, innocent, downtrodden, versus bad, threatening, exploiting, etc. Prejudices therefore needed to be explicitly focussed on Chinese immigrants, i.e. New Chinese, which resulted in modified generalizations distinguishing ‘bad Chinese’ from ‘good Chinese’, ‘our Chinese’, ‘Surinamese Chinese’. So rather paradoxically, anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname fosterered the articulation of sub-ethnic labels, a positive local label versus a negative foreign one.

Anti-outsider prejudices among Fuidung’on Hakkas transplanted from the qiaoxiang inherently motivated them to produce a similar set of positive-negative sub-ethnic labels, despite the general anti-Chinese sentiments of non-Chinese. Relations between the established Fuidung’on Hakkas and the New Chinese were bad almost from the start. Tong’ap – the original ‘Chinese shopkeepers’ – found themselves facing competition from the New Chinese maoyi gongsi. They also found their interpretation of Chinese identity in Suriname challenged by non-Hakkas. The established Fuidung’on Hakkas framed the new situation in terms of established-versus-outsider relationships which was familiar to them and originally grounded on shared Chinese language and ancestral homeland. Kejia speakers in Suriname call members of the Chinese out-group, i.e. (Han) Chinese people from outside one's ancestral homeland, laoteu (no clear Chinese orthography; possibly a nominalization of a southern Chinese suffix meaning ‘man; fellow’: “those hicks”). A more neutral PTH equivalent of this pejorative term is waixiang, “(someone from) outside the county”.

Hakka identity emerged from a conflict between established and outsiders in the Pearl River Delta – remember that ‘Hakka’ basically means ‘outsider’. Kejia language had become a potent marker of Hakka identity during the Punti-Hakka conflicts of the nineteenth century, but in late twentieth century Suriname, Fuidung’on migrants (i.e. Tong’ap) were strongly associated with Hong Kong and Cantonese rather than the Hakka qiaoxiang and Kejia language. Because New Chinese used PTH as a lingua franca, the Tong’ap initially described them as ‘Northeners’, which is nominally accurate as practically any other region in the PRC (except for Hainan Province) lies to the north of the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang. Eventually the qiaoxiang of the major immigrant cohort

(the Wenzhounese, who self-identified as Zhejiangese) was gen-eralized to indicate all New Chinese. Kejia-speakers now called them *zetgongzai*, a stigmatizing term meaning ‘those from Zhejiang Province’. The Fuidung’on stereotype of the untrustworthy *laoteu*, now updated to *zetgongzai*, nicely matched the reports of irregular migration and allegations of organized crime among the New Chinese in the local and international press.

In their study of the English village of Winston Parva, Elias and Scotson described how a new group finds itself ostracized by an existing group, exclusively on the grounds of their newness.\(^{115}\) The elite of the established group dominates the positioning of the newcomers as outsiders, shifting all negative images that could conceivably apply to both groups towards the outsiders. Elias noted that the village elite used gossip and avoidance of social contact to position the outsiders as inferior to their respectable selves. Something very similar happens in Suriname when established Fuidung’on Hakkas speak about New Chinese. It was very difficult to elicit anti-outsider gossip aimed at New Chinese from Tong’ap informants, but Laiap participants were far less circumspect. Note how the level of prejudice increases as one moves away from the Tong’ap side on the Laiap continuum.

So they’re not Hakkas? Those really are strange people. They’re a bit arrogant. I’m not acquainted with them, but I was there with my daughter not long ago, and I asked something in Kejia and they answered in Sranantongo. Rather strange.
(Kejia and Cantonese speaking Laiap informant in her sixties, fully accepted by Tong’ap huiguan elite. Telling me of her experiences in a supermarket run by Hainanese)

You know, I have shop premises to let. But I’d rather rent it to a Surinamese than rent it to a *Zetgongzai*. Get involved with one of those, and you can forget about being paid. Not to be trusted.
(Kejia speaking Laiap informant in her fifties. Refuses to let shop premises to New Migrants)

Those Chinese from China are not civilised like we are.
(Laiap woman in her sixties)

I understand that the police here say they keep finding bodies of murdered Chinese, and then they have to go and find the killer. Description: Chinese, nose flat, eyes slanted, hair straight, greasy and wispy, age about 25 years, build short, slim, last seen

\(^{115}\) Elias & Scotson 1994.
Elias’ paradigm seems to be applicable to the Chinese of Suriname, but closer scrutiny reveals one particular problem: the contrast between the established (the established Fuidung’on Hakkas – Tong’ap as well as Laiap) and the outsiders (the New Chinese) appears to be only based on the length of residence to non-Chinese, who are less atuned to the extremes of Chinese lin-guistic (and to a lesser extent cultural) variety. As described earlier, the linguistic differences between the established Fuidung’on Hakkas and the New Chinese are so considerable that the varieties of Chinese they speak might be called distinct languages. Chain migration from the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang meant that there were always some non-integrated, non-assimilated, recent ethnic Chinese immigrants around, who had a lower status for all kinds of reasons: they were poorer, rural, unable to speak anything besides Kejia, not well-connected, or something else.

As immigrants, all Tong’ap individuals had been sinkeh to some other laokeh, newcomer outsiders to earlier cohorts of Fuidung’on Hakkas. But even there linguistic and cultural differences existed; Fuidung’on laokeh almost exclusively spoke Kejia and had grown up in the qiaoxiang during the early years of the PRC. Especially after the 1960s, Fuidung’on sinkeh were acculturated to Hong Kong and used Cantonese as a prestige language, or they entered Suriname more or less directly from the qiaoxiang. They were bilingual in PTH as well as Kejia. Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh were positioned as outsiders by the establishment of Fuidung’on Hakka laokeh through a system of gossip and avoidance of social
contact. For example, Hong Kong immigrants were at best arrogant and untrustworthy and at the other extreme rumoured to be linked to organized crime. Such gossip and character assassinations were limited to the Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants, and only slowly percolated out to Laiap and non-Chinese.

Motivations behind Tong’ap and Laiap reactions to New Chinese were also different. Tong’ap distanced themselves from New Chinese mainly out of fear of the consequences of increasing anti-Chinese sentiments, while Laiap were strongly defending their higher status within Surinamese society. Tong’ap huiguan elite had always used Chinese ethnic identity strategically in their contacts with the Surinamese public, including Laiap, in their use of the Dutch word ‘Chinees’ (Chinese), if it was expedient to do so. The Tong’ap view of Chinese identity in Suriname was constructed to define ethnic borders: Chinese identity was patriarchal and thus excluded women; it was primordial and thus excluded any hybridization; normative huaqiao cultural values such as reverence for written Chinese defined membership, and Hong Kong modernity served to provide status among Tong’ap. New Chinese presented the Tong’ap elite with a dilemma. New Chinese may have been unwelcome competitors, but Tong’ap would never deny that they were Chinese, in the sense that these were PRC citizens and / or ethnic Han-Chinese. Chinese culture was something the Tong’ap tended to downplay when it came to New Chinese, either because it was taken for granted that immigrants from China should be full representatives of Chinese culture, or perhaps because the Chinese culture and what the New Migrants represented was rather different from the traditional Fuidung’on Hakka folklore and Hong Kong modernity of the Tong’ap.

Though Laiap could also be included in the newly generalized negative meaning of ‘Chinese’ in the media, they generally shared non-Chinese and Tong’ap annoyance about New Chinese. They were equally fluent in the stereotypes and prejudices as non-Chinese, and just as blind to what exactly New Chinese were. But Laiap are different in their understanding of the exact distinction between Laiap and New Chinese. To non-Chinese the central difference between Chinese immigrants and Surinamese is like the distinction between foreigners and citizens, while to Chinese migrants the only relevant distinction among ethnic Chinese is between the established and the new (i.e. laokeh and sinkeh). To Laiap the central distinction between themselves as established, integrated and assimilated ethnic Chinese and the New Chinese was more about class. The difference between Laiap and Tong’ap
on the one hand and New Chinese on the other was basically the same – the issue of assimilation / hybridization and the Laiap lack of Chinese culture. In any case, Laiap were expected to choose between self-identifying as Chinese, or the opposite and follow their Creole reference group, invoke anti-ethnic patriotic discourse, actively voice anti-Chinese prejudices, or otherwise disassociate themselves from Chinese ethnicity or migration. In that way the basic Laiap view of Chinese identity is reactive: ‘we are not them’ or ‘we are not Chinese’. But although Laiap could also freely choose to be Chinese, those individuals harbouring any realistic hopes of political participation had little choice but to present themselves as Chinese in Surinamese apanjaht politics.

What happened next was that Laiap agents repositioned themselves in the Surinamese multicultural landscape by rearticulating their Chineseness to exclude New Chinese; Chinese stereotypes were manipulated to articulate Chinese identity. This Laiap rearticulation of Chineseness contained the patriotically correct distinction between ‘good Chinese’ and ‘bad Chinese’ arising from Surinamese civic disourse, the native Fuidung’on Hakka distinction between in-group Hakkas and out-group laoteu, and the dualistic set of negative and positive Chinese stereotypes (see Appendix 1, Table 7). All three elements create channels of agency, as ‘good Chinese’ achieve the power to define legitimacy through exclusion. Though negative stereotypes are not easily discredited, the missing positive messages in the matrix of Chinese stereotypes may be filled in to balance out the negative image: e.g. “Chinese are foreigners and temporary residents” is balanced by “Chinese are loyal citizens and successful and essential contributors to Surinamese society.” Excluding New Chinese as laoteu / zetgongzai reaffirms Fuidung’on Hakka unity in public settings as well as out of sight of non-Chinese; Laiap and Tong’ap are both Hakka by virtue of common ancestry in the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang. Finally, excluding New Chinese is a patriotic act, making Surinamese-Chinese loyal Surinamese citizens. Unhyphenated, the term in practice meant little more than ‘the Chinese of Suriname’. The hyphen now specifically implied that legitimate Chineseness was located in Suriname.116

Laiap agents had defined the Surinamese-Chinese label, but it is important to stress that no coherent Surinamese-Chinese

116 Hyphenation here is metaphorical, as the term ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ does not actually contain a hyphen in Dutch. Dutch Surinaamse Chinezen can mean both ‘the Chinese of Suriname’ as a general term and ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ as a special group.
category arose, and the *Surinaamse Chinezen* / Surinamese-Chinese label could apply to any type of Fuidung‘on heritage in Suriname – Laiap, Tong‘ap and mixed Chinese. The Tong‘ap were quiet about this strategy, but the New Chinese were basically voiceless. Language barriers are the most obvious reason for this. Newcomers speak little English, no Dutch, and it takes a few years to learn enough Sranantongo to effectively communicate with the state and clients. Communication with the established Fuidung‘on Hakkas was also problematic; new-comers speak PTH, but though many established Fuidung‘on Hakkas in Suriname speak Kejia and Cantonese, most (especially the older generation) are not fluent in Mandarin.

Texts voicing opinions of New Chinese were exceedingly rare in the Surinamese Chinese-language media up to 2004. Though New Migrants were acutely aware of the distinction between good ‘Surinamese Chinese’ and bad ‘New Chinese’, they were generally quiet about general anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname. Language barriers and a weak power base made it difficult for New Chinese to retaliate against gossip among the established Fuidung‘on Hakkas. New Chinese reactions ranged from studied indifference to resentment. A man from Liaoning in his forties who worked in a restaurant said “they look down on us”. Some think that this is a result of economic competition; the New Chinese are competing with established Fuidung‘on Hakkas in an increasingly tight Surinamese market, but appear to be more innovative and successful than Tong‘ap and Laiap in the short term. An English-speaking university graduate from Shandong in her late twenties who is married to a Laiap man put it like this:

They [Tong‘ap and Laiap] are soft. They don’t know what hard work is anymore. They have no idea what you have to go through in China to achieve anything.

Tong‘ap and New Chinese might not have directly challenged the articulation of ‘Surinamese Chinese’, but in many ways they also ignored it. The PRC embassy, which could be expected to speak up in defence of New Migrants (*xīn yímin*) has remained silent about anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname. It is important to note that no unambiguous equivalent of the term under discussion has ever developed in spoken or written Chinese in Suriname. The best translation in written Chinese is *sulinan huaren*, but the adjective *sulinan* (*‘Suriname’ / ‘Surinamse’*) makes the term hazy. Local translations favour ‘Chinese in Suriname’ (i.e. people in
Suriname who can be identified as Chinese) and/or ‘the ethnic Chinese of Suriname’ (i.e. Surinamese people of Chinese descent), but never non-inclusive ‘Surinamese-Chinese’. All things Laiap stayed encapsulated within the euphemistic term *huayi* ‘people of Chinese descent’. As will become clear in the following chapters, a distinctly local ‘hyphenated’ identity was at best marginal but virtually invisible within a Chinese-language context.

The ‘Old Chinese’ also fear that the stereotype of New Chinese Migrants (called *cendaekook* in Khmer, ‘mainland Chinese’) as only after easy money and flouting public morals damages Chinese-Khmer relations. As in Suriname, the ‘Old Chinese’ publicly distance themselves from New Chinese Migrants, labelling them ‘not proper Chinese’. The PRC is trying to rebuild its relations with the Chinese of Cambodia and to repair its image by representing the PRC as a strong, unified superpower homeland, while burying the past record of the PRC in Cambodia, fostering cultural revival, trying to reconnect with the ‘Old Chinese’ by funding Chinese associations, and by actively promoting PTH among the ‘Old Chinese’. Edwards goes so far as to claim that the PRC seems to be on a mission to modernise Cambodia through resinicization of its ethnic Chinese population.

Up to the early 1990s, ‘Surinamese Chinese’ identity was reactive, a direct response to anti-Chinese sentiments. Patterns changed after that as the variety of Chinese languages, economic strategies, and migration strategies increased; actors positioning themselves as legitimate Chinese in the Surinamese multicultural landscape could no longer refer to simple established-outsider distinctions between Laiap / laokeh and Tong’ap / sinkeh. However, reconstruction of Chineseness in Suriname was more than a simple redefinition of ‘Chinese of Suriname’ as the only legitimate kind of

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117 For example, the bilingual programme of the variety show in De Witte Lotus sports club on the Sunday evening, 19 October 2003, the day before the commemoration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement, was printed in Chinese with Dutch translations on a sheet of A4 paper. The Chinese title was 蘇里南華人定居150周年聯歡晚會節目表 (*sulinan huaren dingju 150 zhounian lianhuan wanhui jiemu biao*, literally translated: Suriname Chinese settlement 150th anniversary variety show programme list). The Dutch title under it was: *De Witte Lotus 150 jaar vestiging Chinezen in Suriname* (‘De Witte Lotus, 150 years of Chinese settling in Suriname’). Written Chinese lacks an exact equivalent of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’, as the language contains no such thing as the broad term ‘Chinese’.

118 Edwards 2002: 274.

119 Ibid.

120 Edwards 2002: 283.
Chineseness in Suriname. In the narratives which are formed around anti-Chinese sentiments, Chineseness implied membership of a closed community, the unwillingness or inability to integrate, the eternal orientalist Other; Surinamese-Chinese might be better than New Chinese, but this does not mean that they are suddenly any less Sneisi. In other words, it was not enough to deflect anti-Chinese sentiments away from the established Fuidung’on Hakkas; the term ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ needed performative content.

Current anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname could be pinned down as a reaction to Chinese globalization, in the form of a strong influx of cheap PRC-made commodities, increased migration from the PRC, and the growing influence of PRC geopolitics. The specific response of Laiap elites to New Chinese migration (i.e. the rearticulation of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’) resembles the earlier responses of Surinamese and Jamaican colonial elites to commercial competition from the Fuidung’on Hakka ethnic ownership economies in the two countries. New Chinese entrepreneurial chain migration is strongly associated with Baihuo Business, and so it should come as no surprise that Laiap elites (as members of the modern Surinamese middle classes and business elite) respond by marginalizing New Chinese as dangerous competitors. However, a more immediate concern obviously is the ‘Old Chinese’ desire to distance themselves from forms of ascribed Chineseness that threaten the harmony of their position in Suriname.

Anti-Chinese sentiments are very relevant with regard to political participation of Chinese. Any ethnic Chinese elite in Suriname with ambitions of political power would have to balance unifying as many ethnic Chinese as possible into a viable constituency while distancing itself from the image of Chinese as migrants and outsiders. With the arrival of New Chinese, relatively ‘mild’ food contamination stereotypes have re-inflated into Yellow Peril imagery. The readiness to identify a New Chinese migrant group as a threat and position it as such, is linked to well-established attitudes towards outsiders / newcomers among Surinamese and Chinese. Negative Surinamese attitudes toward Chinese migrants reflect anomie in the face of a weak state, and link anti-immigrant sentiments with disillusionment about the socio-economic and political situation. When stories involving illegal Chinese migration attracted the attention of the US State Department (e.g. the Trafficking in People Reports), the Surinamese state responded by tightening immigration procedures, aimed at Chinese nationals, as described in Paragraph 6.2.1 above.
Chinese migrants freshly arriving in Suriname are not ‘Chinese’ yet, but they become so in light of Surinamese expectations of what being Chinese means, and in terms of pragmatic choices in securing a livelihood. Fluid self-identification suits most Chinese entrepreneurial households just fine; as entrepreneurial chain migrants, New as well as ‘Old Chinese’ present themselves to the general public as citizens, stakeholders in and contributors to Surinamese society, and co-victims with other Surinamese of government policies, etc. To a local Chinese public, they represent themselves as hardworking members of Surinamese society and the state, and as victims of crime, taxes and racial discrimination. However, individual ethnic Chinese actors generally balk at the idea of permanent association with a fixed ethnic group in the spotlight of current local and global political and economic developments. New Chinese migrants, for instance, are aware that the idea of the PRC as a burgeoning superpower matches and reinforces the Yellow Peril image, the main stereotype underlying increasing anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname. Chinese migrants appreciate that they may be considered marginal within Surinamese society and as an ethnic minority analogous to minority nationalities (shaoshu minzu) in PRC multiculturalism.

For Chinese migrants in Suriname, ‘Chineseness’ – in particular local interpretations of what that means – is therefore an important factor that limits the choices of Chinese migrants when positioning themselves in Surinamese society. Anti-Chinese sentiments cannot be separated from anti-establishment protest; any social or political issue related to the idea of Chinese identity or China becomes symbolic of perceived government failure, either consciously in naïve monarchic resistance or unconsciously in an anti-government conspiracy theory. This is embedded in a framework of stereotypes (both negative and positive) about ethnic Chinese in Suriname. These stereotypes also inform the specific anti-New Chinese stereotypes that provide the performative content for ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ identity. In this way, anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname (generally anti-Chinese or specifically anti-Chinese immigrant) reveal the limits to situational and performative Chinese identity. In the narratives which are constructed around Surinamese anti-Chinese sentiment, Chineseness implies membership of a closed community, the unwillingness or inability to integrate, the eternal orientalist Other. Surinamese-Chinese might be better than New Chinese, but this does not mean that they are suddenly any less ‘Chinese’.
The Tong’ap response to the negative image of Chinese in Suriname had been to retreat from public view as much as the marketing requirements of their economic niche would allow, and this attitude was reinforced by concrete experiences of anti-Chinese violence in the Malaysian part of their Asian migration circuit. The Laiap power brokers responded by shifting negative imagery onto New Chinese as outsiders, and rearticulated the idea of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ as the only legitimate Chinese in Suriname. Laiap agents had always contested Chineseness and now rearticulated a hyphenated ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ identity that distinguished ‘true and legitimate Chinese in Suriname’ from ‘alien and illegitimate’ New Chinese – basically the contention between the smugness of being Chinese and the urgent wish to be recognized as Chinese. Were Laiap speaking as if they were the only true ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ or for the Chinese of Suriname – in other words, did ‘Surinamese Chinese’ attach any meaning to Tong’ap, and what exactly had the term come to mean to non-Chinese? Intentionally or not, Laiap adopted the Fuidung’on strategy of marginalizing Chinese outsiders through gossip in their reaction to heightened anti-Chinese sentiments. In so doing Laiap appeared to be part of the Chinese establishment in Elias’ sense, but remained an out-group vis-à-vis the older Fuidung’ on Hakka immigrants. The reinvented label of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ would now be used by the ‘Old Chinese’ elite – Laiap and Tong’ap – to transcend the negative image of Chineseness to articulate ‘apanjaht Chineseness’ in the narrative of Surinamese multicultural belonging.

121 It is worth pointing out that ‘Old Chinese’ have limited agency with regard to public articulation of Chinese identity. They do not dominate the local media quite like the fair-skinned colonial elites of the past. The Chinese TV station SCTS in Paramaribo (Stichting Kong Ngie Tong Sang TV) which was set up in February 2008, was linked to New Chinese by the general public, if only because it was ‘new’ and ‘Chinese’. It was in fact set up by Fuidung’on Hakka with support from various Chinese segments and the PRC embassy. But the unavoidable universal Chineseness presented in the programmes it receives from the PRC combine with the necessity to bridge Chinese language barriers to make the broadcaster appear fundamentally non-local. In this example Fuidung’on Hakka lose their grip on any local image they might wish to project and lose control over what is New Chinese and what is Surinamese-Chinese.
7 THE ‘OLD CHINESE’ ROUTE TO PARTICIPATION:
POLITICS OF CHINESENESS

The anti-Chinese sentiments following in the wake of New Chinese immigration were increasing precisely in a period when ethnic Chinese had the best chance to acquire a share of political power in Suriname. As luck would have it, the best opportunity for Chinese politics of recognition in apandaht ethnopolitics appeared about 18 months before the legislative elections of 25 May 2005. This occasion was the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Chinese indentured labourers on 20 October 2003. Political power-sharing goes beyond Chinese political participation (which strictly speaking meant the right to vote and stand for office of Laiap and those Tong’ap who had citizenship rights). It implies an ethnic elite using the ethnic identity created through successful politics of recognition in apandaht multiculturalism to negotiate inclusion in a pre-election grand coalition and post-election allocation of strategic government posts. In the case of ethnic Chinese in the early 2000s, it was a Laiap elite that was fully prepared to take the apandaht path to political power. However, this elite was also aware of the need to soothe the growing anti-Chinese and anti-establishment mood of the general population, while also mobilizing the support of ethnic Chinese regardless of citizenship rights. The challenge was to distance oneself from New Chinese migration while trying to avoid alienating potential ethnic Chinese supporters.

Any minority elite with political ambitions in Suriname needs to face the fact that apandaht consociationalism leaves just three routes to the centre of power: join an existing apandaht party, set up a political party with a realistic chance of being considered a potential coalition partner, or set up a special (non-political) group that will be recognized by the State as a representative of a social segment. The social stability seen as the merit of Surinamese apandaht consociationalism requires stable apandaht parties, and patronage rather than democratic participation makes the apandaht parties relatively impervious to the ambitions of new members. This also limits the success of minority group representation within established apandaht parties; the interests of other social segments remain subordinate to those of the ethnic group on which the
apanjaht party has based its legitimacy, while the interests of a minority group may conflict with the career agendas of the individuals joining the apanjaht party as minority representatives. In the context of apanjaht consociationalism, minority parties have very few prospects of reaching the centre of power, so setting up a new party or a special interest group implies the creation of a power base (real or not) that is immediately recognizable to the established apanjaht parties, which means that the outside elite must foster the impression of some type of segmental and ethnic representation to the political establishment and the general public.

7.1 Celebrations and Special Interest Groups

A simple announcement of the creation of a new party or organization does not make one a credible representative of a social segment which may somehow have been overlooked by established apanjaht parties. The demands of a new ethnic party or the goals of a special interest group working for a particular ethnic segment need to be articulated within the framework of the apanjaht imagining of Suriname. This means that the group, which the elite claim to represent, needs to be publicly defined. Although public contestation of group identities is common in Suriname, very few scholars have worked on this issue. França considers it in the light of national identity formation, and sees different and simultaneous representations of Suriname in the apanjaht discourse developed through public events, which typically entail the creation and contestation of spatial and temporal markers by ethnic elites to define group identity vis à vis the State and other ethnic groups.¹ At the surface such public events, which are never spontaneous outbursts of popular sentiment, but planned by limited specific groups claiming to represent segments of the population, are platforms for politics of identity, focused on resisting assimilationist nationalism and dominant ethnic groups. While it may be going too far to claim that apanjaht discourse is driving the creation of civil society, the idea that ethnic pluralism is an asset to Suriname and that all Surinamese ethnic groups should be equal and equivalent does provide ethnic elites with a context to pursue a politics of recognition aimed at achieving a share of political power.

Of course, public statements of group identities in Suriname are not utilized exclusively in service of elite politics of recogni-

¹ França 2004.
tion in apanjaht consociationalism. The need to publicly assert identities and the manner in which this is done, though surely driven and heavily influenced by politics of recognition, would very likely exist without it. Assimilation from within and globalization from without are breaking down simple ethnic identification and cultural distinctiveness. Identity that cannot be taken for granted needs to be constantly reasserted: people need to constantly remind themselves who they are, and need to constantly retell their story to others. In this narrative approach, ethnic identity is the life history of an ethnic group. Ethnic narratives therefore always include a tale of origins, as well as an evaluation of the position of the group in Surinamese history and society. One explanation for the public events noted by França is the need to tell ethnic narratives to broadest possible audiences. In any case, public performance of ethnic narratives in Suriname provides an excellent platform for individuals and groups attempting to develop a politics of recognition in view of participation in apanjaht consociationalism.

7.1.1 Ethnic Celebrations Through Fragmentation of National Celebrations

The celebrations that figure in politics of recognition are staged on meaningful dates. As the migrant background of ethnic groups was initially more relevant, these dates had transnational rather than national meaning, for example the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the Founding of the Republic of India, or the Founding of the Republic of China. After Independence in 1975, meaningful dates were chosen to reflect the idea that ethnic groups were essential building blocks of the Surinamese nation; the entry date of the first members of various ethnic groups in Suriname became ethnic ‘birthdays’. Nationalist discourse determined the basic calendar of national celebrations, which were to be non-ethnic and reduced to a minimum. According to apanjaht logic, every Surinamese ethnic group needs to be recognized by the State, which means that the minimum of national celebrations should include at least one holiday for every ethnic and / or religious group. When the two competing discourses clashed, formally national, non-ethnic events fragmented into a proliferation of platforms for politics of recognition – contestation of temporal markers, in França’s terms.

‘National’ and basically non-ethnic events do exist in Suriname. Some are intended to promote patriotic attachment to the idea of Suriname, though State involvement is generally minimal; the
State neither fully supports these celebrations nor actively opposes their increasingly ethnic nature. One extreme is Independence Day (25 November, since 1975), the quintessential national event, which is linked to Surinamese Nationalism and therefore to Creole ethnic identity in the minds of many Surinamese, despite strict efforts by the State to use pan-ethnic symbolism. At the other extreme is the Wandelmars or Avondvierdaagse (a four-day night-time walking trip which takes place every April immediately following Easter since 1964), which has been organized by the Bedrijven Vereniging Sport en Spel (BVSS) for the last 40 years. Originally an amateur sports event copied from the Netherlands, the Avondvierdaagse has gradually succumbed to commercial interests and the influence of cultural NGOs and become a sales promotion show and folklore manifestation with wide spectator appeal all rolled into one. The organizers never limited folkloric expressions, but they did act to curb what it considered lewd behaviour and dress, and attempted to provide moral and wholesome contexts through annual themes. The Kalinya Socio-Cultural Association ‘Paremuru’, the oldest Amerindian cultural group in Suriname, started using the hugely popular Avondvierdaagse as a platform for ethnic promotion during the 1990s. Creole folkloric groups now increasingly dominate the event.

‘Ethnic’ events are intended as platforms for politics of recognition with the broadest national coverage possible. Such events are typically copied from existing ones. Ethnic beauty pageants are a good example; the national and non-ethnic Miss Suriname Contest was discontinued in 1999, apparently due to financial problems, and was replaced by a proliferation of ethnic pageants. Various groups and individuals copy the concept of pageants from other ethnic groups and organize alternative pageants within their own segment as a strategy to acquire legitimacy and status within the apanjaht narrative. Ethnic pride becomes gendered as it is channelled through young urban women who compete in the mastery of ‘authentic’ and essential folklore, and

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2 The 2006 theme was ’Het is fijn om Surinamer te zijn; een goed gezin is het begin!’ (It's great to be Surinamese; everything starts with a healthy family!).

3 Interestingly, Surinamese Creole cultural associations in the Netherlands have attempted to transplant the wandelmars concept to promote what is basically Surinamese apanjaht multiculturalism. For example, Stichting Wi Uma in The Hague described one of its activities as an annual multicultural wandelmars: “The goal is to promote the good cooperation that is slowly arising with other ethnic groups. We aim for mutual solidarity, tolerance, respect and acceptance.” (http://www.denhaag.nl/smartsite.html?id=45714)
stereotypical racial ideals of beauty. And so by 2006, Suriname had the Misi Sery Contest for Afro-Surinamese women (the successor of the Miss Alida contest held on the evening before Emancipation Day, 1 July), the Miss India and Miss East Indian Beauty Pageants for women of East Indian extraction (the Miss India Pageant is held under the auspices of Miss India Worldwide), the Miss Indra Maju and Miss Djawa Beauty Pageants for Javanese women (organized by the Vereniging Indra Maju and Sana Budaya respectively), the Miss Amazonia Beauty Pageant for Amerindian women, the Sa Ameva Beauty Pageant for Maroon women (usually first week of October, to commemorate the 1762 peace treaty with the Ma-roons).

The most obviously political ethnic events are the ‘ethnic birthdays’. The oldest of these is the commemoration of the Abolition of Slavery (Manspasi or Keti Koti, 1 July). Originally, 1 July was used as a Christian celebration ‘to discipline and control the formerly enslaved and their descendants’ for the benefit of the colonial status quo (Van Stipriaan 2004: 300). By government decree of 2 February 1960 Keti Koti was officially declared to be Dag der Vrijheden (Freedom Day), but the new name never stuck. After 1975, Independence Day proved to be less ambiguously eth-nic than 1 July. In 1993, the Venetiaan I administration indicated that there were plans to restore 1 July as the commemoration of the abolition of slavery. According to Lila Gobardhan-Rambocus, a public discussion about the plans for 1 July in the Mata Gauri building on 2 June 1993 revealed both resentment about the basic Afro-Surinamese claim to 1 July as a national symbol as well as concerns about fragmentation. Nationalists disapproved of any formal recognition of ethnicity, while to intellectuals of various eth-nic groups recognition of specific ethnic holidays signalled ‘emancipation’ of ethnic groups, which meant achieving development and equality as Surinamese citizens. At the meeting Max Man A Hing warned that many separate ethnic holidays might follow from apanjaht logic, if 1 July were to become a Creole holiday, and that the national production of a developing nation would be harmed by more holidays. Eventually 1 July was officially renamed ‘Keti Koti Dey’ (Day of Broken Shackles) by government decree of 28 August 1993.

4 A number of the ethnic beauty pageants have been transplanted to the Netherlands: Miss India Holland, Sa Ameva Nederland, Miss Alida Nederland.

Fragmentation did not quite follow as expected. Moreover, although 5 June (*Hindostaanse Immigratie, Milan ka Dien*) became a national holiday in commemoration of the arrival of the first East Indian indentured labourers in 1873, no other fixed ‘ethnic birthday’ was recognized by the State. Various NGOs keep trying to have various dates recognized as special ethnic holidays, and the Surinamese State only concedes to grant once-only holiday status to special anniversaries. Some ethnic groups have more obvious ‘birthdays’, for example 9 August is Javanese Immigration Day (first arrivals from Java, 9 August 1890). Other groups have more difficulty finding equivalent dates, particularly for groups who were striving for recognition as Maroon and Indigenous People rather than Bush Negroes and Amerindians. Technically there already was a Maroon day: either 1 July, which Maroons as Afro-Surinamese could (and do) freely claim, or 10 October, which had been designated *Loweman Dei* (Day of the Runaways) in 1974 to commemorate Maroon resistance against the colonial authorities. *Loweman Dei* remained a tool of instrumental ethnicity in the hands of urban Maroon intellectuals in the 2000s, and never caught on as a popular celebration among Maroons in the tribal lands or in Paramaribo.

In the myth of the peopling of Suriname, Amerindian peoples are not immigrants, or at least not the Arawaks. Having organized an annual ‘Amazonian Folklore Market’ in the Palmentuin in the centre of Paramaribo since 2002, the Organization of Indigenous Peoples in Suriname (*Organisatie van Inheemsen in Suriname, OIS*) petitioned the government in May 2006 to have 9 August (proclaimed International Day of the World’s Indigenous People by the General Assembly of the UN on 23 December 1994 for the duration of the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People) declared a national holiday as the National Day of Indigenous Peoples. According to OIS, the State had not recognized the unique role of Amerindians as the ‘first people’ of Suriname with a

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6 Surinamese national holidays by 2008: New Year’s Day (1 January), Good Friday (between 20 March and 23 April), Holi Phagwa (5 Basant, which works out to different dates in March), Easter Sunday and Easter Monday (both between 22 March and 26 April), Labour Day (1 May), Commemoration of East Indian Immigration (5 June), Keti Koti Dey (1 July), ‘Id al-Fitr / Bodo (1 Shawwal, which works out as different dates throughout the Gregorian calendar), Indigenous People Day (9 August), Independence Day (25 November), First Christmas Day and Second Christmas Day (25-26 December).

7 15th century Spanish portrayals of peaceful Arawaks versus bellicose Caribs are reflected in retellings of Surinamese history, where Arawak (autonym: Lokono) agricultralists preceded Carib (autonym: Kari’ña) immigrants.

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specific holiday, while other ethnic groups were allotted their own free days.⁸

The contested distinction between national holidays and popular ethnic celebrations (‘culturele feestdagen’ (cultural festivals) which always include the ‘immigration days’) also extends to religious festivals. Apanjaht logic also puts under question the apparent pro-Christian (and implicitly anti-Asian) bias of the Surinamese State, which claims to be liberal, non-ethnic and secular. Though the Pentecost and Ascension Day holidays were transferred to the Hindu festival of Holi Phagwa and Eid ul-Fitr (the only recognized Muslim holiday in Suriname), Good Friday, Easter and Christmas are still good for a total of four free days. The State resists recognizing Divali, the other widely popular Hindu festival in Suriname, as a national holiday. Lists of Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and other festivals regularly appear in Surinamese media, seemingly born out of resistance to perceived Christian / Creole domination, or as a consequence of apanjaht logic which requires all ethnic and religious groups to be equivalent.⁹

⁸ The government initially stated that a special holiday was out of the question (De Ware Tijd, 28 June 2006 ‘Geen nationale vrije dag voor Inheemsen’ (No national holiday for the Indigenous segment)). Amerindian politicians within the ruling coalition (Pertjajah Luhur) and the opposition (NDP) supported the OIS. Sylvia Kajoeramari of Pertjajah Luhur stated that the Amerindians of Suriname are ‘not descendents of immigrants like the other ethnic groups’ but are ‘nations with the right to autonomy on their own land’, who contribute to cultural variety in Suriname. Though not diasporic, Amerindian elites did manage to acquire a transnational base, by allying themselves with the powerful transnational environmentalist circuit. Amerindian issues were linked to programs for protection of biodiversity and issues of land rights (Suriname being the only country in the New World without indigenous land rights). Eventually, on 26 July 2006, the Council of Ministers declared 9 August the National Day of Indigenous People (Nationale Dag van de Inheemsen) (De Ware Tijd, 26 July 2006 ‘Inheemsen krijgen nationale vrije dag’ (Indigenous segment to get national holiday)).

⁹ There are various lists of Hindu religious celebrations appearing on websites on Suriname, promotional calendars issued by East Indian entrepreneurs, and in other media. The lists reflect imagined transnational Hindu identity rather than the reality of local religious practice, and include festivals traditionally celebrated in Suriname as well as festivals introduced in the context of a Hindu ‘revival’. Original festivals (public as well as confined to the East Indian group) include the ceremonies and celebrations around Holi Phagwa (Standard Hindi: होली hōlī) including Basant Panchami (Standard Hindi: पचमी basant pañcamī) and the Holika Dahan bonfire (Standard Hindi: होलिका दाहन holikā dāhan), Divāli (Standard Hindi: दीवाली divālī, दीपावली dipāvālī), Maha Shivāratri (Standard Hindi: महाshivārātri mahāśivrātrī), Novrātri (nine nights twice a year. Standard Hindi: नवरात्रि navrātrī), Raksha Bhandan (or Rakhi, Standard Hindi: राखशा बंधन rakṣabandhan). Some lists include festivals that
7.1.2 The First Public Celebration of Chineseness

According to Zijlmans and Enser, Double Tenth Day (10 October, commemorating the Wuchang Uprising in 1911 that led to the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China) has been celebrated by the huiguan since 1923. Held behind the walls of the huiguan exclusively for Chinese, it was the only community celebration among ethnic Chinese in Suriname until the 1980s, when the Moon Festival and Lunar New Year began to be celebrated communally and publicly. Other Chinese festivals (most of which have roots in folk religion), if they were celebrated at all, were kept out of the public view as much as possible.

Even so, one of the first ethnic celebrations in Suriname was the first Chinese parade in October 1953. The Fa Len Sa (‘Society for Chinese Unity’) organization planned a grand parade through Paramaribo on Double Tenth Day in association with the

are only observed by a devout minority: Ramnavni (birthday of Lord Rama. Standard Hindi: रामनवमि rāmanavami), Krishna Janmastmi (birthday of Lord Krishna. Standard Hindi: कृष्ण जन्माष्टमि kṛṣṇa janmaṣṭami), Hanuman Jayanti (birthday of Hanuman. Standard Hindi: हनुमन जयंती hanuman jayantī), Swami Dayanand (commemmorating Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj), Gita Jayanti (the creation of the Bhagavad Gita. Standard Hindi: गीता जयंती gītā jayantī), etc. More recently introduced and actively promoted rituals include Gangā Nahān (Sanskrit: गंगानान् gangāsān), the annual ablution in the Ganges, performed as a festival along the estuary of the Suriname River near Weg naar Zee (see http://www.ohmnet.nl/actueel.aspx?llntEntityId=543 ‘Ganganahan blijft populair in Suriname’ (Gangā Nahān remains popular in Suriname); http://www.ohmnet.nl/actueel.aspx?llntEntityId=380 Hindoefeestdagen krijgen nationaal karakter in Suriname (Hindu festivals acquiring national character in Suriname); http://www.ohmnet.nl/actueel .aspx?llntEntityId=544 Hindoes willen hindoeïsme in het openbaar kunnen beleven (Hindus want to be able to practice Hinduism in public)). The Novrāti in the second half of the Gregorian calendar culminate in a festival during which scenes from the Ramayana, in particular the rescue of Sita, are re-enacted. In Suriname the open-air performance of the Ramayana is known as the Ramlila, organized by a few Ramlila associations in the peri-urban areas despite difficulties in sustaining the tradition. The Ramlila never became a platform for apanjah identity politics in Suriname, but was transplanted to Rotterdam in 2006 as a 3-day spectacle celebrating East Indian culture in the Netherlands. (Dr. Elizabeth den Boer, Leiden Institute of Religious Studies, Leiden University; personal communication.)

10 Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 145.
11 Zijlmans & Enser quote a list of eight ‘old style’ and four ‘new style’ Chinese festivals in the Almanak voor Suriname of 1917, which were “not all publicly or widely celebrated” (Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 145).
Lie Tsie Sa organization and the Young China basketball group, with the support of the two huiguan Kong Ngie Tong Sang and Chung Fa Foei Kon. The celebration was to be in 'mixed Western and Oriental fashion', centred on a parade with a dragon with performances in the morning and the afternoon. This first Dragon Dance (Kejia: mu liung; PTH: wu long) ever in Suriname was choreographed by a Taiwanese specialist provided by the huiguan. The dancers were locals, and many of them were not ethnic Chinese. The parade consisted of flag bearers, Chinese music, the lion dancers of Lie Tsie Sa, followed by the Fa Len Sa ‘golden dragon’, a pagoda and decorated floats, women in cheongsams, a marching band (only in the afternoon), and the Young China sports group. The programme of the 1953 celebration set the pattern of discrete elements explicitly aimed at the elite (the Surinamese authorities and the Chinese elite) and the general public. In the morning delegates from the Chinese organizations visited the governor, and in the afternoon the group would pay their respects to various important Chinese individuals. Though Fa Len Sa had stated that the celebration was for the benefit of ethnic Chinese in Suriname, non-Chinese were invited to the ‘fancy fair’ / ‘grand ball’ in Fa Tjauw Song Foei / the Surinamese Branch of the Kuomintang in the evening. The dragon was extensively photographed, but the event went basically underreported.

Except for the fact that they were ethnic Chinese youth organizations, little else is known about Fa Len Sa (‘Society for Chinese Unity; the group claimed to ‘advocate Chinese unity’) and Lie Tsie Sa (or Lie Tse Sa). It is impossible to know with absolute certainty what precise reasons Fa Len Sa had for organizing a public spectacle of emblematic Chinese culture. The celebration was more about Laiap identity politics than recognition as a player in anpanjhaht consociationalism. With chain migration from the Fuidung’ on Hakka qiaoxiang impeded for almost fifteen years and almost completely blocked following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, Chinese youth organizations in Suriname in 1953 were by definition Laiap. The point of the exercise was to challenge anti-
Chinese sentiments which had peaked in Suriname during the *piauw* scandals twenty-five years earlier, and to present an image of Chinese that transcended the sojourner shopkeeper stereotype; Fa Len Sa hoped that there would be “...room for cultural expression in Suriname.”\(^{15}\) Clearly aware that public shows of Chinese folklore were new to Suriname, Fa Len Sa presented itself as an authority on Chinese culture and folklore. There is nothing more emblematically and stereotypically Chinese than a Chinese dragon, yet Fa Len Sa shrouded the symbol in mystery rather than choosing to make it accessible. The dragon was to be consecrated on 3 October, the day of the inauguration of the new Fa Len Sa club-house. In China priests would perform such a consecration in a temple, but in Suriname with neither priests nor temples, the details of the consecration would be secret. This claim to arcane knowledge could be construed as a challenge to the Tong’ap, who in any case preferred to stay in the background.

The most important question is why that particular Double Tenth Day should have been celebrated in the public eye. The 42\(^{nd}\) anniversary of the Republic of China on Double Tenth Day 1953 could hardly be considered a major event in itself; in neither Chinese nor Surinamese tradition is 42 a significant number. 1953 was the last year of the Korean War, a civil war which developed into a

\(^{15}\) De West 17 September 1953 *'Chinezen en de draak'* (Chinese and the dragon).
Cold War-era proxy war between the USA and its allies and the PRC and the Soviet Union. Suriname had participated under the flag of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with 115 volunteers in the United Nations force. In Suriname the split between a ‘good China’ and a ‘bad China’ implied by the war meant that activities of Chinese migrants and organizations were scrutinized for any trace of communist activity, and in the Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s, any challenge to colonial authority could be labelled communist. A public celebration of Double Tenth Day in that period did have strategic benefits; Chinese could present themselves as linked to the ‘good China’, and gain sympathy through a spectacular display of folklore.

This first public performance of Chinese ethnicity in Suriname was indeed very likely a political statement aimed at the government and the non-Chinese Surinamese public, and possibly mirrored similar initiatives among Overseas Chinese elsewhere. On 15 February of the same year, the first modern Chinese New Year’s parade was held in San Fransisco. According to Ye, this parade was unmistakably the response of ethnic Chinese leaders to anti-Chinese sentiments linked to the Cold War following the establishment of the PRC in 1949 and the end of the Korean War in 1953. The structure of the parade (non-Chinese participants were included) signalled the local Chinese view of US multiculturalism, linking democracy and freedom to cultural diversity in the US, and claiming that ethnic Chinese were Americans, not Communist outsiders.

If it was indeed a coincidence that in October 1953 it would also be 100 years since the first Chinese indentured labourers arrived in Suriname in October 1853, it was an incredibly huge one. The narrative defining Asian ethnic groups in Suriname as immigrants linked to an ancestral group of indentured labourers was already established by the 1950s, so it is reasonable to assume that Fa Len Sa knew about October 1853. It seems reasonable to view the 1953 Double Tenth Day celebration as a hidden celebration of the centenary of the arrival of the first Chinese indentured labourers in Suriname. However, after more than fifty years the precise motivations and agendas of the organizers of the 1953 Double Tenth Day celebration will probably remain a mystery; what merit


17 The indentured labourers arrived in Suriname on the HMS Merwede on 18 October 1853 (Surinaamsche Courant en Gouvernements Advertentieblad (Surinamese News-paper and Government Gazette), 20 October 1853, no. 126). The anniversary of their arrival is set on 20 October, which is explained as the official disembarkation of the fourteen labourers.
did ‘Chinese Immigration Day’ have in their eyes, and why did they feel that the celebration needed to be masked, if indeed it was? It might simply have been the case that with two important dates to choose from (an established and accepted annually recurring event and a one-off celebration of ethnic origins), the festival of the Republic of China was a more strategic choice in the short and long term with regard to Chinese image building. Nothing survives of any concerted ethnic Chinese presence in the 1955 election campaigns, and in any case no Chinese ethnic group was evident in the resulting coalitions.18

7.1.3 Chinese Immigration Day 1993

The next occasion to be used by ethnic Chinese elites for public Chinese identity politics was in October 1993; the 140th anniversary in 1993 of the arrival of the first Chinese indentured labourers preceded the legislative elections of 1996. Though 140 years was strictly speaking not a grand anniversary according to Surinamese conventions (it was not a bigi-yari; Sranantongo: ‘big year’, i.e. a birthday or anniversary as a plural of ten years, but increasing to plurals of 50 years in larger numbers), there was a public celebration. However, the decade following the period of military rule (1980-1987) was rife with opportunities for political power-sharing, and other apanjaht groups had already indicated their presence with public statements. Between 1953 and 1993 the three largest ethnic groups had celebrated all their Centenaries; in 1963 the abolition of slavery was 100 years old, in 1970 it had been 100 years since the arrival of the first East Indian indentured labourers, and 1990 saw the Centenary of Javanese Immigration. Minor anniversaries are usually celebrated, if at all, by various ethnic NGOs well below national level. Openly, the reason for celebrating 140 years of Chinese in Suriname - a minor anniversary - was a celebration of the apanjaht narrative of stable multiculturalism from a Surinamese Chinese point of view. The celebration was organized around a number of events, such as a photo exhibition in Chung Fa Foei Kon about Surinamese Chinese history and daily life, and huiguan

18 Individuals of Fuidung’on Hakka descent did figure in government. The most prominent was Frederick H.R. Lim A Po, Md., mixed Creole and Fuidung’on Hakka and able to speak Kejia, who was chairman of the Colonial parliament from 1945-1947, before general suffrage (see Paragraph 9.1). None of the Ministers in the 1955 cabinet were ‘Chinese’, even in the minimal sense of carrying a Sino-Surinamese surname.
events such as a reception for State authorities. The 1993 celebration was organized by the Comité Herdenking Chinese Immigration 1853-1993 (Committee for the Commemoration of Chinese Immigration 1853-1993), which was led by a group of Laiap entrepreneurs and intelligentsia. Though the focus of the commemoration was outward rather than aimed at some perceived Chinese community, none of the events were spectacular or broadly inclusive.

At first glance 20 October 1993 was about Chinese identity politics in Suriname - raising ethnic pride through public displays of Chinese culture, challenging the image of the Chinese of Suriname as sojourners rather than full citizens, and defining who is Chinese in Suriname and why. However, as the idea for the celebration arose shortly after the second return to democracy in 1991, the organizers very likely concealed an agenda of politics of recognition in view of the 1996 elections. Ethnic Chinese did not hold official posts in the previous administration. The first free elections after the end of military rule in 1987 resulted in what was essentially an apanjaht coalition: the Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling (Front for Democracy and Development) consisting of the Creole NPS, the East Indian VHP, and the Javanese KTPI. Ramsewak Shankar of the VHP became president, while the post of Vice-President was filled by Henck Arron of the NPS. Unhappy about Surinamese-Dutch rapprochement through the apanjaht coalition, the military staged a coup three years into the Shankar administration. Following foreign pressure, particularly from the Netherlands, the military-backed government of Johannes Kraag consented to holding free elections the next year. The Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling entered the elections on 1991 as the Nieuw Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling (New Front for Democracy and Development, NF).

The new elections provided an opportunity for representatives of smaller social groups, such as the Chinese, and it publicly hinted at the importance of their vote and encouraged them to

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19 The photo exhibition compiled by the artist Paul Woei replaced an earlier plan for an exhibition of Chinese heritage in the Surinaams Museum.
20 The first 14 Chinese indentured labourers arrived in Suriname on the transport ship Merwede on 18 October 1853. All save one who was sick in hospital were transferred to the sugar plantation Catharina Sophia on 20 October 1853. (Surinaamsche Courant en Gouvernements Advertentieblad (Surinamese newspaper and government bulletin) no. 126, 20 October 1853).
21 The 'Telephone Coup' of 24 December 1990, so called because the military telephoned government officials to inform them that they were ousted. The government duly complied.
lobby for inclusion in the coming round of apanjaht consociationism behind the scenes. Political participation for Chinese in Suriname was traditionally less about acquiring a share of political power and more about protecting Chinese interests against East Indian influence. The NPS had presented itself to the Chinese elite as the vehicle for Chinese participation within the consociational system via its Chinese section. In 1993, the fact that President Venetiaan was said to have promised ‘the Chinese’ to declare 20 October of that year a once-only holiday showed that the Comité Herdenking Chinese Immigratie 1853-1993 and its supporters had been lobbying the highest echelons of the NPS. At least publicly, this lobby was not unanimously supported by all prominent Laiap in Suriname.22 The NF eventually won the 1996 elections, and Ronald Venetiaan became president. Once again, no one who could be called ethnic Chinese held a government post.

7.1.4 The Organizers: Fa Foe Foei

The 1993 commemoration had been organized by a small group headed by mainly Laiap entrepreneurs. In 1995 this group set up Fa Foe Foei, ‘the Chinese Mutual Assistance Association’; its formal goal was to promote the interests of Chinese in Suriname and the integration of ‘Surinamese of Chinese origin’ and ‘naturalized Surinamese-Chinese’ – basically Laiap and Tong’ap. The Fa Foe Foei group consisted of 15 members, mostly prominent Laiap with some Tong’ap representatives of the main huiguan. Fa Foe Foei was presented as a collaboration of four huiguan (Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjauw Song Foei and Chung Tjauw Fu Li Foei). As the huiguan were treated as representatives of the Chinese segment by the Surinamese government, the implication was that Fa Foe Foei could be considered a single representation of unified Chinese interests in Suriname. It was, however, never a grassroots organization, nor did it directly communicate with any

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22 During the meeting in the East Indian Mata Gauri community centre on 2 June 1993 about the future of Keti Koti Dey as ‘Dag der Vrijheden’ (Day of Freedoms), Max Man A Hing stated that he did not support Venetiaan’s promise to the Chinese to declare 20 October 1993 a free day. Despite his reputation as a gatekeeper, it is unlikely that he was speaking for all Chinese in Suriname or even the Laiap intellectuals. It is unclear if the plural ‘freedoms’ in the Dutch name refers to different aspects of freedom or to the emancipation of different ethnic groups, i.e. a conflation of all possible ethnic ‘birthdays’. Lila Gobardhan-Rambocus, ‘Dag der Vrijheden’ (Day of Freedoms). Paramaribo Post, 19 June 2003.
Chinese constituency. The huiguan would consistently refer to it as simply another Chinese organization, but seemed to appreciate that Fa Foe Foei could be useful in diverting attention away from them should Chinese interests prove too controversial. Fa Foe Foei was also called a think tank (*denkgroep*), and as such it conducted ‘hearings’ with various apanjaht parties such as the Creole NPS and the Javanese Pendawa Lima and anti-apanjaht parties such as DA’91 and SPA. These meetings were to officially inform ethnic Chinese voters about party programmes and to advise the ethnic Chinese electorate, while informing the political parties of specific problems of the Chinese. This is a euphemism for dangling the carrot of the ethnic vote that was inflated to 10,000 out of a Chinese segment that was supposedly 50,000 or even 70,000 persons strong. The willingness of the parties to assist in setting up a Chinese television station was apparently also gauged.

Fa Foe Foei articulated Chinese interests mainly with regard to citizenship. Naturalization and legal residence were a constant headache for Tong’ap, but the influx of New Chinese migrants since the first half of the 1990s increased the scope of the problem of legal residency for Chinese immigrants. The government failed to cope with the situation amid growing anti-Chinese sentiments, and (established) Fuidung’on Hakkas generally avoided taking up the issue of residency for non-Fuidung’on Hakka migrants. There was an idea that any group (influential individuals fluent in different varieties of Chinese as well as Dutch being exceedingly rare at that time) able to bridge the gap between Chinese migrants and the Surinamese State would have access to a relatively wealthy constituency. Chinese immigrants who acquired Surinamese nationality would also become voters, and such new voters might be happy to oblige the wishes of those who had helped them. In any case a group helping Chinese immigrants to acquire the Surinamese nationality would be greatly empowered in the eyes of the political establishment simply by the impression that it could command new votes.

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23 Zijlmans & Enser (2002: 200) quote the number of 70,000 ‘Chinese and Surinamese Chinese’ people in Suriname on the basis of information spread from Fa Foe Foei and individuals with similar agendas. The number of 10,000 Chinese voters was quoted in KOMPAS of 17 April 1996 (*De Chinese Taalbarrière*, The Chinese language barrier): “The Chinese community in Suriname is said to be good for 2 seats in parliament. But more than half of the more than 10,000 voters speak no Dutch. This might be a big problem in the upcoming elections. There are initiatives in the Chinese community to inform the people of developments in the country. However, language will remain an obstacle to further integration in the foreseeable future.”
Fa Foe Foei was only partly successful with regard to citizenship for Chinese immigrants. Protests against unfair treatment of Chinese applicants for naturalization and residency permits had no resonance among a public increasingly unsympathetic to migrants in general and Chinese migrants in particular. Fa Foe Foei also had a hard time convincing the constituency it claimed (all the Chinese of Suriname) of its effectiveness. It was neither a huiguan nor a grassroots organization and could not be seen to provide immediate assistance with the concrete day-to-day problems of New Chinese Migrants, and so Fa Foe Foei’s public goal of promoting the integration of local-born and immigrant Chinese remained elusive.

Despite having won the 1996 elections again, the NF coalition did not come to power as a result of problems with two coalition members in the post-election power-sharing process. Fragmentation of the VHP delayed the formation of a government and when the VHP splinter BVD and the Javanese KTPI defected to the NDP of ex-military strongman Desi Bouterse, the opposition parties managed to form the Millennium Combinatie coalition and establish the government of the 1996-2000 Wijdenbosch Administration. The huiguan establishment had been careful to hedge their bets, making sure that they favoured no party above any other in public. One Fa Foe Foei member, the prominent Tong’ap businessman and member of the huiguan establishment Ling Nget Tet, stood candidate for the NDP in the National Assembly, albeit unsuccessfully. Acquiring a share of political power had not been a publicly declared goal of Fa Foe Foei, and none of its members held government posts in the Wijdenbosch Administration. The inflated size of the Chinese segment apparently made little impression on the winning parties, though the upper echelons of the NDP showed keen interest in increasing Chinese globalization. The new government was soon confronted with popular protests as a result of the deteriorating economic situation.

When the Wijdenbosch Administration was forced to call early elections in 2000, Fa Foe Foei remained quiet, which gave the impression that it was distancing itself from the Wijdenbosch Administration and the NDP (whose leader, ex-military strongman Bouterse, had fallen out with President Wijdenbosch). It had become clear that neither the NF coalition nor the NDP had provided ethnic Chinese with a direct share of political power. For the 2000 elections, the ethnic Chinese elite turned to the ethnic Javanese parties, which had always successfully capitalized on their ability to preserve the delicate balance between the Creole and East Indian
components in the apanjaht coalitions. The NF coalition won the elections, and the Fa Foe Foei strategy proved successful. Behind the scenes negotiations with the latest Javanese apanjaht party on the NF side resulted in an ethnic Chinese filling the crucial post of Minister of Trade and Industry.  

7.1.5 Chinese Immigration Day 2003 as the Commemoration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement

The next opportunity for a Chinese celebration linked to legislative elections was the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Chinese indentured labourers on 20 October 2003 (the elections being held on 25 May 2005). The purpose of the celebration was once again about gaining recognition within the context of apanjaht politics and mobilizing the ethnic Chinese constituency. Fa Foe Foei formed the centre of a Commemoration Committee, which included Tong’ap as well as Laiap elite. Although the symbolic capital of those who were born in China is greater than that of the Laiap, Laiap have a greater social, political and financial capital. But in order to show their loyalty to the Surinamese state, they have to take the anti-Chinese discourse into account and present themselves as ‘Surinamese-Chinese’. In presenting Chinese as legitimate citizens rather than immigrants, the Laiap intellectuals reproduced popular anti-immigrant attitudes, and portrayed mixed Chinese as proof that Chinese indentured labourers and the later Fuidung’on immigrants gladly and successfully integrated into Surinamese society. The Tong’ap agenda was not only obscured by Laiap dominance, but also because their identity politics are limited to a kind of damage control. Certain important calendrical events (Surinamese Independence Day on 25 November, Chinese Lunar New Year, etc.) are used to emphasize that Chinese in Suriname are harmless, loyal Surinamese residents and citizens.

The committee approached the Celebration as though it were a public relations project. On the one hand there would be the usual overtures to the ruling establishment in the form of re-

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24 See Chapter 9. In 2000 Jacques Tjong Tjin Joe, (1931-2002) was appointed Minister of Trade and Industry. Originally a surgeon, Tjong Tjin Joe had been Minister of Health from 1980-1981 in the first period of Military Rule. Though its existence was very likely an asset in the negotiations, actual support from the ‘Chinese community’ was never a real issue. The Chinese constituency was expected to vote NF anyway, and a Chinese cabinet minister was virtually guaranteed via Pertjajah Luhur.
ceptions and speeches, on the other hand there would be entertain ment aimed at a more general public of ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese Surinamese. Anticipating the 2005 elections, Chinese would be targeted with appeals to ethnic pride and ethnic loyalty. In response to the negative influence of the anti-Chinese discourse Chinese identity would be constructed to match the diasporic modality of Surinamese multicultural discourse; the Celebration would eventually be called the Commemoration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement rather than Chinese Immigration Day 2003. In short, the 2003 Celebration would be about politics of recognition, and not primarily for the production of bridging social capital, though there would be attention for bonding within the Chinese group through the production of symbolic capital.

### 7.1.6 The Commemoration in the Multicultural Context

There were other pressures to organize an event around 20 October. The commemoration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement in October 2003 was one of many public events during which segmental identities were presented that year. In May it was 130 years since the first East Indian indentured labourers arrived in Suriname, there was the 140th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in July, and then in October it was 150 years since a group of 18 Chinese men from Java arrived in Suriname to work on the state-owned sugar estate of Catharina Sophia. July 1st is a national holiday that is traditionally seen as a Creole day, but in 2003, the East Indian and Chinese days were also holidays. Ethnic celebrations persist in Suriname as platforms for politics of identity and recognition, but also emerge through the performative nature of ethnicity in Surina-

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25 Dutch: *Herdenking 150 jaar Chinese vestiging*. Written Chinese: 華人定居蘇理南 150週年. Ang (1993) criticizes this way of using ‘Chinese diaspora’ to describe the process of Chinese migration. According to her, the ‘Chinese diaspora’ is not natural, but an imagined community. Its transnationalism is national in its outlook, because it is defined by the category of ‘Chinese’ and the way that category develops.

26 The words used by the various organizers to describe their events were interesting. The East Indian day was ‘130 years of East Indian immigration’, 1 July was ‘140 years of slavery history’, and the Chinese day was ‘150 years of Chinese immigration’. Of these, only the Chinese day was more or less accurately described. The Lala Rookh did sail into Suriname 130 years earlier with the first East Indian indentured labourers, but there has been no 130 years of sustained immigration from India. The description of July 1st was also slightly off: it was 140 years since the abolition of slavery – slavery had existed in Suriname a good deal longer.
mese multiculturalist discourse. Though they are presented as celebrations of authentic and living culture, their main role is in defining boundaries and ethnic belonging.

As usual, the 2003 ethnic celebrations were used by apanjaht political elite and special interest groups as platforms for politics of recognition and identity. Public opinion was divided over the need to celebrate and recognize such commemorative days as public holidays. The same naïve monarchic patriotism that focussed on Chinese immigration in the anti-Chinese discourse surfaced in popular resistance to the ethnic celebrations of 2003. In Surinamese patriotic discourse ethnic celebrations are wrong, potential attacks on the unity of the Surinamese State, all in the service of political elites who strive to broaden their powerbase through mystification of ethnic roots. It is impossible to gauge the size of the naïve monarchic resistance in 2003 relative to the supporters of ethnic celebrations and the likely majority of people who refused to choose either extreme.

The 2003 East Indian celebration was characterized by the use of space. The main East Indian monument in Paramaribo turned out to be the statues of ‘Baab and Mai’, a naturalistic depiction of an Indian couple disembarking. The setting for this monument was transformed into a stage, with a wooden cut-out of the silhouette of the Lala Rookh (the ship that brought the first East Indian indentures labourers) placed behind the statues along with platforms and pavilions placed in front of them. Traditional garland-hanging ceremonies became performances and the (Creole) President, prominent Surinamese and foreign guests (participants of the World Hindi Conference that was timed to coincide with the celebration) were filmed and photographed honouring Baab and Mai with garlands.27 There were some attempts to place the World Hindi Conference in a Surinamese context; one prominent East Indian (not a linguist) claimed – despite the lack of linguistic data – that 38% of the Surinamese population speaks Hindi daily. This is not accurate as not everybody who may be identified as East Indian can speak Standard Hindi or even for that matter Sarnámí (the local Bhojpuri-based koine which is considered the East Indian

27 The performance was not limited to Baab and Mai. The ‘Creole’ statue of Kwakoe, the personification of the abolition of slavery, was honoured, but the older statue of Mahatma Gandhi was not, because it was being restored, and Mahatma Gandhi had put an end to Indian indentured labour. Moreover, the small square where the statue stands had been renamed ‘Kodjo, Mentor and Present Square’, after three slaves who were said to have been burned at the stake there as a punishment for setting the great fire of Paramaribo in the 18th century.
ethnic language). There were two transnational elements present in the ceremonies; one was partly orchestrated by the Indian embassy, consisting mainly of Indian performing arts, the other was the presentation of a book about East Indians in the Netherlands. There were of course popular celebrations, in particular a historical and folkloristic pageant through Paramaribo.

The Creole celebration was characterized by the use of symbolic objects. Traditionally, special angisa (head scarves) are designed for special celebrations, and the designs of these angisa may be read as a text. Three different angisa series were available, with nationalistic ‘texts’ tinged with nostalgic references to nineteenth century Suriname. There was a clear Dutch transnational presence, not only through substantial numbers of Dutch Creoles who had come for the celebration, but also because of two cultural products of Dutch Creole identity politics, which were centred on reinterpretation of slavery in Dutch history. One was a three-part educational TV film for use in the Netherlands about African slavery in the Dutch West Indies, which was presented as a very important feature film that would help educate Surinamese about slavery. The other event was presented as a du (a type of late nineteenth century Creole folk theatre), but which turned out to be a poor reworking of a similar project five years earlier by a Dutch Creole team. The Surinamese President was invited to both premieres. There was also a badly publicized conference about slavery. The main event, however, was the traditional annual popular festival in the centre of Paramaribo.

In August 2003 Suriname hosted Carifesta, the most important Caribbean cultural festival. Identity is a major preoccupation in

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28 The angisa were produced, marketed and sold by Palestinian and Lebanese textile stores: Jerusalem Bazaar had a series of four multicoloured designs (their own design printed in Shanghai) with the coat and arms and flag of Suriname; Aboud carried a angisa by their own designer, a simple screenprint on white cotton; Ready Tex had commissioned a angisa by the artist Rinaldo Klas, also a simple screenprint on white cotton featuring the heliconia flowers of the Surinamese coins instead of (the religious image of) palm fronds. There was one state-sponsored angisa, issued by the Directorate of Culture of the Ministry of Education. This too was a simple screenprint on white cotton, but its message was the Multiculturalism Myth; the Creole, East Indian and Chinese ‘birthdays’ were given equal space in the design.

29 I attended both the original production of Na Gowtu Du in July 1998 and the reworked version of 2003. In both performances, Creoles were depicted as slaves – not as descendents of slaves but as actual slaves, without a clear explanation of such a statement. Whites were presented as the bad guys – not only the European slave-owners in Suriname, but all Whites.
One major problem was how to present Surinamese culture. Multiculturalism was never the issue, the presentation of the various stereotypical ethnic groups was. The link between Suriname as a place and the various ethnic groups got lost in the production of folders and other material: one folder contained pictures of Canadian Indians, a temple dancer from Southern India, South Africans and a Balinese dancer to represent Surinamese ethnic groups. On TV, a spokesman from the Ministry of Education said that “in order to show what we have here” there would be performances of cultural groups from Ghana, India, Indonesia and China. Surinamese groups such as the Lebanese who had never really had to show off their folklore were suddenly required to produce ethnic costumes and performances of song and dance. Though the African and Asian groups never showed up in Carifesta, and there were no local Chinese performances, Chinese in Suriname were under increasing pressure to come up with something special for 20 October. As one middle-aged Kejia-speaking Laiap man told me:

The nearer that day gets, the more ashamed I get. People keep asking me what the Chinese are going to do. They have no dances, no songs, they have nothing, what do they actually think they will be doing? At least the East Indian and Creole have things they can show, but what do the Chinese have, really?

7.2 The Production of the Commemoration

In the 2003, celebrations in Suriname, emblematic folklore and cultural practices, were naturalized as typical expressions of East Indian and Creole ethnic identities. Chinese culture is similarly supposed to derive from Chinese identity, but items of (emblematic) Chinese culture / folklore are limited, so there are few objects that can be used as in the Creole celebrations; there are no temples, no authentic ethnic costumes, no films. Lacking a single self-perception, there are no monuments to mark the landscape for non-Chinese in a way that is acceptable to all Chinese. The Chinese have no inclusive festivals, except maybe the Lunar New Year, but that is mainly because the huiguan establishment uses that occa-

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30 “We have been digging for our roots so long we have reached China by now”, Surinamese playwright Sharda Ganga said during the festival.
sion for its own diplomacy and networking with individuals in Surinamese society.

The organizers of the Chinese Commemoration involved a small number of Laiap intellectuals and artists to develop the Chinese narrative for the event, basically providing content for the politics of identity and recognition. In articles and interviews produced for the Dutch-language media, they elaborated on the Laiap view of diasporic and essential Surinamese Chinese identity and listed the cultural, economic and social contributions of the ethnic Chinese segment.

However, the Committee lost control of the narrative of Chinese contribution to Surinamese society as 20 October approached. The Laiap intellectuals had developed their brand of Hakka nationalism as a reaction to the Surinamese anti-Chinese discourse and absolutist Chinese discourses of racial identity. During the Commemoration, their take on the anti-Chinese discourse closely resembled the mulatto anti-Black views. The most offensive statements were predicated on the idea that Chinese immigrants had brought culture to an uncivilized Suriname: not only were emblematic Creole cultural items (songbird competitions, kites, etc.) introduced by Chinese, but Chinese had also taught black people family life and provided basic livelihood strategies (the Creole kasmoni ROSCA, credit provided by shopkeepers, etc.).

7.2.1 Positionality and Multiple Discourses

Bauman speaks of people having double discursive competence, by which he means that people are able to think of their ethnic identity as essential while (unconsciously) negotiating it in everyday reality. The meetings of the Commemoration Committee provided clear examples of multiple discursive competence; people were able to pose Chineseness as primordial, essentialist, and uniform, while redefining it in the local context ('Surinamese Chinese' were the real ethnic Chinese) and presenting simultaneous and at times con-

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31 E.g. De Ware Tijd 20 October 2003, 'Tolerantie van elkaars cultuur is grote kracht van Suriname' (Tolerance of each other's culture is Suriname's great forte). In this article the artist Paul Woei (pseudonym of Paul Woei A Tsoi) waxes lyrically of Chinese contributions to Surinamese society. Not only does he list songbird culture and ROSCAs, but he also explicitly claims that it was the Chinese who brought family life to Suriname (suggesting that it did not exist before the arrival of the first Chinese indentured labourers in 1853).

32 Bauman 1999.
tradictory interpretations of the meanings to various audiences (typically variegated Surinamese audiences in fact being ‘audiences within audiences’). Laiap in particular proved multiple discursive competence, as they not only switched between Chinese positions, but also moved between multiculturalist, patriotic and anti-Chinese discourses. Situational identities emerged surprisingly easy during the meetings which I attended, although sometimes smooth communication was hampered by language problems.

In July 2002 I was invited by a prominent Kejia-speaking Laiap to a meeting in Kong Ngie Tong Sang, the oldest huiguan, to see if, as a sinologist, I could contribute anything. There were no minutes of the previous meeting, no clear agenda, and no obvious chairperson. About twenty people sat around a long table, the majority of whom were Tong’ap, all shopkeepers and all at one end of the table. Less than half were Laiap, including the only woman present, all of whom were prominent businesspeople. All were introduced as representatives of the various huiguan. Sitting between the two groups was I, the only moksi sneisi. There were no non-Hakkas / New Chinese. Again, language reflected ethnic variation. Laiap tended to code-switch to Sranantongo, with Laiap Kejia as the matrix language. Tong’ap spoke Dongguan Kejia, with hardly any need to supplement their vocabulary with Sranantongo. My presence was acknowledged through the use of Sranantongo and Mandarin. But as things developed, communication started breaking down. The Laiap started speaking Dutch among themselves, and Cantonese was being used among the Tong’ap. A Tong’ap who is married to a Laiap and who speaks Kejia, Cantonese, English and Dutch, was asked to translate more complex views expressed from the Laiap side of the table.

The Laiap appeared very paternalistic. One explained to me:

Yes, it’s chaotic, but that’s how those Chinese are. You must give each one the opportunity to have his say, else they won’t come back. You know what they’re like.

The Laiap clearly thought that the Tong’ap did not give enough attention to integration, and I actually got the impression that the Laiap felt integration made them legitimate and superior. The Tong’ap appeared to be tolerating the Laiap, listening politely but rather cynically. My impression was that they did not completely trust the Laiap at the table, suspecting hidden agendas. The Laiap overestimated the goals and level of organization of the huiguan: they assumed that huiguan represented all Tong’ap (“They need to
take it up with the rank and file, they have no mandate to make
decisions here.”) and that their organizations were associations in
the Western sense (“Of course, their membership files aren’t organ-
tized too well, you know.”). They saw their own organization as a
way to guide and develop badly organized and rudderless huiguan.

Finally the issue of 20 October was raised. The Laiap
explained the importance of 20 October as a form of honouring the
ancestors of the Chinese of Suriname. They did say that if it were
not for those first Chinese, there would be no Chinese in Suriname
today, but stopped short of saying that they were the ancestors of
all Hakkas in Suriname. But not only were the indentured labourers
the first Chinese in Suriname, they were also the first indentured
labourers as well as the first Asians in Suriname. Anybody who
feels linked to those first Chinese is welcome to join in, and as
many Surinamese have Chinese blood, this would show how well
the Chinese belong in Suriname. The Laiap speakers consistently
called it “herdenking 150 jaar Chinese immigratie” (“the comem-
moration of 150 years of Chinese immigration”), and stressed that
Surinamese were expecting a celebration of this bigi-yari.

Then one Tong’ap raised what was apparently an old ob-
jection: why 20 October instead of Chinese Lunar New Year? Lunar
New Year is embedded in Chinese culture and is being celebrated
more and more among Chinese in Suriname, and more and more
Surinamese are becoming familiar with it. It is also transnational, as
any Chinese anywhere in the world would be celebrating at the
same moment. 20 October had been celebrated just twice before, fifty and then ten years ago. The Laiap responded that 20 October
was inclusive, but that the Lunar New Year could be ‘too Chinese’
to be understood by everybody. The Tong’ap wondered how that
could be a problem; the issue was a ‘Chinese day’ in the Surina-
mesian calendar, and if mixed Chinese could not identify with the
Lunar New Year, then that was only natural. Both sides agreed that
Chinese in Suriname should also get a ‘national day’ just like other
Surinamese ethnic groups, but was this a celebration of the Chi-
nese cultural presence or a final recognition of Chinese assimilation?

With some difficulty, everyone settled down to discuss the
actual celebration. To the Laiap, the most important aspect of the
celebration would have to be the unveiling of a monument, which
was envisaged as a Chinese and Dutch bilingual plaque in a small
park, to be set up on a piece of land that had been promised by a
previous government ten years earlier. The Tong’ap did not agree.
They might have not understood the need to invest in Chinese
markers in the Surinamese landscape for future inter-ethnic nego-
tiations, or perhaps it is a reflex to avoid any symbol of permanent settlement? One objection the Tong’ap raised was that rather than something with only symbolic value, they would have preferred something that was of use to Chinese. The Kong Ngie Tong Sang huiguan is the only building in Paramaribo other than a restaurant in (an approximation of) traditional Chinese style, with an entrance in the shape of a pailou commemorative arch. Yet none of the participants considered the Kong Ngie Tong Sang building neutral enough to be used in the presentations aimed at the Surinamese public, even though they found it neutral enough for a meeting of different Chinese factions. Nobody seemed to consider that outsiders already use Kong Ngie Tong Sang as a symbol of Chinese-ness in Suriname: its picture is included with those of churches, mosques and Hindu temples to illustrate cultural variety.

To the huiguan establishment among the Tong’ap, the most important aspect of the celebration had to be a reception. Ten years earlier (the 140th anniversary) the reception had been open to the public, but this time things would be more organized, so only prominent Surinamese politicians and members of the business community as well as the Chinese embassy would be invited to the reception in a hotel in downtown Paramaribo. These events would be accompanied by speeches from prominent Surinamese, huiguan establishment and the Chinese embassy, and the only conceivable Chinese folklore: Lion Dances (or rather ‘Unicorn Dances’ mu kilin in Kejia) and fireworks. This was diplomacy, clear and simple – the only thing that made sense to them.

They complained that the ‘Surinamese community’ did not understand ‘the Chinese’, but were unwilling to present anything other than the clichés of Chinese emblematic folklore. The Laiap proposed importing a dragon from Hong Kong. Fifty years earlier there had been a dragon dance (Kejia: mu liung), but that dragon had been constructed locally, and most of the dancers were non-Chinese, though the choreographer had been Taiwanese. This time there was no question of a locally made dragon; it had to be a ‘real’ dragon. It was also an investment, as it could be used to present ‘Chinese culture’ in future events. I suggested inviting performers of Cantonese opera – popular among the established Fuidung’on Hakkas through Karaoke DVDs – to Suriname to perform for Chinese and selected non-Chinese audiences. This would ensure controlled propagation of Laiap views and unique presentations of authentic culture. The Laiap objected, because Cantonese opera was ‘too Chinese’.
The meeting ended without reaching any firm agreements or making any clear decisions. I wondered about the absence of a New Chinese view, and so I asked some of the Laiap how they thought they could get away with celebrating 150 years of Chinese immigration without involving the New Chinese. After all, they were the ones who the Surinamese public recognized as Chinese immigrants, since immigration from the Hakka qiaoxiang had stopped. It turned out that New Chinese were elusive; there were no New Chinese huiguan, and then there was the language barrier (Laiap spoke no Mandarin, New Chinese were assumed not to speak Sranantongo). But New Chinese had also been explicitly avoided because nobody wanted to communicate with zetgongzai, people who were being associated with crime and illegal immigration.

Observing the interactions, it became clear to me that Laiap positions depended on whether Laiap, Tong'ap or non-Chinese were being addressed. To a Tong'ap audience Laiap considered anyone with a Chinese ancestor a Chinese; Chinese in Suriname are unified; the huiguan, the PRC embassy and the Surinamese State are linked; though celebrating ‘150 years of Chinese Settlement’ is unavoidable in multicultural Suriname in a year when other groups have similar anniversaries, the concrete goal of the celebrations is diplomacy, not identity politics. Laiap portray themselves as the ‘real Surinamese-Chinese’ to non-Chinese audiences; they stress that the China-born – Tong’ap and New Chinese – are foreigners; to them the nineteenth century Chinese indentured labourers are the ancestors of the Surinamese-Chinese. This was a refined version of the position taken towards a Laiap audience: Laiap are legitimate ‘Surinamese-Chinese’; Tong’ap are ‘too Chinese’; New Chinese are foreigners. Tong’ap positions were equally situational, though their expression was limited during the Committee meetings. Tong’ap restricted Chineseness when addressing other Tong’ap: Chinese cannot get along; mixed Chinese are not real Chinese, and New Chinese are laoteu – outsiders; the PRC embassy is a kind of huiguan; ‘150 years of Chinese Settlement’ is an opportunity for politics of recognition, not a fixed day of remembrance.

Although I had decided not to get too closely involved with the organization of the celebrations, I still agreed to try and help a Tong’ap church group who were concerned about a memorial book that was being written by a prominent Laiap. The church group had been invited to participate in organizing the celebration, because its church is treated as a huiguan. They wanted a memorial book which would be a short, popular, a-political book that would promote acceptance of Chinese in Surname. Something the Laiap
writer said had shocked them: “A lot of people will be angry when this book is published!” It seemed that the project was a private initiative, and looked very much like a confrontational manifesto of Laiap identity politics, alienating Creoles, Tong’ap, and completely ignoring the presence of New Chinese.

The Tong’ap now planned a completely different memorial book, which I was expected to contribute to. Its goal was to enhance the image of Chinese in Suriname. Chapter 1 would be about the history of Chinese immigration, including the following subjects: milestones during the 150 years; inside the Chinese community (work, daily life, new immigrants, educating children); changes in the Chinese community; Chinese culture; religious life; contributions of Chinese to Suriname, particularly with regard to agriculture, forestry, health care, education, etc. Chapter 2 would list prominent Chinese in Suriname. Chapter 3 would cover the huiguan, not only the three main Hakka huiguan, but everything including Chinese Christian churches, making a total of at least eight organizations. Chapter 4 would consist of the views of the huiguan leaders, while chapter 5 would be an overview of Sino-Surinamese relations, to be written by the Chinese embassy. Chapter 6 would be about Chinese political participation in Suriname.

Asked what they meant by ‘prominent Chinese in Suriname’, the Tong’ap members of the memorial book committee responded that Chinese meant anybody with Chinese blood. Asked if they were sure that all such people wished to be included as Chinese, they responded that this did not matter, because being included in the list meant that those people were Chinese. As an outsider, I said, I might wonder why there are so many Chinese organizations for the relatively small number of Chinese in Suriname. The Tong’ap I was talking to laughed; of course nobody can agree about anything, but this was the first time everybody was working together. In any case, the point was that unity would be portrayed in the book. But why then describe New Chinese as ‘new immigrants’ under ‘life in the Chinese community’? And how are the New Chinese to be involved in the plans by the Tong’ap? Well, New Chinese had no huiguan, and things need to be handled via huiguan, and besides, nobody really wants to have anything to do with them, but the point is to present all Chinese as a unified group. In the meantime another group had been discussing the project of the Chinese monument. It seemed that the plot of land had finally been identified, though the deed of the grant had not been traced. The Chinese embassy was asked to mediate with the Ministry of Natural Resources, but it was not really clear what the purpose of the land
actually was; instead of a park with a plaque, there was now talk of a Chinese TV-station to be set up with support of the Chinese embassy.

Though I knew many of those present – mostly fairly decent and rational people – no discussion was possible. I was expected to shut up and do as I was told: just think of some milestones and maybe some prominent ‘Chinese’ for the purpose of our celebration. To call the notions of Chineseness around that table robust was an understatement. Remarkably, every aspect of performative Chinese identity that was planned in relation to the local and non-Chinese expectations about Chinese; no reference would be made to Chinese identities outside the framework of politics of recognition. There would be no rituals to honour Fuidung’on ancestors, no ceremonies involving deeper Chinese traditions. Tradition would be projected towards non-Chinese outsiders, modernity would be reserved for Chinese insiders, while the various performances could be expected to be predictable and unimaginative. I decided to retreat and observe developments as surreptitiously as possible. Eventually it was decided that the celebration would consist of roughly a week of events leading up to a grand parade through downtown Paramaribo.

7.2.2 The Commemoration Week

As a bigi-yari, the Commemoration would be celebrated over five days, starting on Thursday, 17 October and culminating on Monday, 20 October. The first evening was a reception funded by the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, for the opening of a photo exhibition on Chinese in Suriname (basically a reworking of an exhibition ten years earlier). The next evening was a lecture by a prominent Laiap on Surinamese culture and history. In one view which is prominent among Laiap intellectuals, Chinese ethnic pride in Suriname is based on a local adaptation of the myth of China as bringer of civilization, by proposing Chinese cultural elements as models for Creole cultural icons. Saturday evening was a reception hosted by President Venetiaan, which, like the first reception, was not really intended for the general public, and was used as a platform for networking. Sunday afternoon there was a variety show in De Witte Lotus, a Chinese sports club. Cantonese, Mandarin, English and Sranantongo were spoken onstage, but not a word of Kejia, even though the vast majority of the roughly 1,000 people present
had Hakka roots.

On Monday morning the President unveiled a memorial commemorating 20 October, basically a plaque inscribed with the names of the first Chinese indentured labourers in the Chinese and Latin scripts. At the time of the ceremony, a pavilion-like structure that was to cover the plaque had not yet been constructed. The design and realization of the memorial had been in the hands of Laiap, with Tong’ap involvement limited to funding. Many government ministers were present, they included notably Minister Jong Tjien Fa, who wore a blue silk shirt in traditional Chinese style. The speeches presented the Laiap-dominated discourse of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’: Chinese in Suriname are descendants of the Chinese indentured labourers, and are essential elements of the fabric of Surinamese society. The State representatives stuck to the official line with regard to formal recognition of ethnic rights in their speeches: the Surinamese State considers ethnicity a reflexive identification, and steers clear of recognizing collective rights of ethnic groups. It accepts the interpretation of Chineseness of the organizing committee, as long as Chinese present themselves as loyal citizens.

The climax of the Commemoration week was the big parade on Monday afternoon. This started at the Chinese School and terminated at Independence Square, the oldest part of Paramaribo and the symbolic centre of Suriname. Participants had been issued
T-shirts with the logo of the event (with the toucan now on the right, and the dragon on the left) in the four colours of the Surinamese flag: green, red, white and yellow. These T-shirts, and many other props in the parade, had been funded by the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China. The parade contained the following elements (items between parentheses could be identified in the scenario of the organizing committee):

1. **“Banner 1”**: Two young Chinese-looking men in green T-shirts carrying a yellow banner with “20 October 2003” in red.
2. **“Protocol Group”**: Minister Jong Tjien Fa, members of the organizing committee, members of the huiguan establishment, wearing red sashes with the text: “150 Years of Chinese Settlement”.
3. **“Surinamese Flag”**: Mostly young Chinese men in green T-shirts, carrying large Surinamese flags.
4. **“Marching Band”**: Creole girls in revealing African-print outfits, followed by a Creole brass band in yellow T-shirts.
5. **“Birdcage Group”**: Laiap, mixed Chinese, etc. in red T-shirts, paper coolie hats and Chinese birdcages provided by the Chinese embassy.
Figure 7: ‘Protocol Group’. (l.t.r) Ling Nget Tet, Minister Jong Tjien Fa, Carmen Tjin A Djie. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.

Figure 8: ‘Chinese Group’, acrobats from the visiting Chinese Circus. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.
6. **“Float 1: the Boat (the Past)”**: The ‘boat’ was not a Western sailing ship, but had a sail of red cloth suggesting the bamboo sail of a Chinese junk. Chinese men in black pyjama-type suits and yellow paper coolie hats stood waving at the public.

7. **“Lantern Group”**: Laiap and mixed Chinese in red T-shirts and yellow paper coolie hats, carrying large red Chinese lanterns hanging from sticks.

8. **“Ribbon Group 1”**: Chinese children in yellow T-shirts, twirling green ribbons.

9. **“Lion, Chinese Group from Cayenne”**: A truck with Chinese banners and musicians of the Association Fa Kiao / Huaren Gongsuo, preceded by the banner of the organization in French and Chinese script. At regular intervals there were very professional performances of Lion Dances / mu su.

10. **“Chinese Group”**: Women acrobats of the visiting Chinese circus, led by a male colleague, playing small drums typical of the Han cultures of the loess plateau.

11. **“Float 2: Chinese House (the Present). Multicultural Suriname”**: The ‘house’ was suggested by an arch-like construction at the back of the float, and was decorated with large red Chinese lanterns and a birdcage. The float was populated by the folklore dance group of Marlène Lie A Ling, who were to perform onstage after arrival at Independence Square. Creole musicians played old-fashioned Creole party music. The dancers wore stereotypical and not completely authentic costumes of the ethnicities expected in the Multicultural Myth: Creole, Indian, Javanese, and Chinese.

12. **“20 Girls in Chinese dresses and parasols, 40 boys carrying flowers”**: Mostly Chinese boys in green T-shirts carried baskets of brightly coloured artificial flowers on their backs. The girls were all older, most were not Chinese, and wore satin cheongsam and carried Chinese parasols, with their hair in a tight bun, fixed with chopsticks.

13. **“Chinese Music Group”**: Hardly anyone realized that the resulting marching band, Fujian Luogu Dui (‘Fujianese Percussion Group’), was a New Chinese element in the parade. They were roughly 50 participants, wearing yellow pyjama-type suits with red details and baseball caps and white gloves, who were mistaken for French-Guianese by Fuidung’on onlookers. The group was led by a flag, a ban-
ner with the name Fujian Luogu Dui in Chinese characters and a banner decorated with dragons. Then came a decorated cart with a drum, and two elaborate processional parasols. The participants, obviously amateurs, played simple rhythms on their cymbals, and would stop to perform more elaborate choreographies from time to time.

14. **“Float 3: Children (the Future)”**: The float was populated by small girls of many different phenotypes. Though the decorations were dominated by the image of lotus flowers, the only clearly Chinese element was the Chinese parasols the girls carried.

15. **“Extras (T-shirts in all four colours)”**: This was a group of well over fifty Chinese-looking people, not all of whom wore the official T-shirts.

16. **Flag of Hua Cu Hui**: One man bearing a flag with a dragon and the name of the organization, escorted by two men in red T-shirts.

17. **Pictures of President Venetiaan**: Banner of the Laiap dominated Hua Cu Hui socio-cultural association, followed by people carrying photographs of President Runaldo Venetiaan and brightly coloured flags with monochrome dragons. I was told that the presence of the photographs was an expression of loyalty to the State, rather than some kind of statement by Chinese stakeholders in the current governing coalition where Chinese participate via the Javanese Pertjajah Luhur party. Another prominent Laiap disagreed with my consociational viewpoint and interpreted the photographs as ‘guests thanking their host, in good Chinese fashion’.

18. **“Soeng Ngie”**: The float of the popular Laiap-owned Chinese store Soeng Ngie & Co. was a truck decorated with the head of a lion costume, red lanterns, flags and garlands. A sign with the text “150 Years of Chinese Settlers in Suriname”\(^\text{33}\) and a logo combining the flags of the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Suriname, was fixed to both sides of the truck. Influential and popular enough to be dissident, Soeng Ngie & Co. had produced its own T-

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Figure 9: 'Birdcage Group'. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.

Figure 10: 'Float 1: the Boat (the Past)'. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.
Dragon Dance: Although the dragon dance (Kejia: mu liung) had been announced, it did not appear in the scenario. The moderately long, imported dragon was carried by a majority of non-Chinese men, without fully exploiting the possibilities of a typical traditional choreography. At one point, the dancers moved the dragon to Caribbean and Creole music.

“Extras (T-shirts in all four colours)”: Teenagers, few of whom looked Chinese, some carrying Chinese parasols.

Chung Tjauw: Banner of the Socio-Cultural Association Chung Tjauw / Zhongqiao Fuli Hui with the additional text: “150 Years of Chinese Settlement in Suriname”.

Local enterprises: Banners of prominent (Laiap) companies, such as Harry Tjin, Jong A Kiem, etc., with slogans such as: “Many cultures, one nation”, and “Together we build the future”. Most participants did not look Chinese.

“Ribbon Group 2”: Chinese-looking children wearing yellow T-shirts, twirling white ribbons.

“Marching Band”: Creole majorettes followed by a Creole brass band.

Decorated float: A decorated pick-up truck, with a yellow parasol, red banners with Chinese and Dutch text, and carrying Chinese women wearing cheongsam.

The Tshjoeng Tjien Church: Banner of the Tshoeng Tjien Church (part of the Moravian Church of Suriname), with additional text: “This is a place of praise and prayer to the Saviour, who is the eternal truth.” There were many Chinese participants, Laiap, Tong’ap and others, carrying little Surinamese flags. The end of the group was marked by a banner with the logo of the Moravian Church of Suriname.

Fa Tjauw Song Foei Lion Dance: The Xing Shi Tuan Lion Dance group of the Fa Tjauw Song Foei huiguan, with associated banners, on a truck. At set intervals the group
Figure 11: 'Chinese Music Group' / Fujian Luogu Hui. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.

Figure 12: Hua Cu Hui followed by pictures of President Venetiaan. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.
Figure 13: Dragon Dance. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.

Figure 14: Socio-Cultural Association Chung Tjauw. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.
Figure 15: Float with yellow parasol. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.

Figure 16: The Chinese School. Cheongsam as gendered emblem of Chinese ethnic identity. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.
would perform (Kejia: *mu su*) with their two lions and Smiling Buddha.

28. **Dalian Investment Co.**: A fairly large group (about 50 persons) of the Dalian International Investment Co., a company based in Dalian, China, involved in the long-term road repair programme. Their banner was red with white text in Chinese and English: “The best wishes to the Surinamese people from Dalian International”.

29. **“Martial Arts Group”**: Five women in white T-shirts and baseball caps, brandishing Taijiquan swords. The leader, an older Chinese woman, would demonstrate her swordsmanship.

30. **Whahaha Foodstuffs Factory**: Float of the Whahaha Foodstuffs Factory. A sign with the text “Congratulations with the celebration of 150 years of Chinese immigration” in Dutch and Chinese was fixed to the front of the truck. All text was in red, except for the Dutch word *immigratie* (“immigration”), which stood out in white. No single ethnic group dominated the float.


32. **Marching band**: Creole majorettes in green T-shirts, followed by a Creole brass band wearing yellow T-shirts.

33. **Individual participants**: Onlookers followed in the wake of the parade, producing a very effective image of total inclusiveness.

Considering that the organizing committee had not bothered to encourage New Chinese participation in the preparatory stages, numbers of (non-Fuidung’on) New Chinese in the parade were unexpectedly large. This was in part because groups such as Dalian and the Chinese Circus could be interpreted as reflecting the New Chinese presence in Suriname, rather than specifically the economic and diplomatic influence of the PRC. However, the **Fujian Luogu Dui** percussion group (number 13 above) added significant

34 ‘大連國際向蘇理南人民問好’ / ‘Dalian International greeting to Suriname people [sic]’.

35 ‘Gefeliciteerd met viering van 150 jaar Chinese immigratie / 熱烈慶祝華人移居蘇理南 150 隊年!’ (Congratulations on the occasion of 150 years of Chinese immigration / Celebrate the 150th anniversary of Chinese immigration in Suriname!).

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weight to the image of New Chinese in the parade. It was also ‘new’ because this type of Chinese folklore had never been seen before in Suriname. Participation in the parade had not been restricted, and basically anyone was free to apply to the organizers, if they wanted to participate. In September there had been advertisements in the two Chinese newspapers to recruit people for a cultural group to walk in the parade, which resulted in the formation of the Fujianese percussion group.

The parade arrived at Independence Square after sunset, greeted by the President and the Ministers and their entourage from the balcony of the Presidential Palace. A stage had been prepared on the square for a cultural show. Chairs had been arranged in front of the stage for the government officials, members of the organizing committee and the huiguan establishment. The first part of the show consisted of Chinese acts: Lion Dances by the Fa Tjauw Song Foei Xing Shi Tuan and the French Guianese Association Fa Kiao; the female percussion group of the Chinese Circus; swordsmanship accompanied by Hong Kong pop music, performed by members of Association Fa Kiao; two girls from the Chinese Circus performing a balancing act; an "Uyghur" dance to Chinese music in an ‘oriental’ style. The second part of the show was a lengthy performance of Marlene Lie A Ling’s folkloric dance group, that rather closely followed Ganga’s typology of such events: a display of ethnic variety, each group depicted separately, hints of a storyline, and a show of unity at the end (Ganga 2004). There was little authenticity in the various displays and performances: ethnic identities of performers did not necessarily match the ethnic label of the acts, costumes were not particularly accurate, and the dances themselves had been adapted. The ‘Creole act’ developed into finale of the performance, when the dancers involved some of the guests in front of the stage. At the very end, the Moravian hymn Mi Kondre Tru, Mi Lobi Yu (“I love you, my dear country”, Suriname’s “alternative national anthem”) was sung by the whole group.36 The final event was a show of fireworks from a pontoon in the Suriname River near Independence Square. Unfortunately, one person was killed when a piece of firework exploded on the pontoon.

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36 The performance could be interpreted to mean that multiculturalism in Suriname is a process of assimilation where the final act is becoming Creole, performed by multi-ethnic dancers.
7.2.3 Performativity in the Parade

In the Parade ‘Chineseness’ – the content of the undifferentiated label ‘Chinese’ – was fully performative; it became a reality through the actions of organizers, people walking in the parade, and people watching it. Chineseness was also multi-situational; throughout the parade it was fluid, negotiable, and situational, being played out differently to different audiences and meaning different things at the same time in. But to use Brubaker’s (2004) terms, the Commemoration event also created a ‘Chinese ethnic group’ out of the Chinese ‘groupness’ that was assumed to exist in Surinamese society. It should be stressed that the props produced in the 2003 Celebration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement are not ‘natural’ ethnic border markers; they define legitimacy, not group membership. They were designed to signal the ‘groupness’ (in Brubaker's sense of ethnic groups as a performative act) of Chineseness in the politics of identity and recognition in apaanjhta context.37

The Commemoration Committee and its subcontractors were not always conscious of the politics of visuality of their parade. The photographs of President Venetiaan were hardly a subtle tribute to the ruling NF-led Venetiaan II Administration, but there were no clear references to Pertjajah Luhur and its chairman Paul Somohardjo. In the parade, Minister Jong Tjien Fa could be considered a member of the ethnic Chinese elite rather than as a representative of Pertjajah Luhur. To a complete outsider, the parade would not seem to indicate that the Chinese were backing NPS rather than Pertjajah Luhur or even the NF coalition. Visual representations of Chinese stereotypes underlying the anti-Chinese discourse were central to the depiction of Surinamese Chinese identity as diasporic. There were no public protests against the massive depiction of Chinese as stereotypical coolies, and it is unclear if the designers of the parade were ever aware that the image might be offensive to local individuals or shocking to outsiders.

In Suriname, ethnic identity is embodied through ethnic dress. Dress consists of body modifications and supplements that form a “coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time.”38 Individuals use ‘ethnic dress’ to mark their ethnic identity in terms of group differences; as a boundary marker, ethnic dress represents unchanging, essential

37 Brubaker 2004
ethnicity. Ethnic dress (or ‘traditional dress’) thus marks inclusion in an ‘ethnic community’, but can also mark exclusion from the mainstream for minority and migrant groups in urbanized, national, and globalized contexts, and so the use of ethnic dress is commonly restricted to specific occasions and locations (often ceremonial or ritual) and female gender, while being frozen in the past to reflect unchanging identity.40

Apanjaht performativity requires Chinese in Suriname to use ethnic dress, but the question of what exactly constituted ‘Chinese ethnic dress’ is fraught with difficulty. Rather than the samfu (Kejia; set of wide blouse and trousers) worn by the Hakka indentured labourers and chain migrants, the cheongsam is presented in Suriname as the quintessential and authentic Chinese ethnic costume, rather like the way the sari is promoted as the original and authentic East Indian costume, despite documentary evidence that proves otherwise.41 The cheongsam (Kejia: congsam), or qipao (in Mandarin), was the national dress of Republican China (i.e. costume that signalled belonging to the modern Chinese state), and it became part of the repertoire of emblematic culture among Overseas Chinese. The qipao has become accepted in the PRC as Han-Chinese ethnic dress and even national dress. It thus becomes something of a Chinese ‘transnational dress’, which signals a general Chinese identity rather than referring to the specific, often rural, ancestral background of Chinese migrants. It is rather ironic that the qipao became a cultural marker of Chineseness. The modern qipao developed in Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s, during the Republican Era, and its body-hugging cut, long slits, short sleeves signalling overt femininity often made it a symbol of the wrong type of modernization and emancipation.42

The Chinese costumes in the parade embodied ‘Chineseness’ in terms of gender, age, and modernity. The prototypical Chinese in Suriname is virtually identical to the Chinese racial and cultural stereotype common everywhere else. Chinese are yellow-skinned men with buckteeth, slanted eyes, black hair who speak a language that sounds like “ching chang chong” and they can’t pronounce the ‘r’. They have long beards and moustaches and a cue, and are dressed in dark pajama suits and a coolie hat. This

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41 Remarkably, the East Indian ethnic costume presented on Float 2 (nr. 11 above) was not based on Bollywood models now current in Suriname, but on an idea of the authentic costumes worn by East Indian indentured labourers.
42 Cf. Finnane 2007: 139-175.
peasant look is more commonly used in Suriname to depict Chinese men than the stereotypical ‘Mandarin’ dress and cap, probably because there is photographic evidence of early Fuidung’on immigrants wearing samfu (Kejia, ‘suit of unlined shirt and trousers’), the wide shirt and trousers of cotton or waxed silk common in Southern China. In the Netherlands, for instance, the Mandarin look is fostered by Chinese men wearing colourful silk congsam (Kejia, ‘long robe’) with traditional vests and caps, usually during public events aimed at a non-Chinese audience. The stereotypical Chinese is a man. Despite photographic records of early Fuidung’on immigrant women in Suriname wearing formal and casual samfu, the stereotypical image of Chinese women in Suriname is the same as in the rest of the world: a quiet young woman wearing a tight-fitting cheongsam dress (also called congsam in Kejia) with chopsticks (instead of long Chinese hairpins) in her hair.

Visual stereotypes reflected the way Chineseness is inscribed on the gendered Chinese body; the past was symbolized by men dressed as coolies, the present by women dressed in cheongsam. The cheongsam is a particularly strong cultural marker, defining Chinese women rather than describing Chinese femininity. Not enough ethnic Chinese women could be mobilized to wear the many cheongsam required in the parade. Remarkably, Laiap and Tong’ap criticized the absence of Chinese women, or rather the fact that, as in the case of the long dragon, non-Chinese were the media of important emblems of Chineseness. Interestingly, a reverse gendering (Suriname as female, Chinese as male) was central to the Commemoration. The logo of the Commemoration was an outline of the borders of the Republic of Suriname, enclosing a toucan (symbolizing Suriname, and yin) on the left and a Chinese dragon (symbolizing China and yang) to the right. The combination of both animals was supposed to produce the character hao, meaning “good”.43 As no Chinese cosmological explanation was provided, classifying Suriname as yin very likely reflected a particular gendered image of Chinese migration in the eyes of the organizers.44

43 The character 好 is made up of 女 (woman) on the left and 子 (child, son) on the right.
44 The dragon and toucan echoed the black and white parts of the yinyang symbol (太極圖):

The logo was developed by a Tong’ap artist and an academically trained immigrant, who is not Fuidung’on Hakka, but operates within the Tong’ap community. The yin/yang symbolism in the logo was an easy reference to ‘deep’ Chinese culture, but could also be read as a subtle attempt to redefine the Surinamese view of Chinese
The ethnic belonging produced by the parade was not fully inclusive. The rhetoric of Hakka identity was missing, because there were no cultural markers to portray it and because to everyone involved Hakka identity is secondary to Chineseness. The experiences of New Chinese were very marginal in the narrative produced in the parade, and Tong’ap concerns about cultural survival were not addressed. The performative Chineseness induced by anti-Chinese sentiments was very much evident, though the sentiments themselves were only obliquely challenged; the image of the Chinese shopkeeper was totally absent from the parade, and despite the name of the celebration there were no clear references to modern Chinese migration. A distinct New Chinese identity was lacking in the parade; cultural expressions of New Chinese could be read by the public as defining expressions of Chinese identity in general, while different Chinese migrant cohorts related to the performances as expressions of regional backgrounds (Overseas Chinese in the case of the lion dances, the Chinese loess-plateau in the case of the women acrobat drummers, the Southeast coast in the case of the Fujian Luogu Dui). Unambiguous references to PRC patriotic discourse were absent. The PRC embassy had supported the commemoration in many ways, not least by providing props and donations. The only clear reference to the Chinese Motherland was the flag of the PRC which flew next to the flag of the Republic of Suriname in the Kong Ngie Tong Sang compound, over a signboard with the logo of the Commemoration.

By the start of the millennium members of the ethnic Chinese elite realized that there would soon be unique opportunities to use Chinese ethnic identity to position themselves in the centre of migration and ethnic Chinese in Suriname. In Chinese philosophy yin and yang are complementary and opposite qualities that humans may observe in phenomena. Yin (陰, originally meaning ‘north slope; southern bank of a river; shady place; cloudy’) describes cold, water, wet, soft, slow, tranquil, substantial, etc. Yang (陽, originally meaning ‘south slope; northern bank of a river; sunny place; sunshine’) qualifies hot, fire, dry, hard, rapid, restless, insubstantial, etc. In the case of humans, women are yin, men are yang. Linking Chinese migrants to yang would refer to the historical fact that chain migrants were mostly men, while suggesting that Chinese are active. Portraying Suriname as yin would refer to the local concubines of the mi-grants and make Surinamese passive. The yin/yang symbolism generally suggests mutual transformation, though this was not implicit in the logo or the performances of ethnic identity in the celebration; it was never explicitly stated that Chinese migrants ever transformed into Surinamese-Chinese.
power, as well as to position themselves within the established Fui-
dung’ on Hakka group as the focus of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ identity.
This elite of well-connected (in Chinese and Surinamese spheres)
and successful entrepreneurs was supported by Laiap intellectuals
and artists who had always had strong opinions on Chinese and
Hakka identity, and the position of ethnic Chinese in Surinamese
society. The opportunities as they saw it, were as follows: in Octo-
ber 2003 it would be 150 years since the first Chinese indentured
labourers arrived in Suriname, and in May 2005 elections were to
be held for the new Assembly and government. A narrative of Suri-
namese Chinese identity could be developed around the ‘Chinese
ethnic birthday’ to rally Chinese support and force public recog-
nition of Chinese ethnicity by the state through the logic of the
Multiculturalism Myth. Successful politics of recognition would mean
that a Chinese - Laiap - elite could legitimately claim a share of
power in apanjaht coalitions which would be the inevitable result of
the 2005 elections. The symbolic capital which would be produced
during the Commemoration would also strengthen the claims of the
Laiap elite to leadership within a larger Chinese community. The
articulation of Chinese ethnic identity would proceed from the rene-
gotiation of inter- and intraethnic boundaries triggered by encoun-
ters between established and newcomers, to the level of politics of
identity and recognition.

The Celebration was in many ways a clear success. The
creation of a ‘Chinese ethnic group’, or at least the image of a uni-
fied, essential and important Chinese ethnic group instead of the
reality of fragmented groups and undefinable ethnic labels, was a
political project of the organizers of the Commemoration, and that
goal had been achieved. The Celebration was also a success as a
response to the anti-Chinese sentiments linked to illegal immigra-
tion and the controversial Chinese transnational construction and
logging companies. There were also concrete results with regard to
Chinese ‘infrastructure’ for future use in apanjaht multiculturalist
discourse; the Chinese had confirmed their recognized status as
one of the Surinamese ethnic groups, and had acquired the props
(Chinese markers in the Surinamese landscape, and new iconic
cultural items such as the dragon) to negotiate their position in the
multiculturalist discourse (i.e. the Mamio Myth). Apanjaht politics of
recognition are not aimed at wrenching special rights from the
State, and indeed the attitude of the Surinamese state to Chinese
migrants remained unchanged after the celebrations. The State
supported, or at least did not oppose, the national celebration of a
Chinese ethnic identity, but neither encouraged the assimilation of
Chinese migrants as citizens nor consciously discriminated against them.

The organizers had succeeded in making the Parade inclusive, inviting anybody to join in, and presenting most aspects of the Chinese presence in Suriname, from mixed Chinese, descendents of Hakka indentured labourers, the PRC, transnational Chinese companies, to New Chinese immigrants, though perhaps this was not precisely what was originally intended. An image of a unified ‘Chinese community’, or at least of a monolithic ethnic group, had been successfully projected. Outsiders were generally unaware of alternative New Chinese claims in the parade; though it was not conceived as a conscious challenge, the Fujianese cultural performance introduced new and potent cultural markers to the Surinamese ethnic landscape. Tong’ap observers at least were now acutely aware that Chinese cultural identity in Suriname was no longer exclusively Hakka, Hongkongese, or even the homogenized Chineseness of globalized Chinese culture.

The collective identity and ethnic belonging presented in the celebrations provided elements that people could make into a basic script: Chinese in Suriname are settlers, not foreigners, respectable citizens, not temporary residents; They are the descendents of the nineteenth century Chinese indentured labourers; Chinese are integrated into Surinamese society without losing their authentic Chineseness, which is reflected by the many things that are familiar in Surinamese culture that were introduced by Chinese; Chinese are also integrated because many Surinamese have Chinese ancestors, so everybody is invited to claim Chinese roots; Chinese are successful and organized, and so on. This script fits into the broader multiculturalist discourse: because Chinese in Suriname can trace their roots back to bonded labour, they too suffered under colonial rule as involuntary immigrants and so their presence in Suriname is equally legitimate as that of Afro-Surinamese (seen as descendents of slaves) or as East Indian and Javanese (also descendents of bonded labourers). However, no ethnic Chinese (however one chooses to define such a person) can afford to place ideology before the practical issues of social networking in a small country such as Suriname. So the way the members of the Chinese minority actually conceive what it means to be Chinese is paradoxically irrelevant to the larger public articulations of ethnic belonging.

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8. THE NEW CHINESE ROUTE TO PARTICIPATION: CHINATOWN POLITICS

The establishment and subsequent activities of New Chinese organizations in 2003 demonstrate that the local positioning and identity formation of the New Chinese Migrants in Suriname follows instrumental patterns of Surinamese ethnopolitics. This chapter will provide an outline of the organizations, which have shaped Chinese political life during the past fifteen years (and even earlier), and suggest that without the influx of New Chinese Migrants and their increasing influence, the long existing Hakka organizations would have had a central and dominant role in articulating Chinese interests in Surinamese politics. The new influx however breaks with the past in various respects.

As stated in Chapter 1 and the previous chapter, elites of minority segments such as the Chinese who are aspiring to a share of political power in Suriname need to play by the rules of apantjahr consociational politics. This requires elites to become ethnic by creating an ethnic group, gain recognition of that group as powerful or unavoidable, and position themselves as representatives of this group. Recognition as a representative of a small ethnic group can be achieved by joining an existing apantjahr party, ideally creating a special minority wing within that party. Setting up an independent ethnic party is only an option if there is a realistic chance of being considered a coalition partner by other apantjahr parties. The last option is to set up or join a non-political and non-government group as platform for recognition by the State instead of proceeding directly through the apantjahr parties.

This is so despite the fact that there are ethnic Chinese who have citizenship rights (such as the right to vote and stand for office) in Suriname, and who therefore have the possibility of more direct personal access to political power. Non-naturalized Chinese immigrants do not have direct access to political power, but can organize themselves in the face of the Surinamese State in such a way as to be recognized as representatives of an otherwise unreachable but important (through association with existing ethnic groups and therefore political power blocs) ‘community’. This is possible as the Surinamese State tends to treat any organization
outside the government as a representation of a segment of society. This misconception is often, intentionally or not, fostered by non-government organizations (NGOs) and special interest groups; local NGOs will find themselves embracing and championing particular disadvantaged groups when striving to access national and international funds, while special interest groups will legitimize their existence by referring to the weakness of the state. NGOs and special interest groups can be and are used as personal political platforms by individuals who wish to access the apanjaht consociationalist power centre. When this happens, ethnicity becomes a political resource for these organizations; consequently ethnicity comes to be located and generated within the NGOs / special interest groups.

Chinese associations in Suriname have been migrant institutions from their historical beginnings. Their primary goal is to provide services that the State does not provide to ethnic Chinese who do not have Surinamese passports or are not fully assimilated into Surinamese society. Moreover, the leaders of these organizations are often themselves migrants who were able to overcome barriers to full participation in Surinamese society. Chinese associations in Suriname resemble NGOs (more specifically Civil Society Organizations) and special interest groups (specifically business groups) in the way they are created by citizens for the interests of citizens outside direct government control and without government funding, and in their methods of lobbying and their stated goals of development and participation. These Chinese associations are huiguan (Kejia: fuigon) traditional Overseas Chinese institutions found all over the world which are primarily intended as mutual assistance associations in a predominantly migrant community. Ideally, activities were directed from a building which would combine multiple functions of clubhouse, community centre, banking and postal centre, crisis centre, symbolic centre of Chinese life, etc. (hence the term huiguan, ‘public building for associating’). Huiguan could be organized on the basis of various ideas, such as shared qiaoxiang, language, surname, or occupation.

Huiguan functioned, and still function, as gatekeepers between Chinese migrants and their host societies and between the Chinese State and the Overseas Chinese. This is one reason why huiguan are at the centre of Chinatown politics; positions on the boards of huiguan provides individuals with the opportunity to present themselves as ethnic elites within the Overseas Chinese group (qiaoling, ‘Overseas Chinese leadership’). The larger the huiguan is, the more prestigious it is supposed to be and the more status its leadership gain. As Li Minghuan noted in her study of modern huiguan...
guan in the Netherlands, gaining a leadership position is the main reason for joining a huiguan; being perceived as a representative of a Chinese association provides access to the State.¹

We will first look at the older Chinese institutions, then position the emergence of the new Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui in that context and look at the consequences this has had for Chinese political representation in Suriname.

8.1 The Development of Chinese Migrant Associations

Chinese migrants abroad copied adaptive strategies from internal migration traditions in China, the most important strategy of which was adaptive organizations that provide migrants and some longer-term residents with housing, employment and social support. Chinese adaptive organizations stressed either fraternal bonds of loyalty (for instance in ‘secret societies’) or social hierarchy.² The last are called huiguan. In a description of the various types of Chinese community organizations between 1925 and 1974, Hendrick Serrie called the huiguan of Southeast Asia ‘contractual subsistence organizations’, meaning that different functions and grounds for membership were unified in a single organization.³ Besides providing help with the basic needs of housing, jobs, and social support, huiguan facilitate contact with the homeland, provide emergency assistance (financial, medical, etc.), and mediate in conflicts involving migrants. Huiguan also provide a link to the Chinese ethnic economy, by managing the ethnic resource of shared group identity; they provide a stage for performative ethnic identity to boost solidarity and loyalty among migrants and emphasize the differences between them and their host society. As the goal of sojourning was to generate quick income to send remittances to dependents back home, Chinese migrants gravitated towards urban business activities, and consequently by about 1900 Chinese migrant organizations were geared to adaptation of highly visible migrants (economically or physically) in urban environments.⁴

As adaptive organizations of migrants, the services which huiguan provide remain relevant depending on the level of integration in the host society and the attitude of the individual migrant or

¹ Li 1999b.
⁴ ibid.
longer-term resident towards the host society and his or her own background. Wickberg suggests three stages in the development of the needs of Chinese migrants. As immigrants, their needs are initially very basic: housing, employment, social support, defence, and contact with the homeland (i.e. the ability to send remittances home). As they become residents, a distinction emerges between earlier and more recent migrants – *sinkeh* and *laokeh* – and with that comes the idea of a ‘Chinese community’. Successful adaptation leads to increasing integration, which provides the residents (*laokeh*) with new opportunities in the host society. Finally, residents become settlers, and migrants (*sinkeh*) have to deal with a local-born generation of ethnic Chinese. Ethnic resources need to be actively maintained (e.g. Chinese education), and reconsidered in the face of the need to acquire the social and cultural capital (e.g. relevant skills and education, non-Chinese languages, networks that expand to incorporate non-coethnics). It is clear that settlers and their local-born children have different needs for adaptive organizations such as huiguan. As there are no longer any pioneering migrants at this stage, basic needs such as housing and employment are generated within the chain migration network. In some areas, such as the Philippines, huiguan and Chinatowns have even disappeared.

Ethnic economy theory provides parallel explanations for the development of Chinatown politics through migrant institutions. As noted earlier, ethnic ownership economies make the existence of ethnic communities likely, as they provide ethnic economies with labour, loan funds, and consumers, while establishing and maintaining notions of group belonging which allow ethnic economies to exist. In this context ethnic community formation equals the development of migrant institutions, which are basically ethnic self-help organization which help to reduce dependency on external entities and control. Such migrant institutions spur the ethnic ownership community by achieving horizontal and vertical integration. In the case of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in Suriname, ethnic Chinese institutions provide horizontal integration (by allowing Chinese business owners to cooperate in choosing store locations, avoid competitive pricing, pool information, and engage in collective buying).  

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5 ibid.
8 Vertical integration is when a whole package of business services (e.g. credit, wholesale, maintenance, transportation, real estate, manufacturing, import/export,
Light and Gold note that “Ethnic communities and the organizations they create often reflect numerous class, ideological, regional, religious, gender, generational, and demographic differences included in the population.”

Ethnic economies provide important support for political leadership in many ways, ranging from office holding to informal efforts to influence the political process on a group’s behalf, while financial contributions from ethnic economies indirectly facilitate political participation, as they permit immigrants who are not eligible to vote to exert influence over local political decisions. In short, bounded ethnic communities linked to ethnic ownership economies can produce significant political autonomy and power for the ethnic elites who control the migrant institutions. Accordingly, migrant elites who are usually locally successful individuals, or individuals who already had high status in the migrant hometowns, put a high value in status systems for achieving leadership positions within the ethnic community. The development of migrant institutions in the context of ethnic ownership economies described by Light and Gold fits well with the development of Chinese associations in Suriname: “...immigrant and ethnic elites often devise social settings that allow them to enjoy social prestige. In so doing, not only do they create agreeable contexts, but in addition, they use these organizations as vehicles to celebrate their accomplishments and achieve their communal goals. In some case, the number of ambitious individuals who seek notoriety through involvement in organizations outstrips available positions. When this happens, institutions may proliferate.”

In Suriname, the ethnic Chinese elite is the set of individuals whose decisions largely shape the lives of the majority of people whose livelihoods are dependent on the Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname, and who are particularly, but not exclusively, Chinese migrants. As is true for any elite, the behaviour of this minority is often short-sighted and self-serving, and can be motivated by the desire to extend their control over crucial resources. Most of their power is derived locally, usually from entrepreneurial success, though their status is realized both in local terms as well in the context of Chinese culture and Chinese migrant networks. The elite is divided along lines of migrants and local-born, etc.) is provided by coethnics. This however is not really applicable in the Chinese ownership economy in Suriname.

10 Light & Gold 2000: 177.
which limits the type of status that either group can derive in the context of the other, but as elites tend to communicate pragmatically in terms of accommodation rather than conflict, there is no fundamental split between the two. It is important to note that the Chinese elite – and for that matter, any of the Surinamese elites – is about power, not leadership. In fact, it can be argued that there are no individuals among the ethnic Chinese of Suriname who are accepted as leaders and representatives by a majority of the ethnic Chinese, despite the fact that the most ethnic Chinese in Suriname will admit the existence of a powerful elite centred on the Chinese organizations.

Huiguan thus persist as voluntary associations because they are a political resource. At the beginning of the twentieth century the attitude of the Chinese State towards emigrants changed, and it attempted to control emerging transnationalism by defining emigrants in terms of citizenship. Migrants officially became huaqiao (‘Chinese sojourners’, i.e. temporary migrants), and with the 1909 Citizenship Law the local-born children of huaqiao automatically became Chinese citizens by the principle of *ius sanguinis* regardless of any other citizenship they might acquire. Contact between these citizens abroad and the Chinese State was channelled through the huiguan, and umbrella organizations developed representing various huiguan as a unified entity to the Chinese State and the host society.\(^\text{12}\) Adaptive organizations became hierarchically linked institutions. The need to manage external relations through institutionalized channels meant that Chinese migrants now came to be organized as communities.\(^\text{13}\)

Huiguan were now the main platforms for ‘Chinatown politics’, the ultimate goal of which is the control of the institutional hierarchy. As Wickberg puts it: ‘Officers of umbrella organizations are automatically seen as Chinatown leaders, by both the community and interested outsiders.’\(^\text{14}\) Chinatown politics are not transparently democratic, and skills and education do not guarantee that newcomers (the younger generation, including the local-born, and recent immigrants / *sinkeh*) rise to leadership positions. Membership of the boards of various huiguan is not exclusive and provides status, while splinter organizations readily develop as the losers

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\(^\text{12}\) Umbrella organizations reflected different local conditions. In Singapore, where ethnic Chinese were commercially successful, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce was set up, whereas in the USA where ethnic Chinese were much less economically successful the umbrella organization was the Chinese Benevolent Society.


\(^\text{14}\) Wickberg 1994: 78.
and newcomers in Chinatown politics create their own private platforms.\textsuperscript{15} Huiguan also proliferate through competition for community status. In 1950s Southeast Asia ‘Chinese communities’ were growing, and with more families and an increasing proportion of local-born, more schools, youth organizations, and sports clubs were created.\textsuperscript{16} There was a similar trend in Suriname during the same period, when youth organizations and sports clubs that catered to Laiap were set up. Globalization also provided huiguan with new relevance in the 1970s as networking hubs in transnational context and as channels for attracting Chinese investments, initially from Hong Kong and Taiwan since the 1970s and from the PRC since the 1990s.\textsuperscript{17}

Kuah-Pearce and Hu-DeHart also note that traditional huiguan everywhere gradually lost much of their original relevance as Chinese migrant communities matured, and that other forms of voluntary associations (collectively called \textit{shetuan}) took their place as hubs of networks and stages of identity formation.\textsuperscript{18} Shetuan are a modern take on the increasingly outdated concept of the traditional huiguan as a communal space and family in lieu of family for sojourners, and focus instead on the needs of modern Chinese migrants with regard to transnational networks and globalizing identities.\textsuperscript{19} New types of Chinese institutions are arising as newcomers (local-born and \textit{sinkeh}) are exploring new forms, such as Baptist churches.\textsuperscript{20} Currently, Chinese organizations have become too diverse for any single organization to be able to dominate Chinatown politics; the diversity reflects the diversity of Chinese migration and the fact that no organization can meet all the adaptive needs of all migrants. Recent migrant cohorts / \textit{sinkeh} are ‘...not bound by the forms of Chinese culture or the kinds of Chinese people present where they have settled.’\textsuperscript{21}

\section*{8.2 The ‘Old Chinese’ Institutions}

The development of huiguan in Suriname closely matches the pattern established above. Fuidung’on Hakka sojourner settlement fol-

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{15} Wickberg 1994: 73-74.
\textsuperscript{16} Wickberg 1994: 76.
\textsuperscript{17} Wickberg 1994: 79.
\textsuperscript{18} Kuah-Pearce & Hu-DeHart 2006.
\textsuperscript{19} Liu 1998.
\textsuperscript{20} Wickberg 1994: 81.
\textsuperscript{21} Wickberg 1994: 81.
\end{footnotesize}
ollowed smoothly upon the period of indentured labour on the plantations, which meant that ethnic Chinese were initially rural. As outsiders in urban colonial society, the Chinese of Suriname followed the Overseas Chinese pattern of setting up mutual assistance associations to provide basic socio-economic support in their country of settlement. A huiguan was founded within twenty years of the arrival of the first indentured labourers from Southern China. Kong Ngie Tong, founded in 1880 and one of the oldest huiguan in Latin America, was based on common ties with the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang, though in practice members spoke the same dialect and occupied the same economic niche.

Kong Ngie Tong provided a number of services. It functioned as a reception centre for recent Fuidung’on immigrants and contained a hostel, restaurant, a folk-religion temple, as well as a shelter for elderly and destitute huqiao (usually men). It managed a burial fund (with a cemetery at the corner of the Wanicastraat and the Steenbakkerijstraat), and facilitated informal financial and postal services for Fuidung’on migrants such as ROSCAs and money transfers to the qiaoxiang. Kong Ngie Tong Sang thus provided the basic services of a traditional huiguan: economic, political, cultural, social, and religious.22

As all Chinese in Suriname shared the same Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang, the same Kejia language, and were virtually all merchants, Kong Ngie Tong was everything except a surname or lineage association.23 Right from the beginning Kong Ngie Tong

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23 Kong Ngie Tong does not seem to have been specifically set up as a hometown association (i.e. for people from the Fuidung’on area) or as an association for people with a common Chinese language or dialect (i.e. Kejia). There is some circumstantial evidence that links early 20th century Kong Ngie Tong to secret society-like ideas of non-kinship solidarity. Firstly, the choice of ‘Tong’ (hall) instead of a reference to huiguan in the name ‘Kong Ngie Tong’, is ambiguous in the sense that it could also have indicated a secret society (a ‘tong’ or Triad). Then there is the issue of the shrine to Guan Yu / Gan Di Ya that existed in Kong Ngie Tong up to 1930 (see paragraph 3.5). One of Guan Yu’s roles is that of patron of loyalty and solidarity, especially beyond the limits of kinship, which makes him a favorite deity of organizations such as military groups and secret societies. This matches, perhaps too neatly, stories of marriage taboos between Zong (PTH: Zhang 張), Liu (PTH: Liu 劉), and Gan (PTH Guan 關) in pre-WW2 Suriname, which are based upon the story of the Oath of the Peach Grove (桃園三結義) in the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, the 14th century historical novel about the reunification of China in the 3rd century. In
was a platform for successful Fuidung’on Hakka entrepreneurs, who exploited their status as gatekeepers between the colonial government and the ethnic Chinese. Conflict between the entrenched leadership and younger individuals eager for a share in power precipitated the first major rift in the ethnic Chinese elite in Suriname. One group split off to form Chung Fa Foei Kon in 1928, which attempted a more transparent handling of Chinese interests. Kong Ngie Tong’s continued involvement in the illegal Chinese Piauw lottery led to open conflict with the colonial government in 1930, when the authorities closed the huiguan (see Paragraph 6.1). The huiguan was almost immediately revived as Kong Ngie Tong Sang (‘Kong Ngie Tong Reborn’). The reformed huiguan was no longer the default centre of Chinese life in Suriname or the only gateway between the Surinamese authorities and Chinese, as it shared the field with Chung Fa Foei Kon.

Chinese services in Suriname remained intact or were quickly reorganized, the one exception being the ‘temple’ in the old Kong Ngie Tang huiguan building, which was never replaced by a substantial public shrine. The temple went virtually completely undocumented, so one can only speculate on the reasons for its abandonment. One practical reason why it was not revived may have been decreasing numbers of adherents of traditional Chinese religions and increasing numbers of Tong’ap and Laiap Christians. The temple might also have played a role in Kong Ngie Tong (such as for initiation and membership rituals) which was no longer required in Kong Ngie Tong Sang. One could also speculate that the huiguan elite might have felt that avoiding anything even remotely offensive to the colonial elite such as Chinese popular religion outweighed any strategic benefits organized Chinese religion might provide; the temple, after all, was a potent symbol of the otherness of Chinese.

24 Kong Ngie Tong Sang never really existed in written Chinese; the new huiguan simply remained 廣義堂, ‘Kong Ngie Tong’, in Chinese-language texts and huiguan functions such as celebrations of anniversaries remained as before.

25 i.e. people who identified themselves as ‘Confucianist’, etc. The number of people who maintained Chinese religious practices, while identifying themselves in a different way, is unknown.
By 1943 a third organization was set up, Fa Tjauw Song Foei. Established in the pre-World War II period when the Chinese Nationalist government tried to recruit Overseas Chinese support for its cause and shape a modern Chinese identity, Fa Tjauw Song Foei hosted the Surinamese Branch of the Kuo Min Tang. Nationalist interest in Suriname was limited, and Fa Tjauw Song Foei was treated as simply another platform for the ethnic Chinese entrepreneurial elite. Limited as that elite was, Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon and Fa Tjauw Song Foei soon shared board members, and in practice operated as a united block; in the Chinese-language newspapers the three huiguan are collectively called the ‘Three Organizations’ (san tuan). Rather paradoxically, pro-KMT association Fa Tjauw Song Foei was never traditionalist. Traditionalist leaders were a-politically focussed on the qiaoxiang homeland, which now happened to be in the PRC. As a hometown association, however, Kong Ngie Tong Sang was predominantly traditionalist.26

The ‘Three Organizations’ currently share responsibility for the Chinese burial ground Fa Kiauw Kung San, while the two main Chinese language newspapers Xunnan Ribao and Zhonghua Ribao are jointly published by Kong Ngie Tong Sang and Chung Fa Foei Kon, and the Chinese School (Zhongwen Xuexiao) is closely associated with Kong Ngie Tong Sang. The Chinese sports club ‘De Witte Lotus’ (The White Lotus, Bai Lian Hua) is formally independent, and is used for staging large public events by the huiguan.

Over time increasing numbers of migrants and increasing assimilation made for the establishment of more Chinese organizations. Most did not prove sustainable, such as the various youth organizations of assimilated and local-born Chinese. In fact none of the organizations founded by or specifically catering to Laiap have survived into the 2000s.27 One important reason why such organizations fail is that they lose their relevance when their members are no longer predominantly migrants or when they cannot facilitate the Chinese ethnic ownership economy. Laiap are neither migrants

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26 Writing in the 1960s on the situation of ethnic Chinese, Willmott (1970: 123) recorded a similar pattern in the constitutional kingdom of Cambodia under King Norodom Sihanouk (1953-1969). However, far greater numbers, a much longer history, and greater ethno-linguistic variety among the Cambodian Chinese meant that far larger numbers of schools could reflect an increased interest in the PRC through increased focus on Mandarin via material from Hong Kong and Singapore (Willmott 1967: 85-89).

27 For instance organizations linked to Laiap: youth club Tsang Nen Foei, educational fund and networking club Moe Poen Sah, and Kooy Tijen Foei for intellectuals.
nor completely dependent on the Chinese ownership economy for their livelihoods.

In any case, links between the various institutions in Suriname became more important once the political ambitions of Chinese elites could no longer be based on leadership status within a single huiguan. In his study of Cambodian Chinese in the 1960s, Willmott describes how homeland loyalties were abandoned in favour of a more general Chineseness under the influence of the founding of PRC and a new Chinese nationalism. The importance of Cambodian huiguan (based on shared dialect, surnames, home-towns, etc.) diminished in favour of shetuan (sports clubs, schools, etc.), and “The overall pattern that emerges... is of a closely-knit network of associations, with interlocking leaders forming the links between them and arranging them into a rough hierarchy of power. [...] It should be noted that the distinction between political and administrative leaders can no longer be made.”

The development of shetuan in Suriname started before the arrival of New Chinese migrants. Kong Ngie Tong Sang, the oldest Surinamese huiguan, provided the basic services of a traditional huiguan: economic, political, cultural, social, and religious. Its splinter organization in the 1930s, Chung Fa Foei Kon, focused was much more focused on Chinese culture and identity. Fa Tjauw Song Foei was strictly speaking not a traditional huiguan; its name (‘Association of Overseas Chinese Businessmen’ or even ‘Overseas Chinese Chamber of Commerce’) implied a more specialized purpose, and its link with the Taiwanese Kuo Min Tang made its focus clearly political. Shetuan now include further splinter groups in an almost biblical line of begettings, following internal conflicts within huiguan.

The ‘Old Chinese’ in Surinamese huiguan are dominated by a limited elite of generally successful entrepreneurs who could gain status in Chinese eyes as ‘leaders of the Overseas Chinese’ (qiaoling) by becoming huiguan leaders. This mirrors the situation described in the Netherlands, where the creation of new associations both provides status for the individual board members and creates opportunities for dealing with the government. In Suriname, any organization where ethnic Chinese congregate will be considered a kind of huiguan, and will be included in power negotiations of the huiguan establishment. Huiguan thus function as

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28 Willmott 1967: 84.
30 Li 1999b.
gatekeepers between Chinese migrants and the Surinamese State on the one hand, and between huaqiao in Suriname and the Chinese State on the other.

This view of huiguan as representing a bounded ‘Chinese community’ is in many ways a holdover from colonial times. According to the initial bylaws of the first huiguan, Kong Ngie Tong, membership was strictly limited to Chinese (meaning Chinese nationals and thus ethnic Chinese immigrants), and access to the Kong Ngie Tong compound was forbidden to non-Chinese. The colonial authorities equated Kong Ngie Tong with the Chinese group, and assumed that segregation could confine any Chinese problem within the huiguan. Segregation is no longer acceptable in the modern Surinamese State, and no huiguan or any other sociocultural organization in Suriname explicitly states in its Articles of Association that membership is exclusive to a particular ethnic group or that its activities bear no relation to the welfare of Surinamese society in general.

The huiguan institutionalized qiaoxiang ties between Fuidung’on Hakka huaqiao in Suriname and their hometowns, at least in the beginning. Huaqiao (i.e. Tong’ap) involvement with the qiaoxiang is increasingly a matter of individual power brokers, in their role of gatekeepers between the PRC and the migrants. Their relationship with the Fuidung’on hometowns is now less about qiaoxiang ties and is morphing into a semi-diplomatic relationship with local incarnations of the Chinese State. The two Chinese-language newspapers published by the Three Organizations (officially by Kong Ngie Tong Sang and Chung Fa Foei Kon), are an example of the development of the new relationship. As the only Chinese-language publication, the combined newspapers are the only medium available to various government levels in the PRC for reaching Surinamese huaqiao, and the only direct source of information (that is, not requiring translation) on the ‘Chinese community’ in Suriname available to them.31

All huiguan and shetuan in Suriname are elite-run organizations, but one can distinguish between organizations that function as platforms for ambitious individuals and institutions that are generally considered to be politically neutral by the ethnic Chinese public in Suriname (with regard to Chinatown politics as well as

31 The two papers are formally separate entities, though they share a board of editors. In practice, however, hardly anyone subscribes to just one, as they are published on alternating days and read as a single Chinese-language daily. Numbers of subscriptions vary around a thousand for each paper, which means that about a thousand households are subscribed to the combination of the two.
national partisan politics: the Chinese school, the Chinese burial ground fund, the ethnic Chinese churches). Though these last entities more closely resemble what one imagines community institutions should be like, one should keep in mind that the formation of a unified Chinese community in Suriname is hampered by the nature of huiguan organization as well as the pressure Chinese actors feel to avoid any suggestion of Chinese communalism in the modern Surinamese state.

Chinese texts in Suriname loosely define the local Chinese institutions, inflating or reducing the number of entities to suit their purpose, and include not only the huiguan but also anything that could pass for a shetuan, such as Chinese sections of the political parties, the two Chinese churches, the Chinese school and the Chinese Burial Ground Fund Fa Tjauw Koen Sang, and even provisional committees. While huiguan boards are either seen as community representatives or special interest groups by the Surinamese government, the boards in turn see ethnic Chinese as their ethnic constituency, to be depicted as broadly as possible in the face of the Surinamese political establishment. Huiguan boards thus have no real interest in democratic processes, which might endanger the positions of the leaders.32

However they are broadly defined, according to Surinamese law Chinese institutions were never formally set up as special interest groups or representations.33 Li notes that Chinese institutions are stichtingen (charitable foundations) under Dutch law, and operate as such in their relations with the Dutch authorities, though all parties involved portray the stichting as representing Chinese as a corporate group via its leadership board.34 Stichtingen have target groups, and verenigingen (associations) have members, and both forms allow for a measure of participation. In practice, however, there is no way to accurately gauge actual participation in the institutions – some Chinese organizations can appear to consist

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32 Li 1999b: 163.
Surinamese huiguan are increasingly intangible – some of the newest do not even actually have a guan, a public building. Instead of providing a venue for social interaction and negotiation of symbolic codes, the newer huiguan basically consist only of a leadership board.
33 Kong Ngie Tong Sang publicly, though indirectly, stated its goals and mission in its newspaper. Chairman Liu Yunping stated four main activities: facilitating ROSCA, publishing Xunnan Ribao, facilitating the Chinese school, ‘developing national diplomacy’ / organizing social activities. Representing the ‘Chinese community’ was not explicitly stated. XNRB, 23 January 2004: ‘二00二年廣義堂堂務報告’ (Report of Kong Ngie Tong activities in 2002).
34 Li 1999b: 214.
solely of a governing board. The institutions have always been dominated by entrenched Laiap and Tong’ap elites. On the one hand these elites unite in networks that link to other Surinamese elites, while on the other hand competition among elite factions for access to the State leads to fragmentation. Chairmen – there have never been any women chairpersons – derive prestige from their title, and strive to remain in office for as long as possible. There is a long tradition of huiguan board members defecting to start their own organizations, or to put it more cynically, their own boards. One result of this fragmentation was increased localization of Chinese institutions; it did not matter whether the first huiguan was transplanted or not, later institutions in Suriname were copies of earlier local institutions.

Chinese in Suriname speak of themselves as ‘visiting the huiguan’ rather than as ‘members’ of a Chinese vereniging and they certainly do not believe that the institutions represent them in any way.\(^35\) They turn to the organization that provides the best services, particularly the ability to facilitate fuicèn (the local ‘Old Chinese’ ROSCA) as inconspicuously as possible, and the most successful and most prestigious Chinese institutions are those that are seen as the most neutral, without an overt political agenda. The huiguan establishment therefore performs a delicate balancing act; it derives status and prestige from its position as a neutral elite that is able to guarantee sustainable services, but finds influence and power in its ability to set up networks and political deals with other factions and its links to the government, the PRC embassy and the PRC resource extraction projects.\(^36\)

In Suriname, there has never been a united Chinese institution in which a unified Chinese position could be developed and internal conflicts could be managed outside the public view. Instead, the Chinese institutions of Suriname form loose networks of personal platforms. In 2003 the list of Chinese institutions in Suriname included Kong Ngie Tong Sang and the Chinese School and Chinese Burial Ground Fund associated with it, Chung Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, Hua Chu Hui, Sociaal Culturele Vereniging Chung Tjauw, the Christian American Missionary Alliance church, and the Moravian Tshoeng Tjien Church. By 2005 ten huiguan had been mentioned in the Surinamese media: Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung

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\(^{35}\) Cf. Li 1999b.

\(^{36}\) Li (1999b) makes a similar point with regard to Dutch situation; the leadership of Dutch huiguan / shetuan derives status from their dealings with national and local government, but actual support from their ethnic constituencies is hard to quantify.
Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, Fa Tjauw Foei Kon, Hua Cu Hui, Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, Hainan Tongxiang Hui, Fujian Tongxiang Hui, Guangzhou Tongxiang Hui, Dongguan Tongxiang Hui. The Chinese wing of the NPS coalition partner, Fa Tjauw, functions as a huiguan in practice. Three other organizations were routinely added in list of ‘the Chinese organizations’ / shetuan: Stichting Oriental Foundation, the CAMA church, the Tshoeng Tjien Church. De Witte Lotus sports club, the Chinese school, and the Fa Tjauw Koen San burial fund are in practice subsidiaries of the san tuan.

Not unexpectedly, new organizations legitimize themselves to the Chinese public in quite different ways, as this report of the founding of Chung Tjauw Fu Li Foei shows:

The idea behind Chung Tjauw Fu Li Foei flowed from the strong demands of the average Overseas Chinese. [We] Overseas Chinese have witnessed how Suriname has become stable in many areas and circumstances have developed, indistinctly, like ‘viewing flowers in the mist’. Unfortunate accidents can strike at any time, yet many Overseas Chinese are ignorant of the law, and not too smart when it comes to exercising their legal rights. ... That is why it was recommended that a charity be set up that is legitimate, perfect, just, imbued with a strong sense of responsibility and urgency, in order to buffer insecurities which may exist and provide solutions to concrete problems, and also to engage a good and resourceful jurist to help Overseas Chinese with relevant legal issues and other complications. [...] Chung Tjauw will pay close attention to the insecurities and hardships of its members and Overseas Chinese, and actively assist any legal and good welfare activities in this city. With a mind to the upcoming parliamentary elections, Chung Tjauw will make all effort to select a Chinese entrepreneur who will actively and selflessly work for us Chinese [wo huaren], will listen to us Chinese and also understands Chinese. This entrepreneur will join the NPS for the parliamentary elections, and will then fight for the rights and interests of us Chinese, and raise our political position. Especially the old problem we Chinese have with regard to natu-

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37 Stichting Oriental Foundation was primarily intended as a corporate body to facilitate the organization of the celebrations of ‘Chinese Immigration Day’, particularly with regard to permits, titles to land, etc. It is not an adaptive institution, as it was not set up by migrants to meet the requirements of migrants, and there is no membership in the sense of a huiguan. Its chairperson, Carmen Tjin A Djie, eventually claimed that Stichting Oriental Foundation was “the coordinating body that linked all Chinese organizations.” (De Ware Tijd 21 October 2008, ‘Herdenking Chinese Immigratie met veel pracht en praal’ (Chinese Immigration commemorated with much pomp and circumstance)).
ralization will then finally be resolved. This is the purpose and
goal of Chung Tjauw, which is concurrently the common struggle
of the goal of uniting all the Chinese organizations and all Surina-
messe ethnic groups that treat us as equals.

In the final analysis, Chung Tjauw is still in its infancy; to
mature it needs the support of all Chinese institutions and benefi-
cial social forces, and for its work in the future it relies on criticism
and guidance from all sides.38

It is hard to imagine that any Chinese audience would read the text
literally and agree that there were no legal and legitimate Chinese
organizations in Suriname. Chung Tjauw’s purely political goal (an
ethnic Chinese in the National Assembly) was not achieved in the
2000 elections, and the organization became for all intents and pur-
poses just another huiguan.

8.3 The Presentation of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui

Up to 2004 there were no specific organizations for New Chinese.
This allowed the Fuidung’on Hakka huiguan establishment to pre-
sent itself as gatekeepers to the New Chinese while at the same
time marginalizing their participation. The huiguan had been estab-
lished to aid sinkeh in overcoming the difficulties of accessing Suri-
namese society and the State, and the New Chinese were simply
the latest sinkeh cohort to become dependent upon huiguan for
help. However, helping New Chinese was a dilemma for the hui-
guan; on the one hand it was in the interests of the leaders to limit
public association with New Chinese migrants due to increasing
anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname, but then on the other hand
there was the opportunity to gain influence at the highest levels as
the government was desperately trying to find a gatekeeper for the
New Chinese. In their turn the Fuidung’on Hakka huiguan were
fostering New Chinese gatekeepers by dealing with power brokers
among the emerging New Chinese entrepreneurial middle class
behind the scenes.

Without adaptive organizations of their own, and with their
ethnic ownership economy not yet fully developed, New Chinese
migrants initially had no choice but to turn to the huiguan and
shetuan of the ‘Old Chinese’ to obtain specific services which they

38 ZHRB 5 August 1999, ‘中僑福利會正式成立’ (Chung Tjauw Fu Li Foei formally
established)
required. However, without personal networks that included Fui-
dung’ on Hakka sponsors, New Chinese migrants who found them-
selves with money problems could only throw themselves at the
mercy of ‘the Chinese community’. The following is an example of a
call for help in Xunnan Ribao, the newspaper of the Kong Ngie
Tong Sang huiguan:

Dear Chinese of Suriname, greetings!
I am a woman from Tianjin39, my name is Z.Y. I have
lived in Suriname for four years now. Last year I dis-
covered I was in the early stages of cancer of the womb, but because there was
no money I could not start timely treatment and now I’m in the
late stage. The doctor said: Go back to China as soon as you can!
The cancer has now spread, and I need to go back to see my
family, if I wait any longer it will be too late. However, the little
money I have was spent on treatment, high medical expenses
have left me destitute. I have not been able to do anything for
three months, my womb constantly hurts and leaks blood and pus,
and I can only wait for Death to come for me. I do not have the
means to buy a plane ticket to go back home.

Oh Heaven! I cast my eyes to Heaven every day and
weep, who can help me! I never thought I would die young, I
don’t want to leave this world, I pray for life. In my moment of
despair I thought of Kong Ngie Tong Sang where there is Chinese
blood like mine, I thought of the Overseas Chinese whose skin is
yellow and eyes and hair are black like mine, they could help me,
help me and throw me a lifeline. Now that I lack the strength to
manage my shop, everything in the shop has been stored in the
house of a friend. There are two freezers, one refrigerator, clo-
thing and merchandise. If anyone would be kind enough to buy
them I would be eternally grateful.

Dear people, kind sirs, please present payment in cash to
Y.X.X., at the Chinese School.40

Money issues (funds for starting up business, financial help for indi-
viduals in trouble, etc.) are the most basic pragmatic reason behind
the creation of specific hometown associations. New Chinese mi-
grant cohorts with their own adaptive organizations could generate
financial assistance for coregionalists in trouble and organize

39 Third largest city in the PRC after Beijing and Shanghai, one of four municipalities
with provincial-level status. It borders Beijing Municipality along the Bohai Gulf.
40 XNRB 26 May 2005, ‘尊敬的蘇理南的華人華僑，您們好!’ (Dear Chinese of
Suriname, greetings!). Initials have been substituted for the two personal names in
the original text.
ROSCAs to provide start-up capital for enterprises in Baihuo Business.

The performance of the 2003 Commemoration would seem to have settled the role of New Chinese in the Surinamese narrative of Chineseness: New Chinese were the latest incarnation of Chinese migration, and secondary to the established Fuidung’on Hakkas. In the Commemoration, the Fuidung’on Hakka huiguan elite had reaffirmed its role as interpreter and representative of things Chinese in Suriname. However, this image of Fuidung’on Hakka hegemony did not quite tally with the actual situation in the field. Wenzhounese individuals and members of the huiguan establishment had been networking behind the scenes for some time for the purpose of diplomacy towards the Surinamese authorities and the PRC embassy, as well as access to transnational business networks. Wenzhounese entrepreneurs had been discussing setting up an organization for Wenzhounese immigrants since 1998, and increasing numbers of immigrants from Zhejiang Province provided at least the illusion of a substantial power base for a budding New Chinese elite. As stated in Chapter 4, most Zhejiangese immigrants are from Wencheng, with smaller numbers from Lishui, both in Wenzhou Municipality. There are some people from other areas in Zhejiang Province (such as Hangzhou, and including Wu-speakers from the Shanghai area), but these have no stable migration networks in Suriname. Eventually Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui (Zhejiang Province Hometown Association) was established on 30 October 2003 as a stichting / Foundation under Surinamese law under the name Stichting Zhejiang (the Zhejiang Foundation). Its Board consisted of nine individuals, one of whom was Yu Lihong, one of the few women in the leadership of any huiguan in Suriname. The new huiguan placed an advertisement in the Chinese papers to remind everyone of Zhejiangese extraction to attend the celebration of the Lunar New Year. In the same paper the huiguan leadership was informed of a formal invitation from the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui to the event. Subsequently, on the evening of 22 January 2004, the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui was launched during an event consisting of a public presentation of the new huiguan to selected guests officials, followed by a variety show. A substantial number of Zhejiangese attended (over one thousand according to

41 Articles of Association of Stichting Zhejiang, composed by Mr. Jan Currie, Ll.M. Not only is Yu Lihong the only woman on the Board of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, she is also the only one of the eight members who has Surinamese nationality.
the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui\textsuperscript{43}). The official guests were seated in a private section right in front of the stage. President Venetiaan was unable to attend, but many upper-level officials of the ‘Chinese’ Ministry of Trade and Industry were present. In Zhonghua Ribao of 29 January, Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui reported that besides the Minister of Trade and Industry, the Minister of Defence had also been invited, as well as members of the huiguan establishment, diplomats of the Chinese embassy, and representatives of China Zhong Heng Tai Suriname N.V.

PTH was the main language of the event, with some attempts at translation into Dutch and Sranantongo. No other varieties of Chinese were spoken. Minister Michael Jong Tjien Fa of Trade and Industry started with a salutation in Mandarin, but the main body of his speech was in Sranantongo. As a government representative he spoke of the important cultural and socio-economic contributions of ethnic Chinese to Suriname, and stressed the importance of foreign investment, not only of companies such as China Zhong Heng Tai, but also of small private enterprises such as those of New Chinese migrants. His speech matched that of the Chinese ambassador, Hu Shouqin, who restated the good relations

\textsuperscript{43} ZHRB 29 January 2004, ‘浙江同鄉會籌委會成立暨春節晚會隆舉行.’ (The Preparatory Committee of the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui put on a grand Spring Festival celebration).
between the Republic of Suriname and the PRC, and praised the Chinese community in Suriname for its social organization on behalf of the people of both countries. Representing Kong Ngie Tong Sang, deputy chairman Ling Nget Tet spoke in Mandarin of the unity of Chinese in Suriname, and the image of Chinese as loyal Surinamese citizens. Zheng Guoqing, chairman of the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui preparatory committee, said that “When discussing economic matters, Zhejiang Province necessarily comes to mind, and one cannot avoid speaking of Wenzhou and Yiwu, as China’s largest commodity marketplace is located there, and from there Chinese sojourners have spread over the whole world.” The goal of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui was to contribute to the socio-economic development of Suriname and to be of service to the Surinamese people, while striving for “unity, charity, cooperation and mutual love”.

The event was a staged performance, but it was very difficult to determine which elements of the choreography were planned for this particular event, and which were simply conventional. The formal welcome of the invited guests was a completely conventional display, staged in plain view and facing the front of the hall; the Members of the Board of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui stood in line to the left side of a red carpet, individually welcoming each government official and huiguan representative. Zhejiangese visitors (shopkeepers and their families) were not formally welcomed, but were left to find a seat at any of the tables and grab a bottle of water from a shrink-wrapped stack. This contrasted sharply with the public statement of wealth at the beginning of the event: a string of fireworks stretching the length of five cars. The Zhejiangese visitors served as a prop for the actors in their dialogue with the target audience of government officials and Hakka huiguan establishment, providing the image of a Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui constituency. However, the Zhejiangese were the targeted audience at those moments when huaqiao conventions and the particular script of the performance seemed to compel the Hakka huiguan establishment to a public reversal of dominance.

PTH was a rational choice as the language for this particular event and as the only variety of Chinese that might be considered common to all Chinese immigrants. But as such this is also a globalizing convention, a symbol of the unity of all Chinese everywhere, and the power of China. So the Kejia speakers were up on the stage doing their best to carry their speeches in PTH, betraying

44 Speech reproduced in ZHRB 29 January 2004: ‘籌委會主席鄭國慶先生致詞’ (Speech by Mr. Zheng Guoqing, chairman of the preparatory committee).
Figure 18: Members of the board of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.

Figure 19: Dragon dance during inauguration ceremony. Photo: Ranu Abhelakh.
a certain marginality to modern Chinese culture and affirming that PTH and not Kejia was the Chinese language of Suriname. But the choice of PTH was also a part of the hidden New Chinese transcript that was becoming briefly visible and evident. A Tong'ap informant later reported how she had been approached by the preparatory committee, who were searching for interpreters who could provide live translations in Dutch and PTH. The representative had dismissed her suggestion that Kejia and Sranantongo might be more realistic and efficient. He pointed out that Kejia was not classy enough in formal Chinese situations, nor was Sranantongo good enough for formal Surinamese settings.

The most significant performance was the dragon which was originally used in the Commemorative Parade. It was carried and operated by Wenzhounese male dancers, and was accompanied

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45 The language they used could better be described as ‘Mandarin’, as it was a mix between the Taiwanese (Guoyu) and PRC (PTH) standards.
46 The informant was a Hong Kong Chinese translator with whom I regularly exchanged translation work from third parties. What should have been limited to handing over text at the gate usually developed into extensive gossip sessions on Chinese matters in Suriname. On this occasion a remark about the Zhejiang Tong-xiang Hui event started her into a long complaint about the haughty ‘zetgongzai’ who thought Kejia beneath them. Her reasoning with regard to the use of Kejia was flawed, however; Kejia had never been acceptable as the language of formal occasions, even during Old Chinese events (see Chapter 3).
by a *suona* shawm and percussion. The Zhejiangese Dragon Dance functioned to start the Spring Festival celebrations, but its use had wider significance. First, it was an internal marker that distinguished Zhejiangese from the older Fuidung’on Hakka migrants; though the dragon was immediately recognizable to everyone in Suriname as something ‘traditionally Chinese’, only the Chinese audience interpreted it as distinctly different from Pearl River Delta culture. Cultural events organized by the older huiguan usually start with a *Kilin* Dance (Kejia: *mu kilin*, ‘dancing the Unicorn’) or Lion Dance (Kejia: *mu suzai* ‘dancing the Lion’), originally a purification ritual. Hakkas in Suriname will identify Kilin Dances as originally Hakka, and Lion performances as Cantonese. They are not distinguished in the Surinamese Dutch term *drakendans* (‘dragon dance’), but an actual Dragon Dance had only been performed once before, on 10 October 1953 during Double Tenth Day (see Paragraph 7.1.2). The Dragon Dance was a marker in that particular context. However, when asked whether a Dragon Dance was Hakka or not, Tong’ap informants explained that it was a broader Chinese tradition. To them, a Dragon Dance (Kejia: *mu liung*) signalled a grander public event than the presence of a Kilin or Lion. They explained that a Dragon Dance was rare in Suriname because the dragon was more expensive and required more people to operate.

That is why the dragon also served to signal social cohesion. Not only does a Dragon Dance require more people, it also involves more complex choreography and preparation than Kilin / Lion Dances, and all the young men carrying the snaking beast rather than just two people bearing a Kilin / Lion suggested a higher level of mobilization and organization. More complex choreographies, featuring more than one animal with more agile routines, can also make Kilin / Lion dances signal social cohesion and the ability to mobilize a constituency, but no such intricacy was ever achieved in Suriname. Finally, the Dragon Dance signalled cultural authenticity. Kilin / Lion Dances in Suriname are accompanied by percussion only, and these gongs and drums are actually the only traditional Chinese musical instruments that are still played in Suriname. This particular Dragon Dance was accompanied by percussion and a *suona* – shawms that loudly and publicly call attention to some public event in a Chinese community, such as village festivals and traditional bridal parades. There is no evidence that they had ever been used in Suriname prior to this event.

The variety show that formed the second half of the event was not remarkable, in the sense that it was very much like the variety shows which took place during the annual public celebration
of the Moon Festival in De Witte Lotus Sports Club. ‘Pure traditional Chinese’ culture alternated with more modern interpretations of Chineseness from the PRC (patriotic Chinese Minority dances by students of the Chinese School, celebrations of modernity through karaoke performances of Chinese pop music, etc.). There was nothing specifically Wenzhounese about the variety show; what was apparent were Chinese patriotism, urban culture, modernization, and consumerism. The Wenzhounese audience who had patiently waited through the official first part clearly enjoyed the show. The whole event was filmed and broadcast later that evening on ATV, spreading the news beyond the confines of the Chinese language to the wider Surinamese community, and beyond the ability of the Fuidung’on Hakka establishment to control. A few days later two of the speeches were published in the Chinese-language media. The elite of the ‘Old Chinese’ organizations who had shown obvious non-verbal signs of discomfort during the event itself, initially chose to ignore the new organization in Dutch-language contexts, but were careful to include its name in Chinese-language contexts.

Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui continues to organize a Spring Festival celebration in the same location, which consistently reaches the mainstream media. In February 2005, the start of Year of the Rooster was celebrated by Chung Fa Foei Kong, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Tjauw / Fa Tjauw and Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, but the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui event in Flamboyant Park was the only one that was extensively covered in De Ware Tijd. Zheng Guoqing, now clearly identified as the chairman of the huiguan, said that they currently had 3,000 members, and that their main goal was to assist integration into Surinamese society, while also looking out to help non-Chinese Surinamese. Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui was legitimate from the start, not because of its leadership but by public acceptance of it as a portal to the world of the New Chinese. A small group of Wen-

47 ATV is a private television station, established on the ground of the Surinamese telephony provider TELESUR. The ATV broadcast was not provided with subtitles, however.
49 De Ware Tijd, 10 February 2005: ’Zhe Jiang [sic] luidde jaar van de Haan feestelijk in’ (Zhe Jiang festively welcomed the Year of the Rooster); 11 February 2005: ‘Fotoverslag viering Chinees nieuwjaar’ (Photo-reportage of Chinese New Year).
50 There is, of course, no way to measure the actual Wenzhounese support for Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui. One indication is an advertisement published in ZHRB on 19 February 2004 to thank donors who contributed funds to the event in Flamboyant Park. Such advertisements are a proven way to mobilize financial support by mani-
zhounese entrepreneurs with the right connections and enough financial backing had successfully positioned itself as grass roots representatives of New Chinese. The message was clear: Chinese collective identity would no longer be the monopoly of Tong’ap and Laiap.

8.4 A New Order

The establishment of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui signalled another change in the way Chinatown politics would be conducted. With the arrival of New Chinese, the linguistic and cultural situation within the Chinese group in Suriname became unusually complex, a complexity that existed for much longer in, for example, Southeast Asia. The presentation of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui meant that the Wenzhounese positioned themselves as a coherent group on the basis of shared origin in the same Chinese Province, but it also placed the earlier huiguan in a Hakka / Fuidung’on / Kejia-speaking group; ethnic Chinese immigrants appeared to be developing sub-ethnic identities by defining themselves as belonging to different tong-xiangbang (“coregionalist group”). People might have been aware of the new cleavages within the Chinese group (the old ones being the huaqiao distinctions between Tong’ap (sinkeh and laokeh) and Laiap), but were not used to think of Chineseness in Suriname in terms of bang. The average Chinese is not necessarily aware of different kinds of Chinese, as Constable notes. In any case Hakka identity as a particular type of Chinese identity was not strongly developed in Suriname in the absence of people from other Chinese backgrounds.

The bang (“group; gang; party”) concept is used by Chinese in Southeast Asia to describe the tendency of immigrants from China to organize themselves on the basis of shared language, native place, or other criteria such as surname / kinship, friendship, or occupation. Elsewhere the concept of bang is firmly institutionalized; it is particularly well developed in Singapore, where British colonial authorities attempted to use it to manage Chinese society.
and control the effect of the significant influx of Chinese immigrants in the 18th century. Originally based on linguistic and territorial distinctions, bang organizations became the institutional basis of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce (SCCC, formed in 1906), which functions as an inter-bang forum, the ‘supreme Chinese association for consultation, cooperation and group contribution to the well-being of the Chinese society’, with its leaders recognized as community leaders.

Subtleties in the wording of advertisements and announcements in the Chinese-language media following Chinese New Year in 2004 suggest that the people behind Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui were aware of the impact of their choices. When Kong Ngie Tong Sang was established all Chinese in Suriname as we saw were coming from the Fuidung’on area, and the huiguan was a hometown association in all but name. The huiguan that ultimately derived from it, such as Chung Fa Foei Kon and Hua Cu Hui, shared its Fuidung’on cultural and linguistic roots. The Chinese organizations that were organized around a political agenda, such as Chung Tjauw / Fa Tjauw (the Chinese wing of the NPS), also operate through what are basically elite networks of established Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants and their descendants. The writers of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui texts in the Chinese newspapers followed Hakka precedent by grouping Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon and Fa Tjauw Song Foei together as ‘the three huiguan’ (san qiaotuan), followed by Hua Cu Hui and Chung Tjauw Fu Li Hui. This practice originally served to distinguish the ‘original’ huiguan (mutually related through their establishments) from the upstart organizations, but now gave the distinct impression of distinguishing the Hakka organizations and their political derivatives from the Wenzhounese organization – an impression that could easily have been avoided by individually listing the various huiguan.

Other New Chinese huiguan soon followed. There already had been a number of ad hoc Fujianese organizations, for instance the Fujianese Percussion Group (Fujian Luogu Dui) which was set up in September 2003 for the Commemoration Parade (see Chapter 7). There was also the short-lived Sociaal-culturele vereniging Xin Hua Lin Liangxin (the Xin Hua Lin Liangxin Socio-Cultural Association), organized around people from Xianyou County in Fujian (see Paragraph 4.1.2). By March 2005, when the campaigns for the 2005 national elections reached the Chinese-language media, two

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new hometown associations (i.e. tongxianghui) started being mentioned. The *Fujian Tongxiang Hui* (Fujian Province Hometown Association, apparently not dominated by any particular qiaoxiang) and the *Hainan Tongxiang Hui* were also named. Neither organization could be reached at a specific address, only via telephone numbers of private individuals. Little else is known about them; their leadership preferred to remain in the shadows, and their presence was never formally or diplomatically announced to the Surinamese public or authorities.

In April 2005 the establishment of the *Hainan Huaqiao Lianhe Hui* (Alliance of Overseas Hainanese) was formally announced in the Chinese newspapers. Its self-description (“The ‘Alliance of Overseas Hainanese’ is a charitable organization established around a core of Hainanese living in Suriname, in which organizations of new immigrant Hainanese are united.”) confirmed rumours that at least three different groups of Hainanese were attempting to set up organizations. An advertisement two months later announcing the upcoming Ninth World Conference of Hainanese Organizations suggested that the Alliance was exploring transnational linkages, and that the *Hainan Tongxiang Hui* was a member of the Alliance. The *Hainan Huaqiao Lianhe Hui* was never again mentioned in the Chinese-language media, whereas both the *Hainan Tongxiang Hui* and the *Fujian Tongxiang Hui* are consistently acknowledged by the three main Hakka huiguan in public advertisements and invitations to huiguan events.

One would expect to see more evidence of network links between New Chinese organizations in Suriname with Chinese migrant institutions abroad. Xin yimin / New Migrant organizations are usually linked to various other organisations and PRC state institutions in complex ways. In Suriname such network links are kept out of the public eye, and only rarely surface in Chinese-language media, for instance in the example of the Hainanese huiguan above. The New Chinese organizations are copies of local patterns: they are patriarchal organizations whose activities are economical (pro-

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55 ZHRB 22 March 2005: ‘臨時助選委員會召開第一次會議’ (Provisional ‘Support the Elections Committee’ meets for the first time)
58 ZHRB 31 June 2005.
59 Nyíri 2001: 647.
tecting and advancing the commercial interest of their shopkeeper constituencies), political (forging links to the Surinamese authorities while settling problems and conflicts out of sight of the same authorities), cultural (organizing ROSCAs, etc.), and social (organizing entertainment). Like the Fuidung’ on Hakka organizations, they are also shetuan because of the necessity to build and facilitate local and transnational networks; all shetuan in Suriname are responses to the needs of Chinese migrants in Suriname. The ‘Old Chinese’ huiguan have become hometown associations by default because of the way the New Chinese intruded, but qiaoxiang ties are not the primary goal of the old huiguan. Moreover, despite of being hometown associations, the New Chinese huiguan focus on the link with the ‘Chinese homeland’ – the PRC – rather than developing qiaoxiang links.

It seems clear that the New Chinese huiguan, or in any case the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, is a continuation of the adaptive strategy of Chinese institutions in Suriname, but it is less clear if their activities are copies of ‘Old Chinese’ models. Fuidung’ on Hakka ROSCAs are highly institutionalized and thoroughly localized ‘bidding associations’ (see Chapter 1, footnote 11). Wenzhou migrants were already familiar with the concept of ‘bidding associations’ as one of a wide range of informal near-banking mechanisms. During the time of economic reform, local government was supportive of the private sector in Wenzhou. In the mid-1980s the vast majority of credit in Wenzhou originated from a wide range of non-governmental sources, from 95% at the high end to 80% at the informal end. Whereas ROSCAs were initially typical sources of credit, by the early 1990s the development of more capital-intensive private enterprises was matched by the appearance of financial mechanisms such as shareholding, pawnshops, pyramid schemes, underground money houses, privately owned banks, etc. As a source of informal credit, ROSCAs in Wenzhou were not highly institutionalized, and did not require organizers or participants to have strong political ties. Wenzhou migrants could therefore have transplanted any type of ROSCA to Suriname, but because those I spoke to were very reluctant to say anything about them, I

60 Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui framed its goals in humanitarian terms: mobilizing financial support for compatriots in dire straits, and providing care for the elderly, based on the “most excellent Chinese tradition of mutual cooperation and love”. ZHRB 29 January 2004: ‘籌委會主席鄭國慶先生致詞’ (Speech by Mr. Zheng Guoqing, chairman of the preparatory committee).
61 Tsai 2002: 130.
62 Tsai 2002: 163.
was unable to compare the Wenzhounese credit systems with established Fuidung’on Hakka mechanisms.

Financial assistance is the most obvious activity of the New Chinese organizations, either by providing a platform, trust and financial backing for ROSCAs, or by organizing fundraising drives. For example, on 6 January 2005, the *Fujian Tongxiang Hui* placed an advertisement in Zhonghua Ribao to acknowledge 66 contributions totalling SR$ 5,622 and US$ 650 for the cremation of a murdered shopkeeper from Jitian County in Fujian Province.63 In April and May 2005 *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui* raised funds via the Xunnan Ribao and Zhonghua Ribao for a Chinese in Nickerie District whose shop was destroyed in a fire and lost almost US$20,000. In four advertisements, *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui* acknowledged donations from 52 individuals of various Chinese regional backgrounds, along with donations from 8 businesses (of which 7 *maoyi gongs*) and 6 huiguan totalling SR$ 19,170 and US$ 3,620.64 Another kind of financial service which Chinese adaptive organizations provide is help with hawala-type remittances.65 In the twentieth century, Fui-

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63 *ZHRB*, 6 January 2005, ‘訃告’ (Obituary notice). The advertisement states that the deceased was ‘murdered by a cruel non-Chinese’. The term I translate as ‘non-Chinese’ was 鬼佬 (Mandarin: *guilao*; more commonly known in the West in the Cantonese pronunciation *gwailo*). The text is also interesting because of the name heading the list of donors, usually the place reserved for the chairperson of the huiguan who is behind such an initiative. The personal name Liangxin is the same as that of Lin Liangxin of ‘Xin Hua Lin Liang Xin Socio-Cultural Association’, which might suggest a link between the *Fujian Tongxiang Hui* and that defunct organization.

64 Advertisements in *ZHRB*, 14 April 2005; *XNRB*, 18 April 2005, 9 May 2005, 27 May 2005, ‘浙江同鄉會’ (*Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui*). The contributing huiguan were: *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui* (US$ 1,000), *Fujian Tongxiang Hui* (SR$ 1,000), *Hainan Tongxiang Hui* (SR$ 500), Fa Tjauw Foei Kon (Nickerie, SR$ 1,000), Fa Tjauw Song Foei (SR$ 1,000), Kong Ngie Tong Sang (SR$ 1,000), *Hainan Huaqiao Lianhe Hui* (SR$ 1,000). Contributions from these five huiguan would signal status-elevating public recognition of *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui*.

65 Hawala (from Arabic حوالإ *hawlā*: a bill of exchange or a promissory note) is a system of remittances originating in Muslim South Asia. It is an efficient, uncomplicated, and informal (in the sense of undocumented as well as untaxed) system of legitimate remittances from migrants to their dependents back home that works by transferring money without actually moving it. Because hawala is based on trust it is a closed system that relies on ethnic resources to bind clients and brokers in a migrant network. Like any other remittance system it can play a role in money laundering. Agents in the hawala network eventually need to move the funds which is owed between them, and since many hawala transactions (legitimate and illegitimate) are conducted in the context of import/export businesses, the manipulation of invoices by hawala brokers (undervaluing and overvaluing) is a very common means of settling accounts after the transactions have been made. If the
dung'on Hakka adaptive institutions provided institutional help with regard to remittances (called *qiao hui*: ‘sojourners remittances’, or simply *hui kuan*: ‘remittances’, in written Chinese of the time). Remittances (from huaqiao in Suriname to huajuan in their homeland) became a marginal issue for the Fuidung'on Hakkas as time progressed. Because stakeholders rely on the informal and closed nature of migrant remittance systems, it is unclear which New Chinese migrant cohorts use them, what role the New Chinese adaptive institutions play, and if New Chinese remittance systems are in any way related to illegal activities (tax evasion, human trafficking, smuggling of goods and funds, etc.).

The legal framework of the New Chinese huiguan is also fully local. *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui* was formally registered as a stichting/Foundation under the name *Stichting Zhejiang* (Zhejiang Foundation), simply because that has proven the easiest way to formalize an organization under Surinamese law. In that respect it resembles the organizations that have split away from the three *san qiaotuan*. Like those more recent Fuidung'on Hakka organizations the *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui*, *Hainan Tongxiang Hui* and *Fujian Tongxiang Hui* do not carry the suggestion of an actual building (guan) of their own and in their names.\(^{66}\) Any New Chinese who wished to establish a new huiguan could be said to have little choice but to explicitly identify with such an organization as a hometown association. Thus they identify themselves as a distinct bang, if they want to be credible in the eyes of their compatriots. However, no new huiguan legitimized itself to the general public as reflecting bang cleavages. Instead, linguistic and cultural differences were downplayed, and new huiguan legitimized themselves to non-Chinese as representatives of ethnic Chinese; the significance of cleavages was minimized, and the vague term ‘Chinese’ was consciously employed.

The new huiguan are hometown associations (*tongxianghui*) in a rather broad sense; none are named after the actual qiaoxiang of their members. In the case of *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui*, almost all Zhejiangese in Suriname are from the Wenzhou area, and most of these are from Wencheng County. Why not then name the fronts are other types of enterprises such as travel agencies, funds might need to be smuggled in the form of cash or valuables.

\(^{66}\) In early April 2005 *Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui* moved from its rented premises above Restaurant Hong Kong in downtown Paramaribo to the first floor above Xinghua Supermarket (興華超市) in Meerzorg in the District of Commewijne, across the Suriname River from Paramaribo.
organization ‘Wenzhou Tongxiang Hui’ (Wenzhounese Hometown Association)? Informants proved evasive, and at times genuinely confused. A wish to keep the organization inclusive by not making it seem restricted to people from Wenzhou, would mean that ethnic resources (i.e. restricting membership to produce a closed network) are not really important. The precise qiaoxiang might not be very important, if the point of a new huiguan was to break the monopoly of the Fuidung’ on Hakkas on representing things Chinese in Suriname. It might just as easily have been that the organizers did not primarily identify themselves as Wenzhounese, and identified the Fuidung’ on Hakkas as people from Guangdong Province, so that contrasts between qiaoxiang would have been articulated at the provincial level. A more likely explanation is that PRC patriotism produces the image of a monolithic ‘Chinese people’. As Nyíri notes, provincial identities are derived from a single national discourse.67

Differences between the ‘Old’ and New Chinese organizations in Suriname are less obvious than the similarities, except for the fact that the ‘Old Chinese’ huiguan were definitely also communal places, while the New Chinese huiguan are not (yet). There is no reason to believe that New Chinese / New Migrant shetuan should be fundamentally different than earlier huiguan. Markéta Moore (2006) described the development of New Chinese Migrant shetuan in isolation – i.e. in the absence of earlier, ‘Old Chinese Migrants’ – in the Czech Republic during the 1990s. In the case of the first Chinese migrant organization, the controversial Association of Chinese Businessmen in the Czech Republic,68 she has noted the presence of the same issues that plague Chinese community formation elsewhere69: low membership numbers, self-styled ‘community leaders’, the organization is seen as a personal platform of the leadership, the organization actually works against the development of a unified and stable community. Moore attributes the success of another Chinese migrant organization, the Association of Chinese in the Czech Republic,70 to its a-political stance, which made it acceptable to migrants, the Czech authorities and, once it accommodated PRC sensitivities, the Chinese embassy.

The question remains whether the founding of New Chinese huiguan in Suriname was encouraged by the PRC embassy. It has been noted that the PRC has an interest in New Migrants orga-

68 捷克華人工商業者協會商會.
69 Cf. Li 1999b.
70 華聯會.
nizing huiguan and shetuan as gateways to the PRC and as portals for PRC influence. Representatives of the embassy have consistently been invited to all major huiguan events. If, however, the PRC embassy was in any way instrumental in the founding of the New Chinese institutions, this has remained a well-guarded secret.

8.4.1 Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui as a Representation

Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui surely provided a new and different platform for ethnic Chinese positioning in the landscape of the Surinamese State; whether the same holds for other New Chinese organizations is less clear. Despite lacking direct access to political power, non-naturalized immigrant Wenzhounese could bypass the ‘Old Chinese’ network that linked Chinese organizations to the State, which meant that they could now negotiate on equal footing behind the scenes with the elite of the established Chinese migrants and (non-Chinese) apanjaht parties. The ‘Old Chinese’ huiguan soon accepted the New Chinese huiguan as legitimate ‘representations’ in their contact with the Surinamese state and public. For instance, following floods in the Surinamese interior in May 2006, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon, and Stichting Zhejiang (Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui) donated bottled water and cash to the relief effort. They were called ‘the four Chinese associations’, without any distinction made between established / Hakka and newcomers.

The presentation of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui can be seen as a public manifestation of increasingly complex Chinatown politics in Suriname, providing, on the surface, little new information other than the fact that a new huiguan had arrived. Despite the fact that the new huiguan was called a Zhejiangese organization, and the speeches clearly reflected Wenzhounese pride in their background, the speeches and the fact that they were in PTH signalled that regional differences were subordinate to the principle of global Chinese unity. By unambiguously stating that Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui would work for the common good of all in Surinamese society,

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72 De Ware Tijd, 16 May 2006: ‘Chinese verenigingen bieden hulp’ (Chinese associations offer help).
the speeches implied that the Chinese of Suriname – ‘Old Chinese’ as well as New Chinese – were loyal citizens.\footnote{ZHRB 29 January 2004: ‘籌委會主席鄭國慶先生致詞’ (Speech by Mr. Zheng Guoqing, chairman of the preparatory committee).}

But the event afforded a glimpse of a hidden transcript of New Chinese; between the lines a New Chinese challenge emerged to the Fuidung’on Hakka-dominated discourse of Chineseness in Suriname. It implied that the ‘Old Chinese’ are not the only Chinese in Suriname; Wenzhounese are equal to the established Fuidung’on Hakkas, and will deal with Surinamese officials directly; Kejia-speakers need to understand that PTH is a world language; the ‘Old Chinese’ are cut off from authentic Chinese culture; and the ‘Old Chinese’ are ignorant of Chinese modernity. This subtly worded message was not the full hidden transcript of the Wenzhounese fantasy of resistance to the ‘Old Chinese’ majority bursting out onstage. But take into account the one sure glimpse of the hidden transcript (the remark about Kejia and Sranantongo to my translator who also participated in the research) and one could guess that the basic idea behind Wenzhounese discontent was something like the following: “Whoever told these overseas Hakkas that they are better than real Chinese?” It is impossible to say how many of the Wenzhounese present at the Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui event agreed with the message performed onstage, and to what extent they agreed with the idea that the ‘Old Chinese’ needed to accept the new order.

A hidden transcript implies a social space where a discourse of resistance can be developed, out of the view of domination.\footnote{Scott 1990.} This implies social sites, safe locations where people talk and disseminate the views of the hidden transcript. The social spaces where the Wenzhounese subalterns speak are located in basically the same places as those of the Tong’ap: the shops, supermarkets and restaurants where they work and live and gather socially. Wenzhounese language also marks social space; as described earlier, language is an obstacle to Chinese participation in wider Surinamese society as well as a shield against outsiders, and in the case of the Wenzhounese their notoriously difficult language creates an instant seclusion, separating them from speakers of all other languages in Suriname – ethnic Chinese or otherwise. The Wenzhounese huiguan has an office, but no public building or hall where regular meetings, cultural events or rituals can take place.
Is Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui a reflection of a social space where Wenzhounese are free to vent their frustrations and fantasize about an end to Old Chinese elite and non-Chinese domination (i.e. marginalization, anti-Chinese sentiments)? The question is whether the New Chinese elite who publicly emerged in the presentation of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui will be able to articulate such fantasies and whether the constituency they imagine leading can be cohesive enough to perpetuate them. Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui was set up by a limited group of Wenzhounese entrepreneurs known to be resourceful and well-connected, specifically to deal with the ‘Old Chinese’ huiquan elite and the Surinamese government. It is therefore basically an elite organization like other hui-guan in Suriname, whose ‘members’ are more often treated like subordinates. With similar relationships of dependency, one would then also expect similar forms of disguised resistance among the Wenzhounese constituency as among Tong’ap and Laiap: rumour, gossip, slander, character assassination, etc.\(^{75}\)

But how effective is Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui as a representative of the Wenzhounese? The only time Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui appeared in the media, acting in the interest of its Wenzhounese target group, was in the case of the double murder of the Fu boys (see Paragraph 6.3), which as we have seen strengthened the association of New Chinese with violent crime in the public mind. When the parents received a ransom call after their children went missing, they turned to Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, and the chairman Zheng Guoqing immediately sent two people to the Nieuwe Haven Police Station and then to the house of Chen Shaoxian, the man suspected of kidnapping them, where they picked him up and questioned him.\(^{76}\) After Chen had assured them that he did not have the boys, he was returned home. The description of the prompt actions of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui in the Surinamese media gave the impression of an organized gang following the orders of a godfather, instead of a new hands-on approach of hui-guan community involvement.

\(^{75}\) Chairman Zheng Guoqing, for instance, is often mentioned in connection with organized crime and violence, in line with anti-Chinese sentiments and Old Chinese gossip that link New Chinese with crime. Old and New Chinese are extremely careful about spilling such rumours to the outside world, but stories about Zheng still surface among non-Chinese.

\(^{76}\) Times of Suriname, 23 July 2005, ‘Waarom deze man niet de moordenaar kan zijn’ (Why this man cannot be the murderer).
Different aspects of social positioning in Suriname produce different Chinese identities. Chinese positioning in economic society produced *Omu Sneisi*, the ubiquitous Chinese shopkeeper. Positioning in political society results in other identifications, such as the instrumental ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ group label that emerged in response to anti-Chinese sentiments and that was central to the politics of recognition in the 2003 Celebration. Instrumental ethnic identity also appears when there are distinct advantages to exclusive membership of social networks, for instance in huiguan and shetuan. Group membership in such migrant institutions rarely corresponds to categories or labels that outsiders accept and use. One example is Wenzhounese group identity; speaking Wenzhounese signals in-group membership, and qiaoxiang labels provide access to support networks.77

Laiap middle class elites have exploited their recognition by the Surinamese State as representatives of ‘the Chinese community’ to become ethnic power brokers via membership of the board of a huiguan. Huiguan politics started to resemble Chinatown politics more closely since New Chinese migrants started setting up their own huiguan in the late 1990s, at which point established Fuidung’on Hakka elites could no longer dictate the views of ‘the Chinese community’ to the Surinamese state and the relationship between Chinese associations in Suriname came to be reinterpreted as reflecting various subgroups. As this superficially resembles the organization of Chinese society in the Malay world, where regional, linguistic, economic and clan-based distinctions (*bang*) form the basis for sub-ethnic organization, one could consider it a form of resinicization and safely conclude that the Chinese of Suriname now resemble Overseas Chinese elsewhere.

By the end of 2003 the established Fuidung’on Hakkas and the New Chinese had both signalled that they could independently mobilize a substantial ethnic Chinese constituency and funds. In the Commemoration parade, the established Fuidung’on Hakkas quite successfully presented an image of Surinamese Chinese as an extensive, well-organized and wealthy group ready to participate, with good links to transnational investment and the rising power of the PRC. The New Chinese had managed to produce the same idea by setting up their own huiguan as special interest groups to be re-

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77 But one could even argue that in this way such a ‘Wenzhounese’ identity is strictly speaking not ‘Chinese’, as it violates the assumption of monolithic Chinese unity. In Suriname Wenzhounese language is also less a symbolic boundary marker and more an access code to an obscured social space.
cognized by the government as representatives of an apparently substantial segment - in the case of Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, with access to Asian investment. For the Chinese elites in Suriname, Old or New, the status quo to be challenged in the face of the 2005 national elections was the absence of ethnic Chinese agents where it mattered, at the centre of political power in the Surinamese State. As we will see in the next chapter, the pretence of ethnic representation that forms the basis of recognition of huiguan leadership crumbled in the aftermath of Chinese apanjaht participation.
9. THE 2005 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

The 2003 Commemoration of Chinese Immigration Day heralded the successful creation of Chinese ethnicity as a political project, the goal of which was participation in the next round of apanjaht political power-sharing in 2005. For the first time, Laiap and migrant elites were forced to define their constituency as Chinese voters and bridge all subgroups covered by the Chinese ethnic label, and appeal for their support as citizens of Suriname. With the 2004 celebrations, the elites showed that they had been anticipating this election campaign, but none expected the issue of Chinese identity to loom as large as it eventually did in the narratives which emerged from the campaign speeches and texts.

Ethnic Chinese political participation in Suriname has never been measured, but it has certainly never been high. There is no proof that ethnic Chinese are less likely to actually vote, or that Laiap or migrants voice the same attitude towards voting as the average Surinamese.¹ Having relatively small numbers and in particular language barriers formed real restrictions to full participation, but other concrete factors also include citizenship issues, ingrained aversion to politics, and the absence of a unified ethnic Chinese constituency. Formal citizenship issues are obviously a problem for immigrants, as only Surinamese nationals can vote or stand for office in Surinamese elections.² But candidates who could be consistently identified as ethnic Chinese by ethnic Chinese voters and managed to stand for office, could not rely on ethnic loyalty from Chinese voters.³

On the one hand there was a clear lack of ethnic Chinese interest in public life, due in part to the sojourner mentality:

For more than a century Chinese have treated politics rather like the god of plague; they keep it at a respectful distance, and endured anything it aimed at them. Disunited like loose sand, and changing over time into

¹ Voter turnout in the Surinamese legislative elections has hovered around ⅔: the percentage was 70% in the 1991 elections and 65% in the 2005 elections.
² As ethnic Chinese have never been formally excluded from naturalization, it follows that they were never barred from voting or holding public office during any period of Surinamese history. By contrast political participation of ethnic Chinese citizens in the newly independent Southeast Asian states such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia was officially limited despite formal national ideals of multiculturalism (Suryadinata 1998).
³ Lists of Chinese politicians and statesmen in Suriname (such as in Zijlmans & Enser 2002) generally contain people with Sino-Surinamese surnames rather than naturalized immigrants or first generation Laiap (i.e. children of Fuidung'on Hakka immigrants), and are composed as political statements by people wishing to extol the importance of the ethnic Chinese group in Suriname.
'economic animals'. As long as they could earn money and return to China, everything was fine. They said that no matter how tall the tree grew, its leaves would always fall to its roots, but how many men actually returned, like leaves, with their wives and children to their roots? Busy work, assimilated children, different systems, these severed the ties with the Chinese roots, and without quite realizing it they had settled in Suriname.⁴

Tong’ap view themselves as a vulnerable group, and actively teach their (Suriname-born, i.e. Laiap) children to stay out of the spotlight. On the other hand it is very difficult to find ethnic Chinese candidates who are unanimously acceptable to the majority of ethnic Chinese voters and migrants supporters. An ideal candidate would need to have an spotless moral and political record, as well as be ‘truly Chinese’, which would imply an unblemished pedigree, fluency in qiaoxiang dialect, PTH, and written Chinese, as well as competence in handling Chinese cultural and ethnic markers. Of course, the ideal candidate must also be a serious option, and actually be likely to wield some power once elected.

The lack of a unified ethnic Chinese constituency is probably the most important limiting factor. The eternal challenge to anyone aspiring to engage apanjaht consociationalist power-sharing as an ethnic Chinese is mobilization of ethnic Chinese support. Disparate interests, cultural and linguistic differences and weak in-group cohesion, in particular between Tong’ap and Laiap, make concerted political action difficult among ethnic Chinese in Suriname. Tong’ap were entrepreneurial chain migrants, which meant that they used family and hometown networks, not broad clan networks or even broader ‘ethnic Hakka’ networks. Laiap of any generation, sensing that Chinese identity is not welcome in Suriname, often have the option of selecting other positional ethnic labels than Chinese when participating in public life. Fragmentation of the ethnic Chinese constituency only became more acute with the entry of the New Chinese; ideal Chinese candidates now also needed to be able to negotiate growing anti-Chinese sentiments while promoting and protecting the interests of the Chinese minority, and they had to be both legitimately Surinamese-Chinese as well as universally Chinese.

9.1. Chinese Political Participation in Suriname

Chinese political participation has historically been marginal in Suriname. Though the ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs managed to cross the tax assessment barrier to voting in 1897, requirements of democratic procedure disqualified many Chinese immigrants. Moreover, prior to general suffrage in 1948, democratic participation of Chinese was limited by requi-

⁴ ZHRB 2 April 2005 / XNRB 4 April 2005, Zhong Fu’an, ‘開拓未來’ (Open up the future). Pertjajah Luhur (NF coalition member) text.
rements related to class.\textsuperscript{5} Up to the creation of the \textit{Koloniale Staten} representation in 1866, shortly after the abolition of slavery in 1863, the colony of Suriname was basically ruled autocratically. Standing for office in the Staten was not an easy option for Chinese migrants; census and capacity greatly limited the number of voters and candidates for the 9 of the 13 seats not appointed by the Governor.\textsuperscript{6} In 1901 three Chinese entrepreneurs managed to overcome class and language limitations and translate their financial success into candidacy for the \textit{Koloniale Staten}. Their bid was unsuccessful, and no ethnic Chinese attained a seat in the Staten until F.H.R. Lim A Po, a Suriname-born jurist of mixed Chinese descent, was elected in 1938. China-born candidates were not elected to office.\textsuperscript{7}

The apanjaht consociationalism that flourished after the introduction of general suffrage in 1949 was originally seen as distinguishing the established and ‘original’ population of the colony (i.e. the Afro-Surinamese majority, and the elite of white Europeans, Jews and mulattoes) from the outsiders (i.e. the Asian migrants, in particular the East Indians and Javanese). Unable to rely on ethnic loyalty from a Chinese constituency or non-Chinese votes, ambitious Chinese would need to cooperate with outsiders if they wanted to run for office. In this sense, the political power-sharing through coalitions of ethnically based political parties increased the chances of the Chinese elites. The earliest ‘Chinese politicians’ were Laiap. As early immigrants, Fuidung’on Hakkas had developed links with the Creole majority, and successful Chinese had assimilated into the fair-skinned urban elite, at the other end of the Black-White continuum. The early Laiap politicians were of mixed Chinese descent, often of Afro-Surinamese and Fuidung’on Hakka heritage. Their success depended largely on their ability to shift strategically between multiple identities, and to act as gatekeepers for the Fuidung’on Hakka shopkeepers and Tong’ap elites.

As ethnic Chinese in Suriname were careful to avoid the spotlight as a group, mobilization of the small ethnic constituency was a constant problem. With regard to political mobilization ethnic Chinese in Jamaica, Li suggests that keeping a low profile in local politics had roots in Chinese political traditions.\textsuperscript{8} Most prominent were local concerns that ethnic unrest would endanger the livelihoods of Chinese shopkeepers in Suriname, but these were fed by fears that Chinese could be targeted in the way Chinese had been treated in Malaysia and Indonesia. Elites of local-born ethnic Chinese in particular realized the need for participation in apanjaht consociationalism, but immigrant shopkeepers and the immigrant establishment of Chinese associations preferred diplomacy from the sidelines.

\textsuperscript{5} Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 87-88.
\textsuperscript{6} In 1928, 116 out of a total of 1391 voters (8.3\%) were considered ‘Chinese voters’. Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 88.
\textsuperscript{7} Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 88-89.
\textsuperscript{8} Li 2004: 67.
making a show of equal support to various parties which had real access to power.

The strategy of spreading Chinese support among different political parties, whether or not these belonged to the apanjaht coalitions, undermined any concerted effort to get Chinese support for ethnic representation. Perhaps more importantly, the cleavage between those born in China and local-born (Tong’ap and Laiap, see below) made it fundamentally difficult to find an acceptable ‘Chinese’ candidate to stand for office. Citizenship requirements remain a barrier to full participation of Tong’ap. Full participation was far less of an issue for Laiap, but Tong’ap support of Laiap candidates in existing apanjaht parties could never be guaranteed. Not only was it important to spread support, but to be acceptable to an immigrant a local-born ethnic Chinese candidate needed to be able to carefully navigate Chinese immigrant sensibilities (which meant fluency in Fuidung’on Hakka culture and Kejia language), while also being able to fully bridge the cultural and linguistic gap with the Surinamese state. These requirements disqualified most local-born candidates.9

The most stable form of Chinese political participation was through the Creole Nationale Partij Suriname (NPS) since the late 1940s, if one assumes that the local-born, assimilated Chinese and mixed Chinese were accepted as representatives by the broader Chinese segment. In the 1960s the NPS attempted to broaden its constituency by establishing non-Creole party segments, one of which was a Chinese wing. The NPS remains associated with Chinese interests in the minds of many Surinamese, but not always favourably. In fact, the elites and the middle class of the Chinese segment tended to access the political centre indirectly via personal networks – another factor that worked against transparent Chinese participation in apanjaht consociationalism. The Chinese section of the Creole-dominated NPS which was formally set up on 20 January 1967 during the final years of the Pengel Administration, was actually the first distinct Chinese political organization. In the 1960s the ideal of non-ethnic liberal democracy was eroding quickly in Suriname, and the major parties (reflecting the major ethnic groups) were becoming more blatantly ethnic on the one hand, while turning to mining support among smaller ethnic groups on the other.

The benefits of having explicitly (non-Creole) ethnic party constituencies were clear to the NPS. These were extension of its electoral base and, in the case of the Chinese who were perceived as relatively well-off, the promise of extra funds. The benefits to the Fuidung’on Hakka elites were direct access to the centre of power, and extension of elite power

9 Zijlmans & Enser (2002) provide a historical overview of Chinese political participation in Suriname as reflected in the Surinamese media, but they do not consistently distinguish between migrants and Suriname-born, Tong’ap and Laiap, or ‘pure’ versus mixed ancestry.
bases beyond the existing socio-cultural associations or huiguan. The Chinese point of view saw cooperation with the NPS as a way to guarantee protection of immediate Chinese interests, most obviously against their common East Indian competitors. In the Cold War atmosphere of the 1960s, Fuidung’on Hakka references to the PRC as ‘the motherland’ were interpreted as a threat of Communist infiltration in Suriname via Chinese migrants. In 1968, not long after the establishment of the Chinese Section, the Surinamese Ministry of Justice decided to issue two-year residence permits to Chinese migrants rather than granting permanent residence as had been the case up to then. The Chinese Section successfully asked the support of the NPS leadership to counter what to the Chinese Section was a policy to prevent Chinese immigration. In fact, after the Pengel Administration, the NPS continued to block moves to limit Chinese immigration.

However, the NPS route never enabled an ethnic Chinese candidate who was acceptable to every aspect of the Fuidung’on Hakka group (i.e. someone respectable, fluent in spoken and written Chinese and Dutch, and sure to defend the Chinese ownership economy) to achieve a position of power. Chinese participation in apanjaht politics outside the NPS, however, was mainly limited by the fact that any available ethnic Chinese constituency would always be a small group reluctant to get involved. Participation in apanjaht consociationalism as an independent political entity under culturally Chinese terms was attempted during the legislative elections of 1973, just before independence in 1975. The only ethnic Chinese party ever in Surinamese history, Nyinmin Lènhap Tong (‘United People’s Party’) was set up by Tong’ap shopkeepers, supported by Laiap gatekeepers. As an ethnic party made up of a small urban minority, it could never acquire enough votes to make any real impact, and so it entered the 1973 elections in an alliance with the Surinaams Vrouwen Front (SVF, Surinamese Women’s Front); the VVP-SVF coalition won no seats. Apparently, the greatest part of the Chinese vote went to the NPS in the NPK coalition, which included PNR and PSV as well as the Javanese-dominated KTPI; Chinese shopkeepers wanted to avoid a repeat of the riots and arson attacks under the previous government, which was led by the (East Indian-dominated) VHP. Nyinmin Lenhap Tong was never formally disbanded, but its greatest lesson was that political participation outside the NPS needed to be low-risk as well as secure. This meant participation via some other substantial group, preferably without

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10 Huiguan (lit.: ‘public place for meetings’) is a common term for voluntary associations of Overseas Chinese. See Chapter 8.
11 XNRB 18 May 2005, ‘歷史的回顧 -- 漫談 NPS 華人支部’ (In Retrospective; An Open Discussion of the Chinese Section of the NPS).
12 Ngien Mien Len Hap Tong was apparently set up by Tong’ap and Laiap. Zijlmans & Enser note that it was started by “a number of Chinese shopkeepers and various other men of Chinese and Chinese-Creole origin who had come to the fore.” (2002: 95, translation mine).
choosing either of the dominant blocs (Creole or East Indian) in the consociationalist balance. Consequently, Javanese apanjaht parties were the logical choice.

Chinese political participation had grown during the roughly thirty years of apanjaht power-sharing between 1949 and the military coup of 1980. Numbers of ethnic Chinese voters had steadily increased, though it is difficult to estimate what that meant in terms of percentages of local-born and foreign-born voters, or what ratio of Laiap to Tong’ap voters actually cast their votes. Chinese are considered to have regularly held public office in this period, though their numbers are probably overstated by the inclusion of Moksi Sneisi who did not identify themselves as Chinese. Still, Laiap did dominate the political scene while Tong’ap remained absent from public office through lack of incentive to acquire Surinamese citizenship and lack of mechanisms by which the State could assimilate immigrants as active citizens.

9.1.1 Chinese Participation via Javanese Apanjaht Parties

Chinese group participation in national politics required ethnic Chinese politicians to seek out coalitions with political entities that stood a reasonable chance of being elected to the centre of power, and that were not only willing to accept ethnic Chinese group representation within their ranks, but were also amenable to granting Chinese representatives access to positions of power following the elections. Anti-apanjaht parties such as the NDP would be happy to host Chinese members in deference to the national Mamio Myth of cultural harmony, but it could never be a platform for ethnic representation. It therefore also cannot provide elites with the leverage to pursue their own intra-ethnic ambitions. The Chinese wing of the Creole NPS had provided protection of Chinese interests, but it is not proven to be a vehicle for ethnic Chinese representation in parliament. More concerted efforts to achieve the goal of an ethnic Chinese member of the National Assembly via NPS included the creation of a huiguan (see Chapter 8), but none were successful. By the 1990s, some in the ethnic Chinese elite had decided to try their luck with the pivotal Javanese parties, which were essential to consociational harmony between the Creole and East Indian parties by virtue of their perceived constituency, the Javanese who are the third largest ethnic group in Suriname.

Throwing in their lot with Javanese coalition partners assured Chinese access to the centre of power, but it also exposed them to negative publicity generated by Javanese party leadership. To explain this inherent political risk we need to take a closer look at the way the parties have developed. The leaders of Javanese parties had learned to exploit their position as power brokers in the apanjaht consociationalist coalition system by the 1970s. Political participation of the Javanese segment in Post-War apanjaht consociationalism was initially limited by suffrage
based on property ownership, educational background and citizenship issues. Javanese initially participated as Asians, in the Hindoestaans-Javaanse Centrale Raad (East Indian-Javanese Central Council), and the Moslim Partij (Muslim Party) that derived from it, but soon became dissatisfied with perceived East Indian dominance. Iding Soemita founded the first Javanese party, Persatuan Indonesia (Indonesian Union), in 1946 around the failed dream of return to the homeland: Mulih njâwâ (Surinamese Javanese: ‘Return to Java’). Soemita renamed his party the Kaum Tani Persatuan Indonesia (KTPI, Indonesian Peasant Party) to participate in the first legislative elections in 1949.

Iding Soemita’s KTPI won two of the 21 seats in the colonial representation in the 1949 elections. By then Soemita had abandoned the Indonesian homeland ideology, and changed the content of the acronym to Kerukunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil (Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Level). During the next twenty years, the pivotal role of the KTPI (now headed by Iding’s son Willy) as a coalition partner in the apanjaht consociationalist system became exceedingly clear. Fragmentation soon followed. On the one hand the Creole NPS and East Indian VHP both created special Javanese sections (NPS-djawa and VHP-djawa) to woo the Javanese vote, while on the other hand internal squabbles erupted over power-sharing, which resulted in KTPI defectors setting up an alternative party, the Sarekat Rakjat Indonesia (SRI, Indonesian Popular Union). The SRI was transformed into the Pendawa Lima (‘The Five

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14 After the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed in 1945 and Suriname acquired limited autonomy under the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954, Javanese indentured labourers (who had migrated from Java to Suriname within a unified Dutch colonial empire as Dutch subjects) had to choose between Indonesian and Dutch nationality, which in practice meant having citizen rights in the Surinamese part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, not broader Dutch citizenship rights.

15 Javanese indentured labourers in Suriname had been Dutch subjects, not Dutch citizens. After Indonesia declared independence from the Netherlands in 1945, return to the homeland meant moving to a completely new post-colonial state. Javanese in Suriname were faced with the choice between Dutch and Indonesian citizenship, and it was this choice that dominated early Javanese political mobilization. In the years immediately following Indonesian independence, KTPI exploited the wish to return and caused real suffering among the predominantly rural Javanese (Derveld 1981: 40-41). Resistance to KTPI hegemony came from two sides. The Pergarakan Bangsa Indonesia Suriname (PBIS, Union of Indonesians in Suriname) opposed the Mulih njâwâ principle, while SRI/KTPI exploited the disillusionment with Soemita’s promises as an alternative Mulih njâwâ party. The Mulih njâwâ principle was gradually abandoned, though there were still calls for mass returns by Javanese politicians up to Independence in 1975, and in 1982 nine former indentured labourers actually returned to Java. (Keynote speech by Minister of Social Affairs and Public Housing, Soewarto Moestadja (KTPI) at IMWO conference on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of Javanese Immigration, 9 August 2000).

16 A Sundanese, Iding Soemita apparently intended to unify his predominantly Central-Javanese constituency under a religious banner, for which he elicited the support of Javanese Muslim religious leaders. The KTPI acronym originally stood for Koran Tuntunan Pustaka Islam, ‘the Koran is the teaching of Islam’. (Kartokromo 2006: 55).
Pandavas’17, alternatively spelled *Pendawalima* despite the PL acronym) for the first post-independence elections in 1977.

**Apanjaht consociationalism** was put on hold during the period of military rule, but following the end of military rule in 1987, KTPI joined NPS and VHP in the *Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling* (Front for Democracy and Development) coalition. The Front Coalition won 40 of the 51 seats in the National Assembly, while Pendawa Lima won four seats. In 1993, Paul Slamet Somohardjo, one of the founders of Pendawa Lima, returned from self-imposed exile in the Netherlands. The early elections following the brief military coup of 1990, were won by the ruling coalition (now renamed Nieuw Front, NF, after the inclusion of the Surinamese Labour Party, SPA), albeit with a narrower margin. In the 1996 elections, the Nieuw Front won only 24 of the 51 seats. Coalition partner KTPI had reliably contributed five seats, but Pendawa Lima acquired four seats in the National Assembly.

Despite the fact that he was not the *lijsttrekker*, at the top of the list of Pendawa Lima candidates, Somohardjo considered himself a presidential candidate. His demands proved too high, and Pendawa Lima was left out of the NDP-led coalition. Despite the narrow victory of the NF coalition, defections by a VHP splinter group and the KTPI to the NDP of ex-military strongman Desi Bouterse resulted in the Wijdenbosch Administration (1996-2000). Soemita’s party was rewarded for the defection with five government ministries. The Pendawa Lima split in two, with one side led by *lijsttrekker* Mohamed Kasto and referred to as Pendawa Lima, joining the NDP, and Somohardjo’s side which was prohibited by the courts from using the Pendawalima name. Somohardjo’s group then changed the content of the PL acronym to *Pertjajah Luhur* (‘Exalted Faith’). The ruling coalition eventually ran into trouble, with President Wijdenbosch starting his own party (DNP, a reworking of the NDP acronym). So the government was forced to call early elections in 2000.

KTPI joined the DNP-led *Millennium Combinatie* (Millennium Combination) coalition for the 2000 elections. The Millennium Combinatie won only 2 seats in the Paramaribo electoral district, which meant that Willy Soemita did not return to power. Somohardjo’s Pertjajah Luhur, however, had filled the vacuum left by KTPI in the Nieuw Front coalition, and was rewarded for helping to secure the Javanese vote with three of the sixteen government ministries: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing. Though the results of the 1996 elections showed that the KTPI was not the default Javanese apanjaht party KTPI, the schism in the Pendawa Lima had effectively prevented it from becoming a unified alternative. Being focussed on their ability to flip the balance of power in

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17 The sons of Pandu in the Mahābhārata: Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadéva. In the Javanese Wajang Kulit tradition, the names of the heroes are: Yudistira, Bima(sena) / Werkudoro, Arjuno / Janoko, Nakula, Sadewa.
apanjaht consociationalism, none of the Javanese parties ever developed any clear-cut ideology. Clientelism remained their main tool in their competition for the attention of the Javanese constituency, which in turn was their main legitimation in the eyes of other apanjaht parties. The Javanese political elite projected a rhetoric of ‘emancipation’ towards its constituency; in the past the Javanese were used and manipulated by other apanjaht groups, but now they were becoming a power to be reckoned with. The various Javanese parties had basically the same reasons for seeking coalitions as the other major apanjaht parties. Political fragmentation plagued all three major ethnic groups, so that no party could claim full control over its ethnic base, which weakened their positions at post-election power-sharing negotiations. Besides the formation of grand coalitions, apanjaht parties had three options. They could try to reintegrate splinter parties. In the 1990s and 2000s, there were calls for the Javanese parties to form a ‘Java Bloc’, as well as talk of a Pancanama (‘five names’) regrouping of the East Indian splinter parties. Less feasible was a fusion of apanjaht parties from across the ethnic spectrum. Finally, one could try to incorporate marginalized groups, in particular minority groups such as Amerindians, Maroons, and Chinese. Amerindians were numerically weak, Maroons less so. Numbers of eligible voters among the ethnic Chinese might have been unclear, but their economic clout made them into an asset.

Somohardjo decided to extend his power base beyond the confines of the Javanese group. Javanese parties had always been beset by a chronic lack of qualified ethnic Javanese who are able and willing to strengthen the party and man crucial government posts. Moreover, by narrowing their focus on gaining and maintaining the allegiance of ethnic Javanese, the parties could be accused of being un-patriotic and lose legitimacy at the formally non-ethnic and nationalist level of the State.

The various Javanese parties at times seemed like personality cults, centred on the Soemita dynasty in the case of KTPI, and Somohardjo in the case of Pendawa Lima / Pertjajah Luhur. According to various sources, the Soemita clan has the advantage of being more respectable; the Sundanese birthplace of KTPI founder Iding Soemita is often stressed. Somohardjo is described as less aloof and distant from the common man than Willy Soemita. Both Soemita and Somohardjo have been linked to corruption and have been convicted. Soemita had been Minister of Agriculture after the 1973 elections, but was convicted in 1977 for taking bribes in return for agricultural plots, and therefore could not return as Minister. Somohardjo was Minister of Social Affairs when he was accused of assaulting contestants of the Miss Java 2002 beauty pageant (in which he was first involved more than thirty years earlier), and resigned after his conviction for indecent assault. Somohardjo was almost constantly embroiled in scandals, particularly with regard to public housing and real estate, through the Javanese Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing.

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20 Kartokromo 2006: 147.

21 This option was suggested in the Netherlands as a response to the instability of the grand coalition following the 2005 elections. Cf. De Ware Tijd, 26 May 2008, ‘Voorzitter NPS-Nederland: “VHP en NPS fuseren en dan nieuwe partners zoeken”’ (NPS-Netherlands chairman: “Merge VHP and NPS, then seek new partners).
Somohardjo did not intend to publicly elevate Pertjajah Luhur above ethnic politics by incorporating nationalist ideology or patriotic discourse. It was unrealistic to expect members of the larger Creole and East Indian segments to switch allegiance. However, marginalized and minority groups who had been excluded from apanjaht power-sharing in the past were more likely to respond to Pertjajah Luhur clientelism. The party focussed on ethnic minority groups such as the Chinese and later worked to include Amerindian groups and Maroons. Somohardjo, who was increa singly personalizing his position as Javanese power broker, however, was not subtle about his goals, and famously referred to his intended Amerindian constituency as ‘Bosjavanen’ (Bush Javanese).22

9.1.2 Ethnic Chinese Participation in the 1996 and 2000 Elections

Somohardjo’s strategy became more concrete when he was approached by Chinese attempting to find a suitable apanjaht coalition partner to piggyback on the road to the centre of power. Leading up to the 1996 elections, Fa Foe Foei, the group behind the Chinese celebrations of 1993 and 2003 (see Chapter 8), conducted ‘hearings’ with various apanjaht parties such as the Creole NPS and the Javanese Pendawa Lima and anti-apanjaht, or ‘pan-ethnic’ parties such as DA’91 and SPA. Officially, the meetings of the Fa Foe Foei ‘think tank’ (denkgroep) were to inform ethnic Chinese voters about party programmes and advise the ethnic Chinese electorate, while informing the political parties of specific problems of the Chinese – a euphemism for dangling the carrot of an apparently high number of Chinese votes. The willingness of the parties to assist in setting up a Chinese television station was apparently also gauged.

The huiguan establishment had been careful to hedge their bets in the 1996 elections, making sure that they favoured no party above any other in public. Acquiring a share of political power had not been a publicly declared goal of Fa Foe Foei, and none of its members held government posts in the Wijdenbosch Administration. The inflated size of the Chinese segment apparently made little impression on the winning parties, though the upper echelons of the NDP showed keen interest in increasing Chinese globalization. Fa Foe Foei articulated Chinese interests mainly with regard to citizenship. Naturalization and legal residence were a constant headache for Tong’ap, but the influx of New Chinese Migrants in the first half of the 1990s increased the scope of the problem of legal residency for Chinese immigrants. The government failed to cope with the situation amid growing anti-Chinese sentiments, and Fuidung’on Hakkas generally avoided taking up the issue of residency of non-Fuidung’on migrants. There was an idea that any group (influential individuals fluent

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22 Analogous to the now politically incorrect term for Maroons: Bosnegers, ‘Forest Negroes’ / ‘Bush Negroes’.
in different varieties of Chinese as well as Dutch were exceedingly rare at that time) able to bridge the gap between Chinese migrants and the Surinamese State would have access to a relatively wealthy constituency. Chinese immigrants who acquired Surinamese nationality would also become voters, and such new voters might be happy to oblige the wishes of those who had helped them. In any case a group helping Chinese immigrants to acquire Surinamese nationality would be greatly empowered in the eyes of the political establishment simply by the impression that it could command new votes.

Fa Foe Foei was the only partly which was successful with regard to citizenship for Chinese immigrants. Protests against unfair treatment of Chinese applicants for naturalization and residency permits had no resonance among a public increasingly unsympathetic to migrants in general and Chinese migrants in particular. Fa Foe Foei also had a hard time convincing its supposed constituency of its effectiveness. Not being a grassroots organization, it could not be seen to provide immediate assistance with the concrete day-to-day problems of New Chinese Migrants. The public goal of promoting the integration of local-born and immigrant Chinese remained elusive, as Fa Foe Foei’s members (entrepreneurs who self-identified as ethnic Chinese) saw their platform as a way to guide and develop a poorly organized and aimless group. They either dismissed or underestimated the deeper split between Laiap and Tong’ap, and risked appearing to place their own political interests above the economic interests of Chinese retail traders. Fa Foe Foei and the huiguan associated with it had thrown in their lot with the NDP government of President Wijdenbosch, and found it difficult to disassociate themselves from government actions and policies that harmed Chinese interests.

Faced with mounting international debt, the Venetiaan I Administration turned to monetary financing and devalued the Surinamese Guilder in July 1994. Though Chinese entrepreneurs and traders were directly affected, none of the Chinese organizations publicly protested. There were also no protests against price monitoring operations which were meant to dampen social unrest by cracking down on shopkeepers, most of whom were ethnic Chinese. Public dissatisfaction with deteriorating economic conditions boiled over onto the streets in 1999, after which the Wijdenbosch Administration was forced to promise new elections a year early in May 2000. In the run-up to those elections Fa Foe Foei remained quiet, which gave the impression that it was distancing itself from the Wijdenbosch Administration and the NDP (whose leader, Bouterse, had fallen out with President Wijdenbosch).

In anticipation of the 2000 elections, Fa Foe Foei switched back to NF, this time joining the Javanese component led by Somohardjo. However, any mention of the name Fa Foe Foei was quietly avoided through

23 Bulletin of Act and Decrees 1994 Nr. 64.
24 Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 196.
oblique statements about four huiguan announcing through Jack Tjong Tjin Joe that some members had joined Pertjajah Luhur. The 2000 elections were won by the NF coalition, and the ethnic Chinese elite acquired a share of political power in the Venetiaan II Administration without the benefit of ethnic celebrations or distinct politics of recognition; Jack Tjong Tjin Joe, chairman of Fa Foe Foei, became Minister of Trade and Industry as a reward for Chinese support of Pertjajah Luhur.

In the broader strategy of the Laiap and Tong’ap elite, representation of Chinese interests meant consolidating the existing powerbase to achieve greater access to scarce resources; basically, creating the conditions for ethnic Chinese clientelism. Prior to the 2005 elections one source described the best scenario as gaining control over business permits through the Ministry of Trade and Industry as well as over land allocation via some other government ministry. Nobody doubted that Pertjajah Luhur would facilitate Chinese participation in the 2005 elections. In March 2005 a ‘Provisional Chinese Electoral Support Committee’ was announced in the Chinese newspapers. In its first text, the Committee linked itself to the Chinese Electoral Support Committee in the 2000 elections, revealing its roots in Fa Foe Foei:

[...] Two years ago we had the success of the celebration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement, when the spirit of unity among all the Chinese of Paramaribo made a very deep impression on the Surinamese people. Let us now once again join hands and succeed in entering the forbidden terrain of Surinamese politics, and together build a glorious future for the Chinese.

9.1.3 Inflating the Chinese Constituency

Chinese participation in apanjaht ethnopolitics relies on the image of Chinese as important in spite of limited numbers. The 2003 Commemoration had already established the importance of Chinese ethnic identity in the narrative of Surinamese multiculturalism. However, the only rational reason an apanjaht party would consider Chinese partners could be to gain their support; either substantial numbers of voters or financial support. Leading up to the 1996 elections, the size of the ethnic Chinese vote was inflated to 10,000 out of a Chinese segment numbering 50,000 or even 70,000 persons. The number of 10,000 voters was quoted in KOMPAS of 17 April 1996: “The Chinese community in Suriname is said to be good for 2 seats in parliament. But more than half of the more than 10,000 voters speak no Dutch. This might be a big problem in the upcoming elections. There are initiatives in the Chinese community to inform the people of developments in the country. However, language will remain an obstacle.

25 ZHRB 19 March 2005 ‘蘇里南大選與你；推選李嘉林小姐為候選國會願意’ (The Surinamese elections and you; Miss Li Jialin to run in the general elections)
to further integration in the foreseeable future.”

Zijlmans and Enser quote the higher estimate of 70,000 ‘Chinese and Surinamese Chinese’ people in Suriname.

Some of the strategies for achieving Chinese political participation in Suriname were transplanted from the Netherlands, where Chinese had finally been recognized as an official minority group on 1 October 2004. Su-Ying Tsai (of mixed Dutch and Wenzhounese heritage) and her husband Eddy Tjin A Lien (Suriname-born Laiap) from the Netherlands had settled in Paramaribo following a visit a few years earlier. They had become involved in the Pertjajah Luhur project after a visit to Suriname, and Tjin A Lien had become policy advisor at the ‘Chinese’ Ministry of Trade and Industry under Minister Tjong Tjin Joe. Tsai had worked in Stichting Chinese Brug in The Hague, and Tjin A Lien had worked at the Haagsche Hogeschool (The Hague University of Professional Education). Their approach basically required Chinese ethnicity to be as inclusive as possible in order to shore up the numerical significance of the Chinese segment, and to increase the pool of available young ‘Chinese’ talent. According to Tjin A Lien the number of ethnic Chinese in Suriname was in excess of 47,000, based on racial features, Chinese roots, Chinese surnames, and active participation in and conscious experience of Chinese culture. Despite the selectively strategic use of Chineseness, self-identification was dismissed as nonsensical, as Chinese identity was considered to be self-evident, primordial, dominant and certainly not situational or multiple.

The high estimate of 10,000 ethnic Chinese voters remained intact in the run-up to the 2005 legislative elections. The credibility of the number was apparently bolstered by the dominant Yellow Peril stereotype of the anti-Chinese sentiments current at the time, which described Chinese migrants as a huge flood (see Chapter 6). As anti-Chinese sentiments took the form of a conspiracy theory, the supposedly enormous dimensions of the hidden Chinese migrant population became unchallengeable. The conspiracy theory held that the ruling Nieuw Front coalition was actively importing Chinese, in order to increase the number of Nieuw Front voters by naturalizing them. In fact, the number of eligible voters among naturalized Chinese was limited. As can be distilled from Table 2, naturalization of Chinese migrants actually stagnated under the Venetiaan II administration (1996-2000). As noted earlier, the number of foreign-born ethnic Chinese and Chinese nationals in the 2004 census was far less than 10,000: they were respectively 5,575 and 3,654. Even the total

26 De Ware Tijd 17 April 1996. KOMPAS supplement, ‘De Chinese Taalbarrière’ (The Chinese language barrier).
28 Interview 20 August 2005. The number implied that one out of every ten Suriname would be recognizably Chinese (i.e. mistaken for someone from China) to any observer, which is obviously not the case.
29 State Decrees for 1960 are unavailable. Naturalization indicates that applicants resided in Suriname for a number of years, but it says very little about ‘integration’ in the sense of full commitment to life in Suriname.

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Table 2: Numbers of Naturalized Chinese, 1956-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Numbers of Decrees Referring to Chinese</th>
<th>Numbers of Chinese</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1 GB 121, enacted through GB1957.26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>3 GB 78, 103, 184</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>2 GB 137, 190</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>1963</td>
<td>3 GB 52, 53, 146</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>2 GB 14, 44</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>5 GB 29, 74, 82, 83, 84</td>
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<td>1966</td>
<td>6 GB 1, 2, 68, 93, 94, 95</td>
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<td>1967</td>
<td>4 GB 20, 23, 90, 91</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>1968</td>
<td>2 GB 48, 50</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>1969</td>
<td>8 GB 4, 33, 45, 69, 70</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>7 GB 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 72, 120</td>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>10 GB 79, 90, 125, 127, 132, 134, 162, 163, 164, 203</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>11 GB 15, 16, 72, 75, 76, 77, 78, 105, 155, 167, 174</td>
<td>239</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>6 GB 92, 93, 94, 95, 118, 178</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>11 SB 56, 57, 106, 107, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>3 SB 6, 7, 8</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>5 SB 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</td>
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<td>9 SB 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 139, 156</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>4 SB 47, 115, 154, 161</td>
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<td>1982</td>
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<td>1983</td>
<td>9 SB 25, 30, 53, 56, 57, 89, 90, 113, 121</td>
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<td>1984</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>5 SB 75, 76, 77, 78, 79</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>10 SB 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 112, 113, 114, 115</td>
<td>248</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>3 SB 18, 19, 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1 SB 1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4 SB 92, 108, 109, 110</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>11 SB 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4 SB 29, 30, 31, 32</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2 SB 115, 116</td>
<td>173</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2 SB 37, 50</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1 SB 74</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>175</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,876</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The number of self-identifying ethnic Chinese was under 10,000: it was 8,775\(^{30}\). Numbers of eligible ethnic Chinese voters cannot be distilled from the voter registries, though the number of eligible voters who were born in China was available: they were 1,898, of whom 1,750 were born in the PRC and 148 in Hong Kong.\(^{31}\)

\(^{30}\) SIC 225-2006/07.
9.2 The 2005 Chinese Election Campaign

There were two sides to the election campaigns involving ethnic Chinese. On the one hand, Chinese support was implied to the non-Chinese public by presenting ethnic Chinese supporters at party gatherings and by construing Chinese surnames of supporters as an ethnic Chinese presence. On the other hand, ethnic Chinese were directly approached in written and spoken Chinese (Kejia, Cantonese, Mandarin) to secure financial or voter support. Non-Chinese were largely unaware of the Chinese election campaign which was aimed at the ethnic Chinese segment in the Chinese language. Like the broader political campaigns, the Chinese one was largely 'content-free': with the possible exception of NDP, no Surinamese political party ever campaigned on clear issues of ideology or party principles. Moreover, like the broader campaigns, the Chinese-language lobby had to deal with an increasingly cynical Surinamese public that suspected any candidate of running for office only for personal advancement.

It was clear from the start that the quest for the Chinese vote would be dominated by the NPS with its longstanding Chinese connections, Pertjajah Luhur with its new-found Chinese support, and the opposition NDP of Desi Bouterse who was known to be keenly interested in the PRC. The campaign in the Chinese newspapers was heralded in February 2005 by the expected notices and summons for meetings and events organized by political parties with established Chinese links. The Chinese branch of the NPS announced changes in its governing body, and posted reminders to Chinese to check their names on the voter registration list. Two weeks later the Chinese group of Pertjajah Luhur started its mobilization campaign with a string of articles in quick succession, which laid the foundation of the discourse on Chinese positioning that followed. In

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31 If the 12 Malaysia-born registered voters and the one from ‘North Vietnam’ were members of the Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrant network, then that would bring the total of foreign-born ethnic Chinese voters in Suriname in 2005 to 1,917.
32 These were not the only parties wooing the Chinese voter: SPA had a Chinese candidate who addressed the Chinese-speaking public in Kejia and Cantonese on the radio. On 21 and 23 May 2005, just before the election date of 25 May, the A1 coalition (DA91, PVF, D21, Trefpunt 2000) of Winston Jessurun and Monique Essed-Fernandes, placed an advertisement in the two Chinese newspapers presenting itself as a multi-ethnic party that does not distinguish according to race, religious conviction or social class. None of these candidates were elected.
33 XNRB 25 Feb 2005; ZHRB 1, 3, 5 March
34 ZHRB 19 March 2005 ‘蘇里南大選與你；推選李嘉林小姐為候選國會願意’ (The Surinamese elections and you; Miss Li Jalin to run in the general elections); ZHRB 22 March ‘臨時助選委員會召開第一次會議’ (First meeting of the Provisional Chinese Electoral Support Committee); ZHRB 24 March 2005 ‘華人助選委員會成立’ (Chinese Electoral Support Committee set up); ZHRB 24 March 2005 ‘我為何要參選國會議員？李嘉林小姐在第一次臨時助選會議上的講話’
presenting its election strategy, the ‘Provisional Chinese Electoral Support Committee’ described Pertjajah Luhur as an instrument for achieving ethnic Chinese participation in Surinamese politics.35

The Committee concisely and fairly systematically described the problem and its solution in its first article in the two Chinese-language papers, despite typically Chinese and Surinamese obliqueness.36 Chinese participation in national politics was minimal through traditional Chinese avoidance of involvement, and limited access for ethnic Chinese. The text suggested that the interests of Chinese immigrant shopkeepers were being threatened in the National Assembly by an East Indian establishment. The Chinese Electoral Support Committee for the 2000 elections had managed to get doctor Jack Tjong Tjin Joe appointed as Minister of Trade and Industry, and after his unexpected death a Chinese presence at that post was preserved by the appointment of Michael Jong Tjien Fa. This was a crucially strategic post; Minister Jong Tjien Fa had managed to prevent a bill from being passed in the National Assembly that would require applicants for retail trade licenses to prove competency in the Dutch language. A Chinese cabinet minister might be able to block laws and policies detrimental to Chinese interests, but Chinese viewpoints were not directly and promptly defended in the National Assembly. Though no Chinese constituency played any role in the appointment of the only ethnic Chinese Minister, an ethnic Chinese presence in the National Assembly required the support of the ethnic Chinese segment.

The Committee presented Sandra Lee, a 25-year old local-born student of Economics at the Anton de Kom University in Paramaribo and employed at the ‘Chinese’ Ministry of Trade and Industry (led by Tjong Tjin Joe), as the ideal candidate.37 The daughter of Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants, her father a former member of the board of Chung Fa Foei Kon, she was “raised in a family with a Chinese cultural background, proficient in both Chinese and Western culture”. She was “pretty as well as talented”, fluent in multiple languages such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Kejia, “and other Chinese dialects”. She was therefore an ideal master of cere-

(Why do I want to stand for office? Miss Li Jialin addresses the first meeting of the Provisional Chinese Electoral Support Committee); ZHRB 31 March 2005, XNRB 1 April 2005 ‘敬請僑胞擁護參加 PL 黨宣行國會候選人黨部大會’ (Overseas Chinese brothers please enthusiastically attend announcement of nominations during mass meeting at the Pertjajah Luhur headquarters); ‘請僑胞抗擊接壤；支助華人參選國會會員’ (Overseas Chinese brothers please readily donate to the cause: support the Chinese candidate); ZHRB 2 April 2005 ‘華人助選委員會通告’ (Announcement of the Chinese Electoral Support Committee).

35 None of the texts produced by the Committee ever hinted that the Committee itself was an actualization of the broader Pertjajah Luhur strategy to extend its electoral base beyond the Javanese segment.

36 ZHRB 19 March 2005 ‘蘇里南大選與你；推選李嘉林小姐為候選國會願意’ (The Surinamese elections and you; Miss Li Jialin to run in the general elections).

37 Her Chinese name is 李嘉林 (Mandarin: Li Jialin), the Kejia pronunciation of which yields the basis for the name with which she styles herself: Kailin Lee.
monies at Chinese cultural events, such as the annual Moon Festival in De Witte Lotus. She had used her experience with public speaking before a Chinese audience during Pertjajah Luhur meetings and on TV. Sandra Lee was theoretically fully acceptable to any ethnic Chinese subgroup. She bridged the Kejia-Dutch as well as the Kejia-Mandarin language gaps, as well as the Laiap-Tong’ap and Chinese-Surinamese divides while remaining ‘truly Chinese’.

The fact that Sandra Lee was born in Suriname was not explicitly mentioned in the article presenting her candidacy, but in her case proven fluency in Chinese culture would make her acceptable to the vast majority of Tong’ap. The Pertjajah Luhur propagandists made an effort to show that Sandra Lee was supported by people from different Chinese backgrounds as well as by Chinese institutions. The second Pertjajah Luhur article specifically suggested that her candidacy was supported by Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjaww Song Foei, Hua Chu Hui, Sociaal Culturele Vereniging Chung Tjauw, Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, Fujian Tongxiang Hui, Hainan Tongxiang Hui, the Christian American Missionary Alliance church, the Moravian Tshoeng Tjien Church, as well as ‘representatives of local-born people of Chinese descent’.

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38 One article was intended to prove her ability to handle written Chinese. ZHRB 24 March 2005 ‘我為何要參選國會議員？李嘉琳小姐在第一次臨時助選會議上的講話’ (Why do I want to stand for office? Miss Li Jialin addresses the first meeting of the Provisional Chinese Electoral Support Committee).
Sandra Lee had been selected from a pool of ‘young Chinese executives’ (jong Chinees kader) who had followed a leadership course\(^{39}\) organized by Su-Ying Tsai and Eddy Tjin A Lien. However, the strategy of inflating Chinese numbers and training eligible young Chinese lacked a clear narrative to account for the need for Chinese participation; citizenship is broader than just political participation, so if Chinese were such successful immigrants, why was political participation essential, why was mobilization so crucial, and who would directly benefit? One possible response to questions such as this was that getting an ethnic Chinese elected to the National Assembly would be a step towards consolidating the Chinese presence in government (a Pertjajah Luhur party member was already the first ethnic Chinese government minister). However, this in turn raised further questions: who controlled the minister, and who would control the Chinese voice in the National Assembly? In any case, no narrative explaining ethnic Chinese political participation in Suriname emerged, save for statements about ‘emancipation’ of the Chinese minority laced with a sense of entitlement.

The ill-defined Chinese constituency had always been considered the domain of the NPS, via its Chinese wing Fa Tjaw. It was assumed that Chinese will be loyal, to the extent that real election campaigns aimed at ethnic Chinese were usually skipped; Chinese voters only needed to be reminded that there was no alternative but the Creole NPS when it came to defending Chinese interests against East Indian pressure. Though the Chinese Pertjajah Luhur propaganda campaign was a real campaign, in the sense that Chinese voters needed to be won over from the NPS, its content was fairly predictable. On the one hand the Pertjajah Luhur texts appealed to Chinese ethnic loyalty, and the Chinese self-image of a unified people linked to a primordial Chinese homeland. On the other hand Chinese were positioned as hard-working contributors to Surinamese society who had earned the right to pursue their livelihoods in peace. Chinese might be an economic power in Suriname, but were weak in the political arena. Chinese ethnic nationalism was remarkably absent from the Pertjajah Luhur campaign, at least initially.

The various political parties who wished to access the ethnic Chinese vote dealt with Laiap gatekeepers between the ethnic Chinese segment and non-Chinese Suriname. But in the actual campaigns, Laiap themselves were confronted with the true gatekeepers to the ethnic Chinese, usually well-connected and multilingual Tong’ap. Generally unable to read or write Chinese, the Laiap campaigners completely relied on Tong’ap assessments of the best ways to reach Chinese-speakers. Chinese texts were products of Tong’ap gatekeepers, as translators or writers. Ideas relating to multiculturalism, ethnicity and citizenship were trans-

\(^{39}\) Leadership courses are a common political strategy of small groups in Suriname who strive for political participation. Fundamentalist Pentecostal Christian sects with a dominionist agenda train young members in leadership courses to increase Christian influence in the public sphere.
lated to match Tong’ap understanding of the concepts. The following excerpts from the Chinese-language texts in the Chinese campaign provide examples of the way issues were translated to the local situation or linked with general Overseas Chinese preoccupations or the image of the Chinese State:

NDP
The government is only able to represent the interests of a small elite class and special ethnic groups. They have already degenerated into a minority government and a tool in the hands of certain ethnic groups to foster corruption and self enrichment and to dominate the Chinese. They think that Chinese are easily dominated and fooled. To suppress the Chinese, that is to destroy the democratic principles of the multiethnic unity, that is the destruction of the reputation of Suriname, such is the action of a common enemy of all the people.40

NDP
We Chinese are but a weak minority with limited power and influence, all are employed in trade and only want a calm society and stable prices and exchange rates in order to earn some money and support a family. And so we treat every government and every party that leans in our direction with the utmost respect, earnestly and sincerely, as we would esteemed guests.41

NF: Pertjajah Luhur
You might be lucky and find yourself living under a good government, but what about the next one? And the one after that? Our president is definitely not Chinese, is he likely to feel any sympathy for the misery of the Chinese? Is he under any obligation to help us?42

NDP
If we take the Chinese as an example, many brought money to invest in business here. With a fantastic array of beautiful products, cheap yet good (people stare in amazement at the low prices), available throughout the country, who hold a proportionate section of the market, the Chinese prop up the domain of consumption in this country. It is the same with regard to income from residence permits. Actually, in the way it keeps the market lively and prices stable, the economy of the Chinese is like one leg of a tripod supporting a stable society and politics, and is

40 XNRB 11 April 2005, ‘為什麼要支持卜特塞競選總統; NDP 華人工作小組告全體華人通報書’ (Why Bouterse’s run for the presidency should be supported; open letter to all Chinese from the Chinese wing of the NDP).
41 ZHRB 19 April 2005 / XNRB 20 April 2005, ‘我為什麼堅決支持鮑特斯當下一屆蘇里南政府總統’ (Letter to the editor: Why we definitely must support Bouterse’s bid to become president in the coming elections).
thus invaluable. If the government treats you like this it clearly means that they have bad intentions. [...] Examples of ethnic persecution are too numerous to list. The persecution of the Jews during the Second World War is known, of course? In modern Indonesian history there have been three waves of anti-Chinese sentiment, of which those of 1959 and 1990 were particularly bad! Expelling illegal immigrants is just one example. Our fatherland has become powerful now, and still there are those who dare to pull the tiger’s tail!43

NF: Pertjajah Luhur
Except for one single Chinese member of parliament twenty years ago, no Chinese voices have been heard in parliament up to now. This is not because the Chinese do not feel this need, but because the big political parties have enough executives of their own and so no openings arise, while the small political parties have few opportunities. The main reason is that we Chinese are always indifferent to politics. From the time they are small we insist that our children secure their future and become lawyers or doctors, that they open a shop and go into trade.44

NF: NPS
The 1969 elections were won by the VHP (the East Indian party) and the PNP (split from the NPS), and they formed a coalition government. Adhin, the Minister of Justice at the time, made very anti-Chinese statements in parliament; he proposed that procedures for shop licenses and residence permits should include proof of competence in the Dutch language. But that was immediately reasoned away by Calor, member of parliament for NPS. In those days it was actually very difficult to get relatives and friends from China to enter Suriname. In 1970 a Chinese applied for permission for a relative (a brother-in-law) to enter Suriname and up to 1973 permission had still not been granted. When they personally raised the matter with the then president of the Central Bank, nothing made sense. They heard that the person involved had been checked by the Dutch consul in Hong Kong, and it had been discovered that he had been employed by a leftist trade union in Hong Kong, and so he was branded a communist and refused entry into Suriname.45

As is clear from the texts above, the quest for the Chinese voter did not stay one-sided for long. The image of broad and cross-segmental support within the ‘Chinese community’ for the Pertjajah Luhur candidate as the only real alternative was marred by a NDP text in the Chinese-language

45 XNRB 18 May 2005, ‘歷史的回顧 -- 漫談 NPS 華人支部’ (In retrospective; an open discussion of the Chinese wing of the NPS).
newspapers. The anonymous author rejected the rosy picture painted by the Pertjajah Luhur propagandists and presented Desi Bouterse as the proper candidate for the ethnic Chinese constituency. A long article singing Bouterse’s praises as a former military strongman in terms reminiscent of PRC nationalism, was the first of an unexpected barrage of nine NDP articles. The Pertjajah Luhur team responded strongly to the NDP attack. The Pertjajah Luhur strategy was to present its carefully selected ethnic Chinese candidate as having broad, popular, and institutional support, while the NDP suggested that there was in fact no real support for the obviously inexperienced Pertjajah Luhur candidate.

In its turn, lacking a ‘perfect candidate’ (the Pertjajah Luhur team pointed out that Bouterse was not Chinese, and was therefore fundamentally unreliable when it came to defending Chinese interests) and with no clear indications of broad ethnic Chinese support, the NDP stressed the failure of the previous Nieuw Front government to deliver on any of its promises to the Chinese. However, Pertjajah Luhur found itself forced to outline more pragmatic reasons for voting Pertjajah Luhur rather than simply Nieuw Front. Although the tone of the various texts was not unusually offensive or harsh in the context of the broader 2005 campaign elections, the editors of the huiguan papers stepped in and announced that texts could not be submitted anonymously, and could not contain attacks on individuals or Chinese organizations.

As the Chinese campaign developed in the two huiguan papers Zhonghua Ribao and Xunnan Ribao, the pretence of a clearly defined audience - a coherent Chinese community - soon became apparent. The strategy for reaching ethnic Chinese voters had been rational; the great Chinese language barrier had to be scaled by addressing shopkeepers on their own turf in Kejia, and via the Chinese language media. However, there were not nearly enough Kejia-speaking volunteers for visits to shopkeepers and restaurateurs, who in any case were apparently no less closed to Chinese-speaking / ethnic Chinese propagandists than they were to non-Chinese. As usual, the two widely read huiguan newspapers emerged as the main line of communication to the ‘Chinese community’. In their pursuit of the Chinese constituency, Chinese speakers not only found themselves putting their ideas of Chinese ethnicity on public record, but also challenging each other’s concepts of Chineseness in the two newspapers.48 Issues of primordial Chinese identity, hybridity, race relations,

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46 XNRB 11 April 2005, ‘為什麼要支持寶特斯競選總統；NDP 華人工作小組告全體華人通報書’ (Why Bouterse’s run for the presidency should be supported; open letter to all Chinese from the Chinese wing of the NDP).

47 XNRB 29 April 2005 / ZHRB 30 April 2005, ‘李嘉林助選委員會至支持者書’ (Letter from the Li Jialin Supporting Committee to its supporters).

48 This was neither the first nor the harshest polemic that developed in the Chinese-language papers. In practice the two newspapers combined read as an advertising journal; feedback from readers is rare but can be sharply worded and even venomous. A quarrel between members of the huiguan establishment that spilled over into the two Chinese-language
unity, nationalism, participation, immigration and citizenship came to the fore, enveloped in antagonistic propaganda and obscured in anonymity.

9.2.1 The Texts

Chinese media (Chinese newspapers, CCTV broadcasts, DVDs, karaoke), most of which are produced in the PRC, are shared to such an extent that their consumption can almost be used to define ‘Chineseness’, in the sense of ‘being on the correct side of the Chinese language barrier’. Traditionally, the most important Chinese media in Suriname have been Zhonghua Ribao and Xunnan Ribao, the newspapers published by Chung Fa Foei Kon and Kong Ngie Tong Sang, respectively. Between 26 February and 27 June 2005 these two Chinese-language newspapers carried 72 items directly related to the 2005 elections, ranging from practical announcements from the editors, full page articles submitted by political parties, to congratulatory poems from readers and letters of thanks to the public from the parties.49 Five political parties, Pertjajah Luhur, NDP, NPS, VVV, and A1, submitted a total of 69 items,50 and as is clear from the table below, most texts were produced by Pertjajah Luhur, NDP and NPS. Party propagandists of the three parties produced about 5 texts each, but if one includes propaganda texts by individuals (nominally) outside the party election committees, then Pertjajah Luhur and NDP each had about 12 texts of propaganda versus 5 NPS texts.

Table 3: Contributors of Chinese Campaign Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PL</th>
<th>NDP</th>
<th>NPS</th>
<th>VVV</th>
<th>A1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propagandists</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party contributors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting instructions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks and congratulations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News reports</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

newspapers in the 1980s is remembered as a particularly shameful and unnecessary episode. However, the 2005 campaign was the first public discourse on Chinese identity and positioning in the Chinese-language community in Suriname.

49 Most texts appeared twice, once in ZHRB and once in XNRB. The 72 items do not include the repeats.

50 Three texts on Pertjajah Luhur’s Chinese committee were presented as news reports produced by the newspapers themselves.
However, NPS produced the longest texts, covering a full page in one case. The Pertjajah Luhur texts linked together to form a single campaign, whereas the NDP texts appeared more ad hoc, reactive and populist. With regard to authorship, the Pertjajah Luhur Chinese committee was the most transparent, allowing the publication of the names of all directly involved in the Chinese language campaign. In the case of NDP, third party contributions were all submitted anonymously. Remarkably, the ethnic Chinese NDP propagandists (all Laiap) were unaware of the exact content of the texts. The Pertjajah Luhur and NPS texts did not mesh to reflect the Nieuw Front coalition viewpoints; there were no pieces countering the NDP viewpoints, only mobilization for the causes of the Chinese party sections. The NDP committee published a Chinese-language summary of the NDP election programme, whereas the Pertjajah Luhur committee had its candidate state her political goals. The NPS committee only reminded readers of the history of the Chinese section of the Creole NPS and stressed that naturalization and residency of Chinese migrants were its achievement, thereby suggesting that it was both an established entity as well as a safe bet.

The issue of New Chinese support permeated the Pertjajah Luhur and NDP campaigns. The Pertjajah Luhur campaign was designed to present Sandra Lee as the only legitimate candidate for all ethnic Chinese, and it portrayed the image of a unified Chinese constituency by explicitly mentioning the support and cooperation of Hainan Tongxiang Hui and Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, and statements from Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui. Though the Chinese section of the NDP was dominated by Laiap, it also explicitly mentioned New Chinese support and used texts by New Chinese authors. Appeals to migrants were not clearly distinguishable from

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51 ZHRB 24 March 2005 ‘華人助選委員會成立’ (Chinese Electoral Support Committee Set Up)
52 As the language of their texts grew increasingly confrontational (apparently reflecting a process of character assassination outside), the editorial boards of the two newspapers stepped in. Authors were not required to sign their names under their texts, but anonymous submissions would no longer be accepted. Announcement in ZHRB 5 May 2005 / XNRB 6 May, 9 May 2005.
54 ZHRB 24 March 2005 ‘我為何要參選國會議員？李嘉林小姐在第一次臨時助選會議上的講話’ (Why do I want to stand for office? Miss Li Jialin addresses the first meeting of the Provisional Chinese Electoral Support Committee)
56 XNRB 11 April 2005 / ZHRB 12 April 2005, ‘鳴謝啟事’ (Letter of thanks); ZHRB 21 April 2005 / XNRB 22 April 2005, ‘為什麼這樣的好僑胞而感動叫好!’ (Praise for this good Chinese brother!).

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appeals to New Chinese sentiments. To the NPS the issue of Surinamese citizenship was embedded in the tradition of chain migration; Chinese who are eligible to vote do so to ensure continuation of chain migration.

The logic of voting and citizenship was less marked in the Pertjah Luhur texts, and rather muddled in the NDP texts. The NDP committee allowed authors to link party chairman Bouterse with the entry of the New Chinese, but was unclear about what New Chinese support meant. Their texts seemed to focus on New Chinese migrants rather than on a broad ethnic Chinese base and on criticizing the Nieuw Front coalition members, and so it appeared preoccupied with undermining rivals rather than being aimed at mobilization of actual voters. The way New Chinese support was approached did give the impression of substantial numbers of New Chinese voters. Outside the Chinese-language press, there had been allegations of voter fraud involving Chinese migrants. Wijdenbosch of the VVV claimed that there were ‘huge numbers of voter registration cards belonging to Surinamese with a Chinese background’ and that registration cards were being printed for people who were either deceased or no longer residing in Suriname. However, no proof ever emerged of Chinese voter fraud.

9.2.2 Basic Issues

In a Chinese-language election campaign, the target group by default consisted of immigrants, Tongap and New Chinese; as assimilated ethnic Chinese, Laiap could be reached via the Dutch language and could be assumed to be illiterate in Chinese. All political factions identified the same basic problem of the target group: legal residency. The system of residence permits had not been adapted to accommodate the greater influx of non-Dutch immigration (i.e. Guyanese, Brazilians, Chinese, and Haitians) since independence in 1975, and had become exceedingly bureaucratic and irrational. Chinese migrants had real trouble acquiring residence permits, necessary for acquiring many other documents such as work and business permits. Application procedures were lengthy, without possibility of appeal, and bribing was a problem. Popular anti-Chinese sentiments which held that Chinese migrants are shown preferential treatment in applications for residence permits, business permits and driving licences, sent strong feedback to the bureaucracy of the departments responsible for residency issues. It will probably never be clear whether Chinese applications were really excessive or were actually given preferential treatment in any year since about 1990, but bureaucrats tended to single out Chinese as problematic and likely to be illegal.

57 De Ware Tijd 27 April 2005, ‘Chinese investeerder afgewezen door vorige regering’ (Chinese investor rejected by previous government).
The Pertjajah Luhur propagandists explained the problem as a project under construction. Minister Tjong Tjin Joe of Trade and Industry and his successor Minister Jong Tjen Fa had striven to simplify the link between legal residency and the issuing of business permits. Gains were being made in protecting Chinese interests despite apparently East Indian attempts to crush Chinese competition from within the Nieuw Front coalition. Venetiaan I and II had brought monetary stability, and could offer Chinese entrepreneurs further stability. As Nieuw Front coalition partners, Pertjajah Luhur and NPS shared this basic view, but needed to distinguish their individual positions with regard to the ethnic Chinese constituency. The Pertjajah Luhur team pointed to the fact that there was now a Chinese minister, with the virtual certainty that there would also be a Chinese voice in the National Assembly. NPS simply pointed out the fact that its Chinese Section was the oldest surviving Chinese political grouping in Suriname, and thus it also guaranteed stability.

The NDP team explained the permit problem as a Nieuw Front construct; the old apanjaht parties constantly wooed the Chinese as voters and donors, but always reneged on their promises. The Nieuw Front coalition had betrayed the Chinese in Suriname, and actually turned on them in the aftermath of every election. Pertjajah Luhur, NDP and NPS all took credit for facilitating Chinese migration:

**NF: Pertjajah Luhur**
Everyone; the fact that we can sell things here today is all due to the support of certain Chinese leaders and certain members of Pertjajah Luhur.58

**NDP**
The last years Chinese have come to Suriname in large numbers. Who was it that opened the doors of friendship between Suriname and China, and opened the door to allow Chinese to enter smoothly? That was Bouterse when he had just come to power.59

Therefore, if there were any problem with regards to migration, from entering the country, acquiring legal residency, to acquiring a Surinamese passport, then Pertjajah Luhur / Bouterse would solve it. The NPS promised that immigration procedures would be updated and smoothed out. Both Pertjajah Luhur and NDP referred to the presence of anti-Chinese sentiments – both groups spoke of Chinese in Suriname being treated as second-class citizens. The NDP team suggested that anti-Chinese attitudes in Suriname are institutionalized at the highest level by

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59 XNRB 11 April 2005, ‘為什麼要支持波特斯競選總統; NDP華人工作小組告全體華人通報書’ (Why Bouterse’s run for the presidency should be supported; open letter to all Chinese from the Chinese wing of the NDP).
the Nieuw Front, whereas the Pertjajah Luhur propagandists suggested very obliquely that the VHP was the problem. The issue of unequal treatment, though ringing true with many readers, eventually proved too controversial; the ethnic Chinese of Suriname had dealt with the anti-Chinese discourse by ignoring it, and evoking ethnic pride was not an option.

9.2.3 The Development of Chineseness in the Chinese Campaign

Despite the development of hyphenated Surinamese-Chinese identity, identity discourse within the Chinese language communities in Suriname remained firmly based on notions of monolithic Chinese identity. However, no single Chinese identity label emerged from the campaign text; the variety of Chinese backgrounds in Suriname never resolved into a single coherent vision of Chineseness. On the contrary, the distinction between China-born and local-born was upheld in a way that was suggestive of ethnic difference. The Chinese propagandists of Pertjajah Luhur, NDP and NPS, approached those literate in Chinese as a monolithic Chinese constituency, either as eligible voters or non-citizen donors. All authors either overstated the obvious or wrote suggestively in an exhaustingly roundabout fashion, in typically Chinese (and Surinamese) style. Though the (Provisional) Chinese Electoral Support Committee was steered by Laiap, its face in the Chinese newspapers was of necessity Tong’ap as Tong’ap read and write Chinese. The anonymous author(s) of the NDP texts was / were said to be New Chinese, and the vocabulary and style of their texts (if not the orthography, which was often mixed PRC and traditional) seems to confirm this. The writers of the NPS texts betrayed their strong Fuidung’on Hakka background in their use of written forms of Surinamese Kejia dialect terms such as tongsan (‘Chinese homeland’, PTH: zhongguo ‘China’, zuguo ‘the motherland’) or loi feu (lit. ‘come to the port (i.e. Paramaribo)’: enter Suriname as a sojourner / chain migrant’. PTH: lai sulinan, ‘come to Suriname’).

Excavating a developing Chinese discourse on Chinese identity in Suriname from among individual stylistic and dialectical variations, positive clichés about Chinese, and chronically oblique statements is not straightforward, even in the limited corpus of the 2005 campaign texts. However, none of the writers could avoid using some of the same words to refer to the idea of a basic, stable and primordial Chineseness. These were common written Chinese words referring to the Chinese homeland and Chinese identity which contain the characters hua (‘flower’; ‘magnificent’; ‘China’), qiao (‘emigrant, sojourner’, an abbreviation of huaqiao, ‘Overseas Chinese’), and zhong (‘middle, centre’; ‘China’). Generally speaking, hua and qiao were more inclusive than zhong, which implied a certain emotional distance. Qiao was mainly the central morpheme in inclusive terms of address, such as qiaobao (‘fellow Overseas Chinese’) and its more emotional plural variant qiaobaomen (‘our Overseas Chinese bro-

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### Table 4: Hua, Qiao and Zhong in the Chinese-Language Newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PL</th>
<th>NDP</th>
<th>NPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hua</strong> 華</td>
<td><strong>Hua (ren)</strong> 華(人): Ethnic Chinese</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Huaqiao</strong> 華僑: Overseas Chinese</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Huayi(men)</strong> 華裔(們): People of Chinese descent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qiao</strong> 僑</td>
<td><strong>Qiaobao(men)</strong> 僑胞(們): Fellow Overseas Chinese</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Qiao</strong> 僑: Overseas Chinese (adj.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zhong</strong> 中</td>
<td><strong>Zhongguoren</strong> 中國人: Chinese people</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Zhong(guo)</strong> 中(國): Chinese / China</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Zhonghua</strong> 中華: Chinese (adj.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of the characters, and their contexts in composite terms reflected fundamental opinions about Chinese identity. To the NPS qiaobao and huaren (‘ethnic Chinese’) referred to the same concept, the former as a term of address, the latter as the regular noun. The three long NPS texts clearly treated huayi (‘people of Chinese descent’) as a euphemism for Laiap by maintaining the distinction with huaren. Only in one instance was huayi inclusive: wo huayi (‘we people of Chinese descent’). The Pertjajah Luhur texts similarly featured huaren as the regular noun and qiaobao as the term of address for the same concept: ethnic Chinese. NPS and Pertjajah Luhur both used zhongguoren (lit.: China + person; ‘Chinese; Chinese citizen’) in contexts implying distance and objectivity. Pertjajah Luhur also used huayi as a euphemism for Laiap, but did not contrast the term strongly with huaren. Remarkably, Pertjajah Luhur did allow the use of Laiap (twice in one short sentence) in a privately submitted text.

The NDP texts also firmly used huaren as the regular noun for ‘ethnic Chinese’, but pointedly avoided the qiao root. The New Chinese authors used the hua and qiao roots to distinguish (established) Fuidung-on Hakkas and New Chinese. Huaren was a general identifier as well as an inclusive group identification: women huaren (‘we Chinese’), xin hua-

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60 Strictly speaking the noun linked to the Qiaobao term of address should have been the limited term huaqiao (‘Overseas Chinese’).

61 ZHRB 2 April 2005 / XNRB 4 April 2005, Zhong Fu’an, ‘開拓未來’ (Open up the future). This was apparently the first time the word laiap appeared in the Chinese newspapers, but in any case the simple fact that it was printed caused something of a stir. The word was printed with a variant character for ‘mud’ (坭 instead of the more usual 泥).
ren tongbao (‘our New Chinese brothers’), xinlao huaren (‘Old and New Chinese’), women xin huaren (‘we New Chinese’), zai sulinan de huaren qiaobao (‘ethnic Chinese in Suriname’). All texts used huaqiao (‘Chinese sojourner; Overseas Chinese’) as a distant and objective term for Overseas Chinese, but there is only one occurrence in the NDP texts, as a non-inclusive ethnic identification: lao huaqiao (‘the Old Chinese here’; ‘the earlier sojourners’). Qiaobao was rarer than in the Pertjajah Luhur and NPS texts, occurring as an inclusive group identification (guangda qiaobao (‘Chinese in the broadest sense’), huaren qiaobao (‘our ethnic Chinese brothers’) and as an oblique (familiar, through the animate plural suffix) term of address implying inclusive group identity: qiaobaomen.

It would certainly be unwise to make assumptions about the feelings of the Chinese segment based on the styles and opinions of a few authors of a limited number of texts. However, the two basic ways of dealing with the reality of fragmentation under the myth of Chinese ethnic unity in the texts reflect the fundamental ethnic distinctions within the Chinese segment in Suriname: Tong’ap versus Laiap, and Fuidung’on Hakkas / ‘Old Chinese’ versus New Chinese. All authors used the term huayi as the general descriptor of ethnic Chinese identity, accepting the idea of Chinese ethnic unity. To the Fuidung’on Hakka authors (identifiable by names and style), the nationalism of the PRC did not carry over into the dogma of Chinese ethnic unity, whereas to the New Chinese author(s) ‘Old Chinese’ were not zhongguoren, but a local development. The conservative Fuidung’on Hakka went along with viewpoint of the NPS authors and made Chinese in Suriname qiao, Chinese abroad; the Chinese-ness of the Chinese constituency was predicated on the idea of a local livelihood. To them, New Chinese were zhongguoren (PRC citizens) and outsiders. Pertjajah Luhur seemed to attempt to go beyond these and capture an all-inclusive view of Chinese identity, recognizing but not defining ethnic variety while unifying all possible varieties in the term huaren.

To the New Chinese author(s) who can be identified through their writing style, the ‘Old Chinese’ were qiao while the New Chinese were zhongguoren. In their texts the distinction between huaren and zhongguoren became vaguely synonymous. Logically, this either made PRC citizenship global and the Chinese-ness it reflected universal, or Chinese ethnic identity was associated with the PRC. Qiao became the mutation derived from the central concept of the hua root. Huaqiao were out of touch with the reality of modern Chinese identity, of which modern PRC nationalism is a part. In the NDP texts Chinese were New Chinese immigrants. Most New Chinese were zhongguoren in the very exact sense of PRC citizens, and were therefore not eligible to vote; they were therefore approached as supporters rather than voters. One could speculate on the reasons why the NDP texts focussed almost exclusively on New Chinese; perhaps the NDP considered ‘Old Chinese’ monopolized by the Nieuw Front coalition, or that the New Chinese were being wooed as a source of funds and support, but it might also have been because of lack of com-
communication between Laiap or other Surinamese campaign managers and New Chinese text writers.

The lack of clear distinctions between huaqiao, huaren and huayi reflects the rearticulation of these terms in the patriotic discourse aimed at New Migrants in the PRC. Nyíri notes that “…previously rigidly separated categories of huaqiao, huaren (ethnic Chinese), and huayi (person of Chinese ancestry) are conflated, and the usual term is now huaren, sometimes qualified as waiji huaren (ethnic Chinese with foreign citizenship).”62 He also notes that zhongguoren acquires the meaning of ‘ethnic Chinese’ in the same way. Equating huaren with zhongguoren not only meant disassociating Chineseness from huaqiao (‘Overseas Chinese’), but also implied questioning the normative assumption of the Chinese Community. Pertjajah Luhur and NPS elaborated on this concept which comes from the Surinamese anti-Chinese discourse, and heaped assumptions about Chinese ethnic loyalty and the existence of civicmindedness onto it (huaren shehui: ‘ethnic Chinese society’, huaqiao shehui, qiaoshe: ‘Overseas Chinese society’, ‘Overseas Chinese community’). The NDP texts ignored the ‘Chinese community’ and centred Chinese ethnic loyalty around nationalistic ideas; PRC nationalism was firmly linked to the Surinamese patriotism of the NDP.

New Chinese (xin yimin: ‘new migrants’, but more often xin huaren: ‘new Chinese’ in the texts) thus appeared not to consider themselves huaqiao ‘Overseas Chinese’, but actual PRC citizens, zhongguoren ‘Chinese’. As immigrants, those members of Fuidung’on Hakkas who were born in China and New Chinese agreed that their interests in Suriname centred on acquiring the status of legal residents: work permits, business permits, and residence permits. Difficulties in acquiring Surinamese citizenship were consistently mentioned, though the actual meaning of citizenship other than acquiring a Surinamese passport as a kind of permit, was not elaborated on. The narratives leave one with the distinct impression that Chinese citizenship stands for primordial, enduring Chinese identity, that underlies and overrules any other formal citizenship status, not unlike the way earlier Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants considered Chinese names ‘true’ names, thus underlying and overruling formal Dutch-style names under Surinamese law.

The orthographies used in the various texts suggest that zhongguoren is not a contested concept. It is important to note that though in principle Xunnan Ribao and Zhonghua Ribao are separate entities linked to different huiguan, both papers share the same editorial board. However, the Xunnan Ribao uses the basic orthography of the PRC (simplified characters in horizontal lines from left to right), which symbolically reflects allegiance of its parent huiguan Kong Ngie Tong Sang to the PRC. Zhonghua Ribao similarly reflects the Taiwanese links of its huiguan Chung Fa Foei Kon by following basic Taiwanese orthography (meaning

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traditional characters in vertical columns from right to left). However, no consistent pattern emerged from the campaign texts and orthographies were highly mixed. It was the ability to manipulate Chinese characters, rather than full mastery of official orthographies, which defined fluency in Chinese culture.

There are many suggestions of primordial Chineseness in the texts, with some vague suggestions of Chinese racial superiority. The style of PRC patriotic discourse was readily apparent in the texts in appeals to ethnic loyalty as a matter of race, for instance the reference to ethnic Chinese as the ‘Sons of the Yellow Emperor and Emperor Yan’. One NDP text ends with the shopkeeper author feeling sorry for poor black people (heiren), while suggesting that Chinese are inherently better at striving for development. Other texts reproduced positive auto-stereotypes in the quest to mobilize Chinese ethnic loyalty: Chinese are naturally good, hardworking, patient, loyal, peaceful, etc. Interestingly, these positive auto-stereotypes used to flesh out the image of those who are born in China in the texts are almost identical to the ones used by the local-born / Laiap in the construction of Surinamese Chinese identity. In some cases the positive stereotypes that underlie Surinamese Chinese identity as a reaction to the anti-Chinese discourse surface more directly: Chinese are successful and hardworking immigrants and legitimate citizens that are victimized by hostile Surinamese.

The NDP campaign texts contained one obvious reference to the anti-Chinese discourse in Suriname. The context was a prevailing rumour that New Chinese were said to be benefiting from NPS clientelism, and were thus assumed to be acquiring permits easily. Driving licences became symbolic of that assumed favouritism. While the public was convinced that Chinese immigrants were getting driving licenses without any knowledge of local traffic laws, the traffic police claimed that many ethnic Chinese were driving without licences. The author of the one NDP text called this the result of discrimination and ethnic profiling:

[...] If they saw locals driving, they would wave them by; if they saw a Chinese face, the car was stopped immediately and the driver told to enter and park in a designated area, after which they inspected the driving licence. More than 20 cars belonging to Chinese were stopped,

63 This use of Taiwanese orthography is a historical relict and does not indicate a clear political preference.
64 炎黃子孫. XNRB 11 April 2005, ‘為什麼要支手寶特斯競選總統; NDP華人工作小組告全體華人通報書’ (Why Bouterse’s run for the presidency should be supported; open letter to all Chinese from the Chinese Wing of the NDP).
65 XNRB 27 April 2005, ‘讀者來信：為什麼一個人均財富機身第 17 位的國家落到討飯過日子?’ (Letter to the editor: Why is a country ranked 17th with regard to wealth per capita reduced to begging?)
66 De Ware Tijd 1 juni 2006, ‘Chinezen moeten verkeersregels kennen’ (Chinese should be aware of traffic regulations).
among whom many brothers from Zhejiang and some Fujianese drivers. The vast majority had no driving licence, surprise, surprise! Our Chinese brothers keep complaining: How can you run a shop without transport? For driving lessons you need a residence permit, but they will not give us that document. But we have no choice but to start up a business, do they expect us to starve? Why don't they give us a residence permit?

The report of the so-called driving license checks initiated in the second half of last year by the Ministry of Justice and Police clearly shows that if so many tens of people without driving licences in the whole country are fined so many tens of Surinamese Dollars, then the State receives so many millions of extra income. That means state funds. There is no proof whatsoever that only Chinese drive without driving licences and that Surinamese or other foreigners all do have driving licences. They're picking out Chinese at the checkpoints, I ask you, is that not racial discrimination? [...]67

This was followed by a text on the issue of residence permits that linked unfair treatment of Chinese immigrants to the risk of Indonesian-style anti-Chinese pogroms.68 This seems to have contributed to the decision of the editors of the two huiguan papers to limit the contributions during the campaign period. In the small, network-driven world of Chinese immigrants in Suriname, open quarrels in the papers were to be avoided, and the risk of the dialogue between Pertjajah Luhur and NDP escalating into a war of words was just too great. A direct response to the increasingly harsh anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname was potentially more dangerous, as it could cross the language barrier and lead to polarization between a weak Chinese minority and an angry anti-Chinese majority.

The Chinese propagandists were well aware that growing anti-Chinese sentiments did play a role in the broader campaigns. The VVV of ex-president Jules Wijdenbosch expressed concern about the ‘enormous number of poll cards for Surinamese of Chinese descent’, which might be interpreted as an oblique attack on the Nieuw Front / NPS.69 Candidates for New Front coalition partner VHP were reported to have spoken out against Chinese in Sarnámi on the campaign trail in the East Indian-dominated countryside, at one point even calling for the Chinese to be sent right back where they came from.70 In a newspaper interview Rajan Nanan Panday of Nieuw Suriname, a party striving for transnational citizenship for Surinamese in the Netherlands, specifically mentioned Chinese

69 De Ware Tijd 27 April 2005, ‘Chinese investeerder afgewezen door vorige regering’ (Chinese Investor Rejected by Previous Administration).
70 Anne Blanksma, personal communication. This student from the University of Amsterdam did fieldwork in Paramaribo for his MA thesis in Political Science on the subject of ethnic mobilization in the 2005 election campaigns.
as a type of unwanted immigrants.\textsuperscript{71} On the night of the elections, during live coverage of the polls on the State broadcaster STVS, the late Humbert Pinas interviewed the consultant D. Samson about developments in the thirty years since independence, such as the survival of ethnic multiparty politics, the rise of globalization, and the current relationship with the PRC. Samson praised the ties with China, but deplored the lack of policy:

You can't just allow just anybody to enter; Chinese medical professionals are welcome, but if only shopkeepers come, there will be too many and then there might be Indonesian situations...

Samson became increasingly shrill, at which point Pinas politely but firmly interrupted and cut to a jingle.

The Chinese script proved an effective, though not a foolproof, barrier to keeping every issue of Chineseness and any suggestion of disagreement among Chinese-speakers hidden from the non-Chinese speaking outside world. To outsiders, the Chinese seemed relatively united, as usual. The huiguan made a show of donating to all parties equally, and the visible Chinese presence on the campaign trail was spread as evenly as possible, or downplayed if necessary. The myth of the ‘Chinese community’ in the broader discourse of Chineseness was presented to the non-Chinese public, while the passivity and lack of civic-mindedness of Chinese in Suriname was deplored in texts aimed at a Chinese public. The Pertjajah Luhur team in particular recognized that Chinese in Suriname did not unite under an ethnic banner:

Of course we will have to see whether we Chinese can manage to unite as a group.\textsuperscript{72}

Chinese immigrants and people of Chinese descent, the time of shoveling the snow from your own door and ignoring the ice on your neighbour’s roof tiles is over for good!\textsuperscript{73}

The Pertjajah Luhur and NDP propagandists failed to realize how social capital accumulates in the small-scale chain-migrant group. This is done through networks of personal reciprocity, where ethnic loyalty is often less relevant than immediate contact with one’s immediate community of neighbours and clients. On the contrary, the NPS basically warned its

\textsuperscript{71} De Ware Tijd 27 April 2005, ‘De prangende vraag: “Die boost komt niet als we stamhoofdenmentaliteit hebben”’ (The sticky question: “No boost will never come if we keep the Tribal Chief mentality”).

\textsuperscript{72} ZHRB 19 March 2005 ‘蘇里南大選與泥推選李嘉林小姐位候選國會願意’ (The Surinamese elections and you; Miss Li Jalin to run in the general elections).

\textsuperscript{73} ZHRB 2 April 2005 / XNRB 4 April 2005, Zhong Fu’an (Kejia pronunciation: Zung Fuk’on) ‘開拓未來’ (Open up the future).
public about the risk of moving away from traditional and proven allegiance to the Creole-dominated, anti-East Indian segment of the apanjaht coalition. In any case, the issue of Chinese unity as somehow central to Chineseness remained unresolved.

9.3 After the Elections

The 2005 elections were considered to have been fair with a reasonable turnout (65.4% of 333,985 registered voters), despite problems with the electoral register and some allegations of voter manipulation. The Nieuw Front won more than 40% of the vote, though as a single party the NDP had more votes than any of the Nieuw Front coalition partners. The number of seats held by the Nieuw Front dropped from 33 to 23. The results of the 2005 elections reflected the changing ethnic landscape underpinning the traditional apanjaht logic; the growing Maroon segment in Paramaribo made a surprise winner out of A-Combinatie, a coalition of various Maroon parties.

Sandra Lee received about 1,000 votes, ten times more than the number 2 on the NPS candidate list, Otmar Rodgers. Both Sandra Lee and Sylvia Kajoeramari (Pertjajah Luhur’s Amerindian candidate) had safe seats on the Nieuw Front list, and were now Members of the National Assembly. Pertjajah Luhur’s Chinese team declared the successful election of Sandra Lee to the National Assembly and the retention of Michael Jong Tjien Fa as cabinet minister to be a ‘Chinese victory’. It organized a number of receptions to thank the Chinese public; the Chinese committee had managed to raise roughly US$ 53,014 via its ads in the two Chinese newspapers. Ironically, by entering government, ethnic Chinese had become part of the political system that popular opinion was rebelling against in the form of anti-immigrant – and anti-Chinese – sentiments. So far Lee has not presented a firm image of defender of Chinese interests in the National Assembly.

74 Suriname was ranked 61st, as a Flawed Democracy, on the Democracy Index of The Economist (The World in 2007), scoring high on electoral process and pluralism but low on political participation.

75 The January 2007 IDOS public opinion poll suggested that despite the increased assimilation indicated by the 2004 Census, ethnic tensions were rising, and that the Surinamese public considered the 2005 elections to be far more ‘apanjahtist’ than previous elections. On average 49% of people in each of six ethnic groups (tracked through self-identification: Maroon, Indigenous, East Indian, Creole, ‘mixed’, and Javanese) felt unfairly disadvantaged compared to other ethnic groups. The lowest percentage was among Javanese (30%), though at the same time Pertjajah Luhur was considered most obviously to be an ethnic party (74%; compare 64% for the East Indian VHP and 33% for the Creole NPS). The IDOS public opinion poll was carried out among 487 eligible voters in Paramaribo between 26-28 January 2007. Results were published in De Ware Tijd (3 February 2007, ‘IDOS-peiling 2; etniciteit, grondbeleid en 8 december’ (IDOS poll, part 2: ethnicity, land allocation, and ‘8 December’), but not on the IDOS website (http://www.parbo.com/idos/).
Pertjajah Luhur chairman Paul Somohardjo did realise that the loss of ten seats for the Nieuw Front coalition could not quite mean an election victory for his party. He called on the leaders of the other Javanese parties (Raymond Sapoen of Pendawa Lima, Willy Soemita of KTPI, René Kaiman of Partij Pembangunan Rakyat Suriname / PPRS, Soewarto Mustadja of D21) to join Pertjajah Luhur, and create a united ethnic bloc in the way the Maroon parties had. In a speech to his party, Somohardjo expressed disappointment that Pertjajah Luhur had won no seats in the VHP-dominated and strongly East Indian Districts of Nickerie, Saramacca and Wanica, and ordered the Chinese candidate Sandra Lee and the Amerindian candidate Sylvia Kajoeramari to start mobilizing their ethnic constituencies in view of the next elections. Somohardjo also repeated his overtures to the Maroon segment.

The Nieuw Front coalition had lost a third of its seats and was forced to enter a coalition with A-Combinatie and DA‘91 in order to retain a majority in the National Assembly. Ramsoedh and Hoogbergen (2006) note that the opportunism of Surinamese politics was evident in the negotiations leading to the new ‘NF-plus’ grand coalition; the negotiations were about dividing ministries among coalition partners rather than producing a coalition agreement based on clear development goals. Those powersharing negotiations proved an embarrassment for the Pertjajah Luhur Chinese. Somohardjo aspired to become the first ethnic Javanese Vice President, but was sidelined because of his 2002 conviction for indecent assault, and was eventually placated with the position of Speaker of the National Assembly. Then Pertjajah Luhur lost the Ministry of Trade and

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76 *Dagblad Suriname* 30 May 2005: ‘Somohardjo roept op tot bundeling Jawa partijen’ (Somohardjo calls for Javanese parties to unite).
Industry to the SPA. To accommodate Pertjajah Luhur’s demands, a new
government ministry was set up for former Trade and Industry Minister
Jong Tjien Fa: the Ministry of Resource Planning and Development, Land
Management and Forestry.77

Control of land allocation strengthened the power-base of the
Pertjajah Luhur leadership with regard to clientelism. In the case of the
Chinese, clientelism did not mean civil service jobs, but access to the
apparatus of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The loss of that Ministry
could not properly be explained to the Chinese constituency. Land alloca-
tion was not very relevant to the Chinese constituency; while larger Chi-
nese investors would benefit from smoother handling of resource deve-
lopment schemes, the average Chinese chain migrant did not get involved
in real estate deals. In the fight over the division of official posts, Per-
tjajah Luhur retained control of the post of Ambassador in Beijing after
the resignation of the Ambassador Wong Lun Hing through the appoint-
ment of Ambassador Mohamed Isaak Soerokarso in early March 2007.78

Rumours of infighting within the Pertjajah Luhur team / Fa Foe
Foei group resurfaced in the face of disappointment. Gossip had it that
Sandra Lee was the creature of a faction opposing the group behind the
Chinese minister (formerly Tjong Tjin Joe, and now Jong Tjien Fa). Ano-
ther embarrassment concerned the size of the Chinese constituency and
the distribution of the votes during the elections. Almost right after the
new ministers were sworn in, the first results of the 7th General Census
containing ethnic data were published. This was almost a month too late,
and it was rumoured to have been suppressed by the apanjaht coalition.
According to the 2004 census 1.7% voters in Suriname election were
ethnic Chinese (8,775 individuals, of whom 3,652 were PRC citizens, and
1,750 were born in China). This is very near the guesstimate of 2% that
was used since the last census, but in any case it is far lower than the
40,000-50,000 estimates of the Chinese Pertjajah Luhur strategists.79
Though ethnic Chinese participation in the NF government had been virtually guaranteed via Pertjajah Luhur, the actual clout of the Chinese constituency always remained vague; the pattern of Chinese voting had never been probed, and no group had ever been able to control the behaviour of Chinese donors. The Pertjajah Luhur team stated that this time there was a way to gauge the support of the ethnic Chinese constituency, by putting forward an ethnic Chinese candidate:80

The Chinese have been bragging about the numbers of votes they command for a very long time now, and all political parties should believe this. Without real data those parties ignore the Chinese. This time Pertjajah Luhur is presenting us with a chance, with a guaranteed victory while we can finally see how many votes the Chinese have. Five years ago many Chinese supported Doctor Tjong Tjin Joe, but as Ministers are appointed, his name did not appear on the ballots, so it was never actually clear how many votes he got. But now the situation is different, there is no margin for trickery; it’s do or die. If we Chinese cannot get number eight elected with the maximum number of votes, then we have announced to all the people of Suriname that we are a disunited minority that does not merit any attention. But if the results are ideal, it will be of the utmost benefit for the Chinese, whatever party they support. This is Chinese capital...

However, unpublished results of the exit polls suggest that ethnic Chinese voted in a fragmented fashion: roughly a quarter voted Pertjajah Luhur, a quarter voted NDP and the rest voted for the NPS.

9.3.1 The Embarrassment of Coalition Membership

If the ‘Chinese victory’ seemed rather hollow following the elections, in the two years following the 2005 elections having any association with Pertjajah Luhur became increasingly embarrassing to the ethnic Chinese elites. Pertjajah Luhur seemed less concerned with the interests of its ethnic Chinese shopkeeper ‘constituency’ in Suriname, while becoming increasingly involved in the Asian business networks of a small local entre-

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first post-independence census in 1980 was conducted in the first year of military rule; ethnicity was completely disregarded, reflecting nationalist, leftist, anti-colonial sentiments. It also signalled a break with apanjaht ethnopolitics, as it explicitly left the question of the actual ethnic make-up of society in the Republic of Suriname unanswered. No census was held in 1990, at the final end of military rule. The ‘ethnic balance’ (namely between Creoles and East Indians) on which apanjaht consociationalism was based remained unchallenged until the seventh census in 2004. This was the result of a recount, as the results of sixth census in 2004 were lost in a fire that destroyed the offices of the ABS. In any case, the results of the seventh census did not support the inflated numbers of Chinese flaunted by Pertjajah Luhur supporters, and in fact showed that the actual ethnic Chinese power-base was very limited.

preneurial elite. Pertjajah Luhur power brokers never appreciated, and never really cared, that one could not approach ethnic Chinese in Suriname as an ethnic constituency without considering notions of uniform Chinese identity, which implied respecting the idea of Chinese unity and therefore supranational Chinese identity - the PRC as the 'Chinese homeland'. The Chinese elites could afford to ignore the 'Chinese constituency' as long as the apanjaht parties they backed did not directly infringe on elite business networks or the immediate interests of the Chinese ethnic entrepreneurs. However, no elite group could survive the loss of face resulting from supporting a party which managed to steer Suriname away from the PRC towards diplomatic recognition of Taiwan under the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Nor would any Chinese establishment be able to survive renouncing the PRC.

In 2006 and 2007 Somohardjo appeared to be positioning himself as power broker in the ruling coalition. With the trial of Desi Bouterse, former military strongman and chairman of the opposition NDP party, for the murders of civilians in December 1980 looming, Somohardjo suggested that all the accused should be granted amnesty, subject to a popular referendum. This move was interpreted as a message that Pertjajah Luhur could leave the Nieuw Front and join NDP in a new ruling coalition. Nieuw Front dropped hints that his presence in the coalition need not be taken for granted, and eventually Somohardjo yielded and dropped the referendum issue. Somohardjo basically tried a similar kind of power play at the level of international relations when Pertjajah Luhur tried its hand at manipulating the Taiwanese and PRC pocketbook diplomacy. As the head of a parliamentary delegation to Beijing in January 2007, Somohardjo reaffirmed the One-China Principle to Wu Bangguo of the National People's Congress. Three months later, a hitherto unknown organization, the Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation (http://www.surinametaiwan.org/index.htm) unleashed a massive campaign in the Surinamese media. David Chin, secretary of the Foundation, announced that Taiwan was offering more than US$ 100 million in aid, in return for recognition of

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81 There were suggestions of renewed interest from a Chinese logging company in protected areas in Suriname, this time voiced by European front men using environmentally correct jargon (sustainability, carbon trading, bio-fuels). De Ware Tijd, 29 June 2007, 'Emerald Group wil shoppen met bossen' (Emerald Group wants to shop around with forests); 'China in wachtkamer Bakhuysbauxiet' (China waiting in the wings with regard to bauxite in Bakhuys area).

82 E.g. De Ware Tijd, 8 January 2007, 'Pertjajah Luhur niet bang voor verlies coalitiepostie' (Pertjajah Luhur not afraid of losing coalition partnership).

83 De Ware Tijd, 24 May 2007, 'Somohardjo 'krabbelt terug' in amnestiekwestie' (Somohardjo backtracks with regard to amnesty issue) De Ware Tijd, 28 May 2007, 'Geen reshuffling van Pertjajah Luhur ministers' (No reshuffle of Pertjajah Luhur ministers).

84 De Ware Tijd, 29 January 2007, 'Somohardjo herbevestigt een-China beleid' (Somohardjo reaffirms One-China Policy).
Taiwan as the Republic of China. The Surinamese government immediately reaffirmed the One-China Principle.

Even so, a Surinamese delegation prepared to visit Taiwan in July 2007, which apparently reflected conflicting views among various coalition parties on the One-China Policy. The PRC strongly objected to the visit. Deputy Chairman of the Assembly, and chairman of Nieuw Front coalition partner BEP, Mr. Caprino Alendy, was to head the delegation of representatives of various coalition and opposition parties, but pulled out at the last minute. In Taipei, President Chen Shui-bian announced that the offer of aid was an official offer to the Surinamese government. The PRC did prove to be sensitive to the popular feeling in Surinamese that almost 30 years of diplomatic relations with the PRC had yielded only rhetoric of solidarity and little substantial aid, surely compared to the US$ 100 million Taiwan was now offering. By early August the PRC promised to donate a US$ 3.2 million container scanner, speedboats, motorbikes and computers to the Surinamese Customs Service, and a week later a high-level delegation from PRC airplane manufacturer CATIC arrived to discuss extending its operations to Suriname, because of the country's 'strategic position in South America and the Caribbean.'

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85 De Ware Tijd, 27 April 2007, ‘Stichting pleit voor vriendschap met Taiwan’ (Foundation argues for friendship with Taiwan); Times of Suriname, 28 April 2007, ‘Bekendmaking Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation’ (Announcement Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation); ‘Taiwan biedt bijkans 200 miljoen dollar hulp in ruil voor “vriendschap” (Taiwan offers almost 200 million dollar in exchange for ‘friendship’).
86 De Ware Tijd, 30 April 2007, ‘Suriname houdt de deur dicht voor Taiwan’ (Suriname keeps the door closed on Taiwan); De Ware Tijd, 17 May 2007, ‘Suriname bevestigt “One China policy” (Suriname reaffirms One-China Policy).
87 De Ware Tijd, 20 June 2007, ‘Alendy naar Taiwan’ (Alendy heading to Taiwan); De Ware Tijd, 24 July 2007, ‘Politici zien geen probleem in samenwerking Taiwan’ (Politicians see no problem in Taiwan cooperation).
88 De Ware Tijd, 4 July 2007, ‘Beijing fel gekant tegen Taiwanreis Alendy’ (Beijing strongly opposed to Alendy’s trip to Taiwan); De Ware Tijd, 25 June 2007, ‘China ontbiedt Soerokarso om Taiwantrip’ (China summons Soerokarso because of Taiwan trip); De Ware Tijd, 28 June 2007, ‘China betreurt deelname coalitieleden aan Taiwantrip’ (China deplores participation of coalition members in Taiwan trip).
89 De Ware Tijd, 14 July 2007, ‘Alendy zegt af voor Taiwan’ (Alendy no longer going to Taiwan). The delegation consisted of Henk Deel (ACcombinatie), Hendrik Sakimin (Pertjajah Luhur), Rashied Doekhie (NDP), Theo Vishnudatt (VVV), Frank Gummels and Fried Meyer (DA’91) and two representatives of the business community, Danny Lo Fo Sang (VSB, Surinamese Business Community Association) and Antony Wong (Surinamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry). Pertjajah Luhur had asked Sakimin not to present himself as a party representative (De Ware Tijd, 22 June 2007, ‘Pertjajah Luhur stapt uit Taiwandelegatie’ (Pertjajah Luhur exits delegation to Taiwan)).
90 De Ware Tijd, 23 July 2007, ‘Hulpaanbod Taiwan aan Suriname nu officieel; Lidmaatschap VN aangevraagd’ (Taiwanese offer of aid to Suriname now official; UN membership application submitted). The offer was formalized by deputy minister vice-minister Javier Ching-shan Hou, by handing a letter to the (unofficial) Pertjajah Luhur representative Sakimin.
91 De Ware Tijd, 7 July 2007, ‘Containerscanner moet inkomsten staat verhogen’ (Container scanner should increase State income).
92 Of course CATIC will not start up operations in Suriname, due to prohibitively high costs.
The Surinamese huiguan and shetuan had always been careful to seek the approval and recognition of the PRC ambassador in Paramaribo. They now rushed to limit the damage right after the Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation announced the Taiwanese offer. In a full-page advertisement in The Times of Suriname, a ‘Federation of Chinese Associations in Suriname’ (Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foei), consisting of the usual ‘Old Chinese’ and New Chinese huiguan and institutions (Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, De Witte Lotus, Hua Chu Hui, Fujian Tongxiang Hui, Hainan Tongxiang Hui, Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui, Chung Tjauw, Fa Tjauw Foei Kon), as well as three new entities (Stichting Oriental Foundation, Guangzhou Tongxiang Hui, Dongguan Tongxiang Hui), stressed the loyalty of the Surinamese Overseas Chinese (huaqiao) to the PRC and the One-China Policy. Any mention of Chinese support of Pertjajah Luhur – which was so obviously ignoring Chinese sensibilities – was carefully left out of the picture.

Political participation was never impossible for ethnic Chinese in Suriname, as ethnic Chinese with citizenship rights were free to vote and stand for office as individuals. Chinese migrants who lacked the right to vote could also be reasonably sure that their interests (in particular with regard to the retail trade, migration, and naturalization) were protected through the influence of ethnic Chinese elites in non-Chinese apanjaht parties, of which the Chinese wing of the NPS is the oldest and best example. However, Chinese elites wishing to extend their powerbase from the adaptive institutions that were a consequence of the Chinese ethnic ownership economy (or rather, the Fuiding’ on Hakka ethnic ownership economy) into the political mainstream needed to be able to convince apanjaht parties of the benefits of guaranteeing direct Chinese representation in cabinet and the National Assembly.

The NPS route had never resulted in an ethnic Chinese representative, and Laiap cabinet ministers had not been reliably linked to huiguan networks. However, New Chinese immigration provided Chinese elites with a political opportunity. Aimed at preserving the status quo, apanjaht – the system of political power-sharing as well as multiculturalist ideology of inclusion and exclusion – does not cope well with immigration. Apanjaht logic dictated that there was only one Chinese ethnic group, and

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93 Cf. Li 1999b: 163.
94 Times of Suriname, 28 April 2007, ‘Communique “Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foe”’ (Communique from Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foei). This instance of dollar diplomacy, which grew into a minor item in the global media, reflected broader regional developments in the ongoing tug of war between Taiwan and the PRC for recognition. St.Lucia switched from Taiwan to the PRC when the St.Lucia Labour Party came to power in 1997, but switched back to Taiwan in April 2007 following the United Workers Party’s win in December 2006 elections. In June 2007, long-standing Taiwanese ally Costa Rica switched to the PRC. At the local level, the Suriname-Taiwan Friendship Foundation was rumoured to be rather intimately tied to Pertjajah Luhur; David Chin was said to be a relative of a prominent Laiap Pertjajah Luhur advisor.
according to the same logic dramatically increased Chinese migration in the late 1990s (see Chart 1) implied that the Chinese might now be turning into a wild card in consociationalist power-sharing negotiations. Chinese migrants would likely play a clear role in upcoming elections, not primarily in terms of a constituency of registered voters (New Chinese migrants were not Surinamese citizens, and could not be made so without discrediting the ruling apanjaht elites), but in terms of apparently unprecedented numerical and financial power. Changing demographics could be used to the advantage of ambitious apanjaht elites, ethnic Chinese or otherwise, but also endanger an already vulnerable and highly visible minority group. For a constituency of self-employed Chinese entrepreneurial chain migrants, apanjaht clientelism meant control of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and influence in other state institutions that govern issues of migration and citizenship.

In the run-up to the 2005 elections, a Javanese route was chosen by rivals of the NPS Chinese; in return for the ethnic Chinese vote and material and financial support, an ethnic Chinese minister as well as an ethnic Chinese member of the National Assembly were virtually guaranteed. Probably for the first time a heated Chinese election campaign erupted in the huiguan-run Chinese language newspapers in Suriname to mobilize and reveal the actual strength of the ethnic Chinese vote, which pitted three Chinese views (associated with the Javanese Pertjajah Luhur, the Creole NPS, and the anti-apanjaht NDP) against each other. Though the Javanese route was successful and an ethnic Chinese minister and member of the Assembly were installed, in the power-sharing negotiations following the 2005 elections, Pertjajah Luhur traded the post of Minister of Trade and Industry, which had been held by two ethnic Chinese in succession, in favour of a specially created ministry in charge of land allocation. Not only had the limited size of the ethnic Chinese vote become apparent, but the Chinese agents at the centre of the power-sharing negotiations were shown to be at the mercy of its Javanese-led partner. Then Pertjajah Luhur overreached itself by challenging the One-China Policy in an attempt to persuade the PRC to raise the stakes in its dollar diplomacy, which alienated ethnic Chinese supporters in Suriname even further and diminished the standing of those who had worked to unify the Chinese vote during the 2005 elections.

It would seem that Chinese ethnopolitics – the bid for structural participation of ethnic Chinese in Surinamese apanjaht politics beyond the established Chinese power bases – had failed. This is not unexpected given the disillusionment of the Chinese public with the consequences of the 2005 elections, the inability of the Chinese elites to explain citizenship to a Chinese constituency, which they were also hard pressed to define and mobilize, and the centrifugal tendencies inherent in local Chinatown politics. No matter how instrumental Chinese ethnic identity is evoked, and no matter what political entity will be prepared to host Chinese ambitions, reliable mobilization of a Chinese constituency in the future will
depend on whether Chinese in Suriname can unite despite various sub-ethnic divisions.

Identity will determine the role ethnic Chinese agents will be able to play in specific contexts in the future. For example, realignment of Chinese identity with the PRC could unify Chinese in Suriname, but would likely hamper their political empowerment if they would come to be viewed as representatives of a foreign power. The majority of ethnic Chinese in Suriname – people of Fuidung' on Hakka heritage, whether Tongap, Laiap or New Chinese – could conceivably claim Surinamese-Chinese identity, but that would effectively mean foregoing Sinocentric Chineseness on which traditional notions of Chinese migrant identity are based. In the logic of apanjaht ethnopolitics, Chinese participation will depend on public articulation of ethnic identity on specific occasions.

The 2005 legislative elections were important to Chinese socio-political participation because its timing uniquely allowed Chinese ethnic power brokers to negotiate continued and even increased participation in the apanjaht coalition that had won the previous elections. The elections of May 2005 followed the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Chinese indentured labourers and the sixth population census (that would define the ethnic balance so central to apanjaht consociationalist power-sharing), both in 2003. Future participation will likely be timed around celebrations of Chinese belonging in apanjaht multiculturalist ideology.
10 CONCLUSIONS

This study has analyzed the positioning of ethnic Chinese in Surinamese society in the early 2000s, in the context of increased (and in many cases new) migration from the PRC, and the increasing dominance of the PRC as a regional geopolitical force. It has demonstrated that Chinese positioning was utterly pragmatic and relied on locally relevant notions of Chinese ethnic identity. Adaptive strategies produced an ethnic ownership economy, Chinese organizations (which at least initially were adaptive organizations of migrants), and entrepreneurial chain migration, all mutually reinforcing each other. Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname is clearly instrumental, strategic, situational, and multiple, despite constant references to local and Chinese notions of primordial and unchanging ethnicity. As a performative identity, Chineseness is a local reality that needs to be ‘performed’ on a Surinamese stage before the different audiences that exist in the Surinamese context. Ethnic Chinese elites are also pragmatic in their use of Chinese institutions as political platforms for access to the Surinamese state, and in their alliances with other elites in their attempts to reach the centre of political power. In the same way networks (of families, migrants, transnational businesses, local personal networks, etc.) are assessed and used pragmatically and instrumentally, and out of necessity with the local context in mind.

Therefore, with regard to the actual process of local positioning of Chinese migrants in Suriname, the main conclusion of this study is that the local in many ways takes precedence over the global. The meaning of ‘Chineseness’ is most strongly formed by local conditions, writes McKeown: ‘A national rather than a global perspective is most relevant to understanding the emergence of ethnic Chinese.’\(^1\) Contrary to what the existing literature contends (cf. Ong & Nonini 1997), modern Chinese migration patterns are not independent of local conditions. The links and interaction between modern migrants as agents of change, their hometowns, and their host countries at various levels is conceptualized as transnationalism, which is approached as a form of globalization (cf. Schiller et al 1995). From this point of view, the transnationalism of Chinese migrants is about business networks that expand along migrant and family networks that span different locations, or, in the case of Suriname, about modern migrant networks that both follow

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1 McKeown 2001: 95.
and mediate the economic expansion of the PRC. Transnationalism as capitalist migration suggested to some writers that modern migration was reconfiguring social and physical space, becoming somehow deterritorialized, though others stressed that specific and concrete local processes were essential to understand the concept of transnationalism (cf. Smith & Guarnizo 1998). This study is in line with current discussions in Overseas Chinese studies which show that notions of monolithic Chineseness (whether or not sino-centric through models of transnationalism) are modulated by the local embedding of individual ethnic Chinese agents (cf. Louie 2000; Zhou & Tseng 2001), even if local embeddedness of Chinese identities is not recognized in the identity discourse of host societies (cf. Benton & Gomez 2001, 2008) or the Chinese homelands (cf. Tan 2006, 2009).

So Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname is also a response to local conditions, in particular the local political structures and economic niches where a specific articulation of ethnic identity as a resource is required. As a result it is subtly different from anything that could be labelled as such elsewhere in the world. However, the visibility of ‘China’ in Suriname (PRC geopolitics, economic globalization, and New Migrants) has increased, and this increase determines the image of ethnic Chinese in Suriname at the beginning of the third millennium. One could analyze this increased visibility in terms of a re-emergence of ‘Chineseness’ in Suriname between 1990 and 2005, a reacquiring, or rather reclaiming, of Chinese cultural identity, in other words resinicization.2 Narrowly defined, it implies a centripetal force that realigns anything Chinese in the world with the cultural make-up of the PRC. Resinicization in this sense does occur in Suriname: established Chinese migrants in Suriname have been refocusing on the PRC and claims of the PRC on New Chinese. But the re-emergence of Chineseness in Suriname signals a wider range of realignments of Chinese group identity besides re-imagining cultural ties with the PRC and politics of identity and recognition in apanjaht ideology, and it also includes adopting transnational identity, abandoning hybridity in favour of ‘authentic Chinese culture’, and rearticulation of ‘Chineseness’ as an ascribed identity by non-Chinese Surinamese.

The Chinese of Suriname are an example of an Overseas Chinese community (community in the sense of a group of coeth-

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2 Writing in the context of the reintegration of Hong Kong in the PRC, Ma (1999: 45) defined resinicization as ‘the recollection, reinvention and rediscovery of historical and cultural ties between Hong Kong and China.’
nics with their own institutions and elite politics, more or less defined by language and migration networks) in a Third World context. As such, their local positioning is compounded by identity issues arising from assimilation pressures and their regional origins (usually Southern Chinese), citizenship issues related to the balance between communalism and citizenship in post-colonial states, and issues relating to the rise of the PRC, in particular developments with regard to geopolitics and globalization, and New Migrants. The way these issues work out in practice naturally depends on the specific context one focuses on.\(^3\) In the case of Suriname, the Chinese were originally Kejia-speakers from the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong Province, who developed a localized, Laiap generation. They developed community institutions under the requirements of their particular ethnic economy based on retail trade, while facing the pressures of positioning as citizens under Surinamese ethnic consociationalism. They had to deal with the increasing political influence of the PRC, and the influx of cheap commodities from there, as well as the appearance of New Migrants / xin yimin which challenged established ideas of the role of ethnic Chinese in the Surinamese state. We shall examine these three themes – New Migrants, the PRC as a superpower, and the Surinamese State – separately below.

### 10.1 New Migrants

In the late 1970s, New Migrants / xin yimin began to arrive to Suriname more than a decade after the lifting of barriers to emigration by the PRC. This renewed migration revealed a gap between the established population of (assimilated) Fuidung’on Hakka and the newcomers. Although some continuity between ‘Old and New Chinese’ did exist, the new migrant cohorts differed from the established group in a wider range of regional and linguistic backgrounds, migration strategies, and adaptive strategies. Chinese migrants in Suriname were no longer Kejia-speaking shopkeepers from the Pearl River Delta, but included Manchurian contract labourers, Wenzhounese entrepreneurs, Fujianese irregular migrants, Chixi Hakka urban agriculturalists, and expat personnel.

\(^3\) I am indebted to Prof. Walton Look Lai of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago, for pointing out to me in discussions of Chinese in the Caribbean that these three dimensions are the basis for comparisons with other countries in the region and further afield.
Initially, ‘new Chinese migration’ referred to all migration from the PRC after the Second World War (cf. Skeldon 1994), and thus included the ethnic Chinese professionals and entrepreneurs of the 1980s and 1990s whose links to globalization gave support to the notion of Chinese transnationalism (cf. Ong & Nonini 1997). Soon the term referred specifically to migrants who left the PRC after the barriers to emigration were lowered in the late 1970s, concurrent with the introduction of economic reforms (cf. Nyíri 1999). In the early 2000s it had become clear that New Chinese Migrants were different than earlier Chinese migrants, from more diverse class, educational, and regional backgrounds, using a wide range of migration strategies, heading towards a far greater number of destinations, and more closely tied to the economic expansion of the PRC (cf. Nyíri 2000, 2001; Edwards 2002; Nieto 2003; Guerassimoff 2003; Ceccagno 2003; Pieke 2004; Barabantseva 2005). New Chinese Migration became recognized in PRC migration policy as the latest incarnation of ethnic Chinese overseas, and like the Republic of China in the past that tried to bring huaqiao under its control, the PRC uses the xin yimin category to bind the latest Chinese migrants in the service of national development (cf. Zhuang 1997; Thunø 2001; Gao 2003; Xiang 2003; Wang 2004).

New Chinese Migration was initially assumed to be focused on the West. In particular New Chinese Migration to the USA was firmly problematized as irregular migration in the 1990s (cf. DeStefano 1997; Chin 1999), and much of the New Migration was seen as headed for North America. However, the presence of large numbers of contract labourers and entrepreneurial migrants from the PRC was noted in Africa, in locations where previously there had been no ethnic Chinese (cf. Li 2000; Østbø & Carling 2005; Dobler 2008). The presence of New Chinese Migrants in Africa is strongly linked to the activities of the PRC with regard to resource extraction, as is the presence of New Chinese Migrants in Southeast Asian countries, in particular regions directly bordering the PRC. Local attitudes towards New Migrants are often ambiguous. They are often welcomed as a revitalizing agent to local economies but feared as economic competitors who might ruin local markets.

Cambodia provides a fairly typical example of New Chinese Migration to Third World destinations. Data on ethnic Chinese and New Migrants in Cambodia are unreliable, but there are estimates of almost a million transiting New Chinese Migrants for the 1990s, though according to Cambodian airport statistics the number of visitors from the PRC (who made up the largest group of alien visitors to Cambodia at the time) averaged 22,886 a year between
In any case, it is clear that both legal and illegal immigration strongly increased in the 1990s, and that Cambodia was a final destination as well as a transit stop to Thailand, the USA, Canada, and Australia. New Migrants mainly lived in the capital Phnom Penh, and their formal businesses include karaoke parlours, hotels, restaurants, maoyi gongsi, bookshops, etc., while informal strategies include sex work. As in Africa, the renewed influx of Chinese migrants is strongly associated with increased investment by PRC companies in Cambodia.

The result of the influx of the New Migrant has been a rethinking of ‘Chineseness’ in Cambodia. There is a big gap between ‘Old Chinese’ and New Migrants, the reasons for which go back to the time of the Pol Pot regime. The PRC was aware of the plight of the ethnic Chinese in Cambodia, but ignored them in the context of the official anti-huaqiao discourse of the Chinese Communist Party. The 10,000-15,000 PRC experts in Cambodia consistently and conspicuously distanced themselves from the Cambodian Chinese as a capitalist exploiter class. After the repression of the Pol Pot and Vietnamese regimes (Democratic Kampuchea and the People’s Republic of Kampuchea) between the 1970s and the beginning of the 1990s, the Cambodian Chinese developed a more independent stance with regard to the PRC, which was no longer referred to as the Homeland. The strong patriotism of the New Migrants causes tensions between them and the ‘Old Chinese’, who fear the newcomers’ public displays of Sinocentric nationalism could rekindle longstanding Khmer suspicions towards ethnic Chinese. In 1999 the protest in Phnom Penh against the bombing of PRC embassy in Belgrade was mainly held by New Migrants, who were heckled by ‘Old Chinese’.

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4 Edwards 2002: 271. The substantially mixed Chinese group was never formally recognized, unlike the Peranakan of Indonesia but just like Laiap in Suriname. This makes quantifying and defining Chinese ethnicity in Cambodia virtually impossible - as in Suriname.
7 Edwards 2002: 274.
8 Edwards 2002.
10 Bertil Lintner of Global Politician described it as follows: “A smaller gathering of ethnic Chinese Cambodians, in the country for generations, held a counterdemonstration, heckling the protesters: ‘You’re not our brothers,’ one yelled, referring to the suffering of Cambodia’s Chinese during the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge regime. ‘Your
In many African countries, with the exception of South Africa, Madagascar and Mauritius, there were no significant established ethnic Chinese populations prior to the arrival of New Chinese Migrants in the 1990s. There the economic strategies of New Migrant have also triggered anti-Chinese sentiments. In the run-up to the Zambian elections of 2005, the campaign of the opposition was clothed in scathing anti-Chinese rhetoric. Though anti-Chinese sentiments in Zambia were triggered by bad labour conditions and low wages paid by PRC enterprises, as well as their use of imported Chinese labour, populist opposition candidate Michael Sata vowed to expel the companies he accused of exploiting Zambian workers. He also promised to expel the New Migrant traders and to open dialogue with Taiwan, if he won the election. More recently in Lesotho, where anti-Chinese sentiments are triggered by competition from the ‘baihuo business’ of New Migrants, anti-Chinese violence aimed at Chinese-owned businesses erupted in 2008, stirred up by populist politics of opposition parties.

As it emerges from this study, the positioning of New Chinese in Suriname mirrors that in locations such as Cambodia and Lesotho, where the meaning of ‘Chineseness’ is either rearticulated under renewed immigration, or becomes a focus in political rhetoric. New Chinese Migration in the sense of post-Second World War migration from China was noticeable in Suriname from the 1950s on, in the form of irregular and legal migration via Hong Kong, which resulted in the particular Fuidung’ on Hakka migrant cohorts referred to locally as ‘Hong Kong Chinese’. Xin yimin started appearing in Suriname in the early 1990s, and were soon called ‘New Chinese’ to distinguish them from the ‘Old Chinese’, i.e. the established Fuidung’ on Hakka. The majority of New Chinese conti-

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nued the adaptive strategy of Chinese entrepreneurial chain migration in Suriname that had led to a Chinese ethnic ownership economy based on retail trade in corner shops, were the ethnic identity of Chinese migrants was a valuable resource. With the arrival of New Chinese migrants, commercial competition challenged the image of Chinese in Suriname as a monolithic group. New Chinese are in fact one of the greatest challenges for the established Fuidung-on Hakkas, not only because of the hostility of the general Surinamese population to the perceived ‘Chinese invasion’, but because of the particular economic niche of the majority of New Chinese. From its beginnings in Zhejiangese entrepreneurial chain migration networks, Baihuo Business (the importation of cheap commodities from Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, along personal networks as an adaptive strategy to provide livelihoods and facilitate continued migration, cf. Østbø & Carling 2005) developed into an alternative Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname. Unlike the retail businesses of the Fuidung’on Hakkas, Baihuo Business was primarily based on the sale of non-foods, and New Chinese entrepreneurs were able to surpass many Fuidung’on Hakka shopkeepers with regard to turnover and profit margins.

In Suriname, New Chinese Migrants were also welcomed as providers of affordable everyday commodities, while being distrusted as agents of a superpower (the PRC) with ulterior motives. Not only was the PRC said to be flooding the Surinamese market with cheap goods, it was also undermining the Surinamese labour market with cheap labour, and Suriname was at risk of being colonized by a new power. Media reports that associated New Chinese with illegality – irregular migration, organized crime, violence – added to the negative image of Chinese in Suriname. Anti-Chinese sentiments became a narrative within Surinamese civic discourse; the Chinese symbolized the utter failure of the government to rule. Such popular sentiments even combined with US pressure (the annual TIP reports) to shape Surinamese government policy with regard to immigration, in which Chinese symbolized illegality. Anti-Chinese sentiments were framed in long-established Chinese stereotypes, which in turn formed the basis for sub-ethnic markers that Laiap actors used to distinguish between ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ and New Chinese. As in Cambodia, the presence of New Chinese brought about a reassessment of ‘Chineseness’; a resurgence of anti-Chinese sentiments in the general population, and the articulation of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ identity among Fuidung’on Hakka, in particular Laiap.
10.2 The PRC as a New Superpower

When this study was conceived in the late 1990s, the image of the PRC as a new superpower was not quite as controversial as it currently is in Suriname. The Chinese state is firmly linked to the activities of PRC state-owned companies and the trade in cheap PRC-made commodities by New Migrants, and it is increasingly pictured as the new colonialist and colonizer. This local view of the PRC can be compared to a wider discourse of China as a new imperialist power in the Third World, exemplified by the discourse of ‘China in Africa’. Whereas in the early 1990s scholars could still comment that “It is hard to make a case that Africa matters very much to China”\(^\text{13}\), a few years later the continent had become of crucial interest to the PRC, since its economic development needed to be fuelled with cheap natural resources. Recently in the West a discourse on China in Africa has developed which focuses on the impact of the PRC on Western interests in Africa and on denouncing PRC support for dictatorial regimes, their disregard for environmental destruction, complicity in human rights abuses, etc.\(^\text{14}\) The PRC is described as the latest colonial power in Africa, a new imperialist power out to exploit African natural resources.

Up to the late 1970s, PRC relations with African states were framed in ideological terms. The PRC presented itself as a third option in the Cold War between the US and the USSR; it would be the leader of the developing world as the ‘largest developing country’ and base its relationships with African nations on South-South cooperation.\(^\text{15}\) The late 1970s saw the start of improved relations with former Cold War rivals which ended the ideological basis for Sino-African relationships. It was also the start of ‘socialist modernization’ which gave improved relations with the developed world priority over unprofitable relations with the developing world. Africa became marginal to the PRC, and by the mid-1980s it was distancing itself from African requests for aid and socialist development dogma. The next change in PRC policy towards Africa followed the Tiananmen crackdown of 1989. Soaring western criticism of the human rights record of the PRC fed into nationalistic narratives of the ‘century of humiliation’, which held that China was cheated out of rightful place on the world stage by nineteenth century Western

\(^\text{13}\) Segal 1992: 115.
\(^\text{14}\) Rocha 2007; Marks 2007.
\(^\text{15}\) Larkin1971; Ogunsanwo 1974; Snow 1988.
imperialists. Relations with African states that also suffered condemnation by the West were rephrased as a common resistance to the hegemonic Western discourse of human rights and the post-Cold War shift of power to the West.\(^{16}\)

As noted above, by the mid-1990s the African continent became pragmatically relevant to the development of PRC. Economic development in the PRC had been tied to the formation of multinational companies, and these now headed resource extraction projects in African countries. A strong link developed between foreign policy objectives and state-owned enterprises. In this light its quest for natural resources in the developing world is also strategic; PRC oil companies, for instance, are set to become major producers, making the PRC an important geopolitical player.\(^{17}\) The PRC’s presence in Africa is part of its foreign policy with regard to resource-rich parts of the developing world, such as Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.\(^{18}\) While the PRC still presents itself to the developing world in terms of South-South cooperation, it increasingly seeks to position itself as a new, but benign global power. However, both the principles of South-South equality and Peaceful Rising (which opposes expansionism by other powers) hamper the ability of the PRC to forcefully assert itself as a superpower in the developing world. The PRC has started to change its interpretation of its non-interfering superpower role and is moving for leadership places in the UN and contributing to UN peacekeeping.

Though its challenge to Western hegemony in Africa helps to rearticulate the relationship of the PRC with the rest of the world, the PRC is mainly interested in access to cheap natural resources, not strong long-lasting relationships with African states.\(^{19}\) Echoing the colonial trade relationships of the past which limited their industrialization, African countries export raw materials to, and import manufactured products from the PRC. As was the case with trade relationships with the West, African states will likely find that trade with the PRC will make it difficult to move away from exports of raw materials.\(^{20}\) Despite the threat of increasing dependence on the PRC, African countries see their relationship with the PRC as balancing Western exploitation.\(^{21}\) The PRC is an interesting partner

\(^{16}\) Taylor 1998.
\(^{17}\) Taylor 2006b.
\(^{19}\) Cf. Taylor 2006b; Rocha 2007.
\(^{20}\) Marks 2007.
\(^{21}\) Rocha 2007.
to repressive regimes, as its development aid is not predicated on democratization but on access to natural resources, and its history suggests that development and modernization require a strong and unopposed government.22

The primacy of resource extraction also induces local opposition to economic activities of the PRC in African countries. For instance, the model of state-owned enterprises in PRC resource extraction projects in Africa is problematic. There is a lack of transparency, high levels of corruption, low safety standards, low regard for workers’ rights, and the recruitment of non-local labour. These were transplanted to African operations. These adversely impact the image of PRC companies, and by extension that of the PRC and Chinese migrants in Africa. Popular resentment against Chinese (i.e. the PRC, its companies, and Chinese migrants) in Africa is rising. Chinese expats are said to be given preferential treatment and government protection, the PRC is not seen to be respecting the sovereignty of African states (for instance, neither the PRC or its African partners can easily explain the logic of enclave concessions in terms of sovereignty), and cheap commodities from PRC sold by xin yimin are threatening local markets and manufacturers.23

As is clear from this study the development of the PRC presence in Suriname parallels the situation on the African continent. By the late 1990s, PRC influence in Suriname had grown from fairly straightforward prestige projects in return for periodic Surinamese acknowledgement of the One-China Principle and support for PRC viewpoints in the international arena, to more extensive, but untransparent resource extraction projects, particularly logging enterprises. In Suriname, PRC resource extraction projects are among the most extensive in the Caribbean, and they parallel the same developments in African and Southeast Asian countries (albeit at a far smaller scale, and on a temporary basis) in the controversy and anti-Chinese hostility they engender. Many of these projects, intentionally are not misrepresented as PRC development aid, were carried out by PRC state-owned companies that insisted on using imported Chinese labour. But despite the apparent parallels which emerged from this study, there are no close matches for Suriname in Africa. Mauritius is the one country in Africa, or in the whole

22 Goldstein et al 2006; Taylor 2006a; Alden 2007. However, non-interference on the basis of absolute respect for national sovereignty may backfire on the PRC. Regime changes, democratic or otherwise, in African states where the PRC is an uncritical presence, may result in a government that associates the PRC – and ethnic Chinese – with the elites of the previous regime.

world for that matter, that can most readily be compared to Suriname; both countries share a similar colonial history, both have comparable views to post-colonial multi-culturalism, and in both countries there is an established ethnic Chinese population dominated by (assimilated) Hakka's from Guangdong Province.

Despite these similarities, the current study also shows that there are important differences between Mauritius and Suriname, the most obvious being the absence of PRC resource extraction projects in Mauritius. In contrast to Suriname, Mauritius saw the development of local Chinese business networks that incorporated transnational Asian capitalists reminiscent of Chinese networks in Southeast Asia. Transnational Chinese enterprise encouraged local industrialization in the 1970s, using Hongkongese know-how in joint-ventures to upgrade garment manufacturing, and local Sino-Mauritian business networks have been expanding to link to PRC enterprises. Crucially, the image of the PRC as a dangerous colonialist / colonizer, which is common with regard to mainland Africa, is not relevant in Mauritius. In Suriname it never developed into a justification for anti-Chinese violence, though it has become an established theme in local civic discourse, as a selection from just one Surinamese internet discussion forum shows:

palm789 | 27-6-2007 07:49:12
[...] Three Venetiaan administrations look more and more like Chinese colonization, even worse than Tibet. [...] (response to DWT Online 27 June 2007, ‘AC forbids Alendy to travel to Taiwan’)

Armando1 | 12-12-2007 06:37:42
[...] Maybe they want to make Suriname into a Chinese colony. Suriname is an autochthonous country and can handle its own affairs if there is a good government at the helm. [...] (response to DWT Online 12 December 2007, ‘China wants to strengthen ties’. The author probably meant ‘independent’ instead of ‘autochthonous’

Lekkerpapa | 21-2-2008 08:31:48 | 37
[...] No, the one china policy of the Gorilla [President Venetiaan] will make us slaves of the Chinese. (response to DWT Online 21 February 2008, ‘Suriname and China finalize US$ 200,000,000 “asphalt loan”’)

China is busy neo-colonizing Africa and Suriname is also on the agenda. All of Suriname soon to be ‘Chinatown’?
(response to DWT Online 21 February 2008, ‘Suriname and China finalize US$ 200,000,000 “asphalt loan”’)

Excuse me, but I’m getting really fed up of reading China named as financier or partner in almost everything that needs to be done. Are [we] becoming a kind of colony or territory of China? [...]
(response to DWT Online 27 August 2007, ‘Government hopes for Chinese support for national utilities company’)

The Chinese INVASION has started. We need to be on guard. 1‰ of the Chinese population is more than the Suriname population.
(response to DWT Online 22 April 2008, ‘Dalian wants to import 450 Chinese’)

The infiltration continues. This was to be expected. China is trying to dominate the world with their China policy. Those so-called nice loans and gifts are a put-up job. I really don’t understand how the Surinamese government could ever have allowed this. How stupid can we be.
(response to DWT Online 22 April 2008, ‘Dalian wants to import 450 Chinese’)

You all don’t know what you’re talking about, let the Chinese stay in their own country. President, please, do not give permission. Look what is happening in Tibet, soon they will be talking over Suriname. They are the filthiest people on earth.
(response to DWT Online 22 April 2008, ‘Dalian wants to import 450 Chinese’)

[...] IT WON’T TAKE LONG BEFORE SURINAME BECOMES A RENEGADE PROVINCE OF CHINA, JUST LIKE THE CHINESE DID IN TIBET AND TAIWAN, AS USUAL THE SURINAMESE WANT TO BE THEIR OWN BOSS AND NOT WORK FOR THE BOSS HIMSELF AN ATTITUDE THAT REALLY NEEDS CHANGING.
(response to DWT Online 22 April 2008, ‘Dalian wants to import 450 Chinese’)

joy20 | 22-4-2008 09:00:03 | 37
What many are not aware of is that China has a global policy (with regard to developing nations with natural resources for its huge industry) that is aimed at colonization of parts of the world. It is mostly ex-criminals who must leave the country for other destinations...
(response to DWT Online 2 June 2008, ‘Dalian insists on extra Chinese workers’)

THE COLONIZATION OF SURINAME BY CHINA IS IN FULL SWING. VENETIAAN HAS TO ACCOMMODATE HIS CHINESE FRIENDS WHO FUND HIS PARTY. [...] 
(response to DWT Online 2 June 2008, ‘Dalian insists on extra Chinese workers’)

10.3 The Surinamese State

In attempting to engage with the issue of local positioning of Chinese migrants, this study necessarily questions the nature of the modern Surinamese State. The ideal of the postcolonial nation-state was not achievable in Suriname, which like many other former European colonies has a highly ethnically diverse population. Like many other post-colonial states, Suriname frames its national unity in a variation on the Unity in Diversity slogan. The political interpretation of this slogan has been described by Dew as a local, ethnicity-based, elite-led version of Lijphart’s consociational power-sharing system. The problem with the literature that forms the basis for the apanjaht model (Lijphart 1969; Dew 1972, 1978, 1988) is that ethnicity is posited in terms of pre-existing ‘ethnic groups’ rather than as processual, contextual, dialectical, discursive (for which concepts of agency, and consequently ethnic resources, politics of recognition and identity, civic discourses, etc. are useful).

Lijphart developed the idea of consociationalism in the highly sectarian context of Dutch society, and it comes as no surprise that it works best to describe political power-sharing in other religiously divided societies such as Lebanon. Dew correctly noted that apanjaht consociationalism - the sharing of political power between political elites as well as the mobilization of constituencies in terms of ethnic rivalry by those same elites - is a form of post-colonial ethnopolitics. But Dew did not take into account how ethnicity would work as a resource in such ethnopolitics and so underestimated how the system could be a very important generator of
the ethnic identities, a web that spins itself. If ethnicity is reproduced in apanjaht consociationalism in terms of ethnic resources and thus agency, then power rather than ethnicity is the focus of agents. As Jaffe (2008) has pointed out, apanjaht consociationalism is management of diversity by political elites, and is thus first and foremost a tool for elite dominance - a very pragmatic reason for its persistence in Surinamese society.

Dew’s concept of apanjaht ethnopolitics worked to describe the political developments in Suriname between the 1950s and 1980s, but cannot fully accommodate popular resistance to elite dominance and other anti-panjaht challenges. In the 1970s, migration and anti-establishment resistance could be left out of the apanjaht equation, but basically anti-panjaht military rule in the 1980s and the increasing importance of immigration since the 1990s have shown the need to at least modify the apanjaht model. If one extends its purely political analysis to include ideology (cf. França 2004), the narratives and myths that form the imagination of the Surinamese State (cf. Meel 1998), and Surinamese civic discourse, it becomes much clearer how articulation of ethnic identity is manipulated by elites and used by non-elites to achieve access to the centre of power, and why anti-panjaht parties are populist rather than successfully nationalistic. The national myth of the *mamio* patchwork quilt enables politically ambitious elites to present themselves as representatives of an ethnic segment that is entitled to the same citizenship rights and an equal share of power as any other group represented in apanjaht consociationalism.

Socio-political participation of Chinese migrants in Suriname implies the development of ethnic Chinese elites who negotiate a share of political power with the elites of other ethnic groups. Surinamese elites are ethnic through their recognition that access to economic power, and in particular political power, is dictated by ethnic discourse - apanjaht ideology as multiculturalism legitimizing the post-colonial state as something other than a nation-state. As ethnic narratives arise and develop through politics of recognition and identity, definitions of Surinamese ethnic groups are constantly shifting. A constellation of ethnic groups exists in a certain equilibrium, with new groups slow to be admitted. Based on this image is the idea that political power-sharing should reflect pluralism: apanjaht consociationalism. Where ethnicity becomes a political resource, ethnic elites base their claims to power on the relative sizes of the segments in the constellation of ethnicities.

Chinese did not need to struggle for recognition as a legitimate member of the Surinamese ethnic constellation despite chan-
ges resulting from New Chinese migration. Renewed migration supported the claims to power of the Chinese elite in the eyes of the Surinamese State, as the size of the Chinese ethnic group was commonly assumed to have dramatically increased. The elites of the established Fuidung’on Hakkas (particularly the local-born) were courted by the apanjaht consociationalist power brokers, and in turn they supported a budding New Chinese elite. Political participation in apanjaht consociationalism implies open competition and fixed allegiances between representatives of larger, established ethnic groups, with relatively few clear-cut benefits for a small entrepreneurial minority that depends on peaceful relations with all segments of Surinamese society. Ahead of the 2005 legislative elections, Fuidung’on Hakka elites promoted a politics of recognition based on the image of Chinese ethnic identity which they hoped would be accepted as an important component of Surinamese multicultural society. Strategic and performative Chinese identity was staged during a celebration of 150 Years of Chinese Settlement on 20 October 2005 to evoke the idea of Chinese ‘groupness’ – the idea of public, collective Chinese identity without an actual quantified group (cf. Brubaker 2004) – which would make Chinese elite actors legitimate players in negotiations of apanjaht consociationalism.

The Fuidung’on Hakka elites, those who were born in China (tong’ap) as well as local-born (laiap), owed much of their prestige to positions on the governing boards of Chinese institutions in Suriname. Originally adaptive organizations that catered to the specific requirements of migrants in the Surinamese context, the Chinese institutions (huiguan- and shetuan-type organizations) soon became political platforms for individuals who could exploit the tendency of the Surinamese State to view the boards of Chinese organizations as elected representatives of an otherwise unreachable ethnic Chinese community. New Chinese institutions were being established within a decade of the arrival of the first New Chinese migrants. These huiguan provided the platforms for the elites of the various New Chinese subgroups to engage in Chinatown Politics on an equal footing with the elites of the Fuidung’on Hakkas. New Chinese were no longer subjugated as merely the most recent migrant cohorts within a monolithic Chinese group dominated by Fuidung’on Hakkas, but could present themselves as gatekeepers to a hitherto unreachable and unquantifiable group of Chinese migrants, and as alternative representatives of the influential Chinese State.

Chinese participation in the 2005 Surinamese legislative elections was conducted strategically via the ethnic Javanese com-
ponent of the ruling New Front grand coalition, Pertjajah Luhur. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, of crucial importance to the Chinese ethnic economy, had been in the hands of Pertjajah Luhur since 2000, and the post of Minister had been held by a Laiap. Now Pertjajah Luhur guaranteed the election of an ethnic Chinese candidate to the General Assembly. A unique, and at times heated election campaign developed in the Chinese-language newspapers, that pitted Pertjajah Luhur’s Chinese propagandists against those of New Front coalition partner NPS and those of the (anti-apanjaht) opposition party NDP. Central to the Pertjajah Luhur campaign in the Chinese-language newspapers was an appeal to vote so that the strength of the ethnic Chinese constituency would finally be established. Eventually both an ethnic Chinese member of the Assembly and Minister were installed, but when the Chinese vote proved to be marginal, Pertjajah Luhur relinquished the ‘Chinese’ Ministry of Trade and Industry in favour of a Ministry of land allocation which was of no importance to a constituency of Chinese ethnic entrepreneurs. The Chinese participation in the 2005 elections proved that despite its success in shaping the narratives of Chineseness in Surinamese ethnic discourse, and convincing apanjaht coalition partners of their position as representatives of a significant ethnic constituency, the elites were not able to convince individual migrant households of the advantages of openly declaring their ethnic solidarity.

Tracking the positioning strategies of Chinese migrants and ethnic Chinese in Suriname has largely validated the apanjaht model of elite power negotiation and politics of identity and recognition in the context of Surinamese civic discourse; inclusion of migrants means being recognized as members of a (new or existing) ethnic component in apanjaht logic, and the ability of migrant elites to join in apanjaht consociationalist power-sharing will determine many aspects of citizenship for migrants. Apanjaht potentially justifies the Republic of Suriname as something other than a nation-state. In parallel with the individual’s daily practice of instrumental, situational, and performative identity, a logical, though positivistic consequence of apanjaht ideology would be the imagining of Suriname as kaleidoscopic rather than as a patchwork in the national Mamio Myth of ethnic diversity. Different, equally legitimate Surinameses can exist simultaneously, from any regional, linguistic, religious, ethno-racial viewpoint within the country.

The process of socio-political embedding of ethnic Chinese through apanjaht ethnopolitics might have occurred independently of the New Chinese influx or the rise of the PRC as a force to be
reckoned with in the Caribbean and Latin American region. However, these developments strongly impacted the articulation of ‘apanjaht Chineseness’. Anti-Chinese sentiments resurfaced in Suriname in the 1990s following the sudden increase in numbers of migrants from the PRC that was concurrent with the emergence of the PRC as a regional geopolitical force. While economic competition was one pragmatic factor underlying anti-Chinese sentiments, Chinese migration had also become symbolic of government failure in Surinamese civic discourse. In the face of such increasing popular patriotic, anti-immigrant sentiments focusing on New Chinese migrants, Chinese political participation had to be disentangled from the question of the inclusion / exclusion of Chinese migrants. The frame of anti-Chinese sentiments eventually formed the basis for sub-ethnic markers with which Laiap agents distinguished ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ from New Chinese. Laiap agents, representing a subgroup within a subgroup (established Fuidung’on Hakkas) of a vulnerable minority (ethnic Chinese), needed to preserve the image of monolithic Chineseness to be recognized by the apanjaht brokers and as legitimate representatives by Chinese migrants. New Chinese agents likewise could not avoid negotiating with ‘Old Chinese’, and also understood the need for local embedding as a survival strategy.

The current context of Chinese political positioning in Suriname parallels the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities elsewhere, and it is even directly impacted by them. Immigration and ethnic diversity are problematized all over the world under increasing globalisation, and despite its claims to ethnic harmony Suriname is no exception to the pattern of reimagining an Us under threat from The Outsiders. Apanjaht ideology is unsuited for such a fundamental dichotomy which would define all Surinamese in contrast with foreigners. I believe that future ethnic Chinese participation in apanjaht power-sharing negotiations will be one of many tests of ‘apanjahtism’.
EPILOGUE

The pattern of performative articulation of Chinese ‘groupness’ according to the logic of apanjaht ideology seems to have been set in Suriname. Despite the setbacks associated with political participation via Pertjajah Luhur in the 2005 elections, the fact that 2008 would be 155 years since the first ‘Chinese Settlement’ and two years before the 2010 legislative elections, was not an opportunity to be missed or ignored. But the 2008 celebrations were in many ways a truncated version of the 2003 celebrations. On Sunday 20 October 2008 celebrations started with a reception in the Presidential Palace. The next day a new memorial was unveiled by President Venetiaan in New Amsterdam in Commewijne District, to mark the landing of the first Chinese indentured labourers in 1853. The location of the second memorial ostensibly marked the spot where the first Chinese set foot on Surinamese soil. This second Chinese marker, in the shape of a white concrete column, was an initiative of the artist Paul Woei.

Though he described the memorial as a monument to integration as well as immigration, he repeated earlier chauvinistic civilizational claims, stating that “integration [of Surinamese society] was initiated by the Chinese” and claiming Chinese authorship of common elements in Surinamese society. This time round a book was produced, with old photographs and a text on the history of the Chinese of Suriname.¹ Celebrations continued on Independence Square, with a food fair during the day and a cultural show in the evening, with the theme of ‘Cooperate for Prosperity and Stability’. The evening started with performances by local music groups such as South South West and the New System Brassband. When the President arrived, a choir of children from various ethnic groups sang the national anthem. This was followed by a *mu su* and a *mu liung* performance, and a ‘multicultural show’ which included a ‘Tibetan’ dance by students of the Chinese school and a performance of Suriname’s delegation to the Carifesta celebration in

¹ (De Ware Tijd 18 October 2008, ‘*Monument voor immigratie en integratie*’ (Monument to immigration and integration)).
Guyana. The celebrations were concluded with a 155 metre long string of Chinese fireworks.²

Now, however, ethnic Chinese elites will have to increase Chinese political participation while anti-Chinese sentiments seem primed to become a strong theme in populist narratives. In the current run-up to the 2010 legislative elections, new coalitions (the Mega Bloc and the Centre Bloc) have formed and old coalitions (New Front) are being renegotiated. In June 2008 opposition parties formed the Mega Bloc, also known as NDP-2008. It basically consisted of the NDP, its former splinter party DNP 2000, the Javanese KTPI, the East Indian BVD (the VHP splinter party), and PALU. In August 2008 smaller splinter parties joined together to form the Middenblok (‘Centre Bloc’, implying a middle ground between New Front and the Mega Bloc): New Suriname (NS), Alternative 1 (A-1), the National Development Party (NOP), the Progressive Surinamese People’s Party (PSV), and DOE. The goals of the Mega Bloc were framed in terms of national development and patriotism.³ The de facto chairman of the coalition, Desi Bouterse of NDP, called for an end to apanjaht consociationalism, which he called “a politics of hate, a politics of lies, a politics of deception.”⁴ The struggle, at the surface at least, is between the ‘old politics’ of apanjaht tradition and the ‘new politics’ of anti-apanjaht coalitions, and some predict the eventual electoral defeat of the established apanjaht grand coalition.⁵

Populism is on the rise in the absence of clear political ideologies. Surinamese civic discourse is currently framed in jingoistic anti-immigrant sentiments. KTPI, the rival of (pro-Chinese) Pertjajah Luhur for the ethnic Javanese vote, has picked up on and embraced the general anti-Chinese feelings. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of KTPI in November 2008, which doubled as a

² (De Ware Tijd 21 October 2008, ‘Herdenking Chinese Immigratie met veel pracht en praal’ (Chinese Immigration commemorated with much pomp and circumstance); 21 October 2008, ‘155 jaar Chinese immigratie; Volle ondersteuning bij Chinese dag Onafhankelijkheidsplein’ (155 years of Chinese immigration; full support on Chinese day at Independence Square)).
³ De Ware Tijd 28 June 2008, ‘NDP 2008 popelt om regeermandaat Surinaams volk’ (NDP 2008 eagerly anticipates mandate to rule from the Surinamese people).
⁴ De Ware Tijd 14 October 2008, ‘NDP-regering gaat positie gemarginaliseerde groepen verbeteren’ (NDP administration will improve position of marginalized groups).
⁵ De Ware Tijd 2 October 2008, ‘Mega blok wint ‘IDOS-verkiezing’ grandioos: Regering krijgt weer een onvoldoende’ (Monumental victory for Mega Bloc in ‘IDOS elections’: government receives bad marks again). According to the IDOS public opinion poll the Mega Bloc / NDP-2008 would win twice the number of votes as the New Front coalition if spot elections were held.
Mega Bloc event, KTPI chairman Willy Soemita warned that Suriname might be formally independent, “but will soon be a dependency of China.”6 The Centre Bloc addressed popular anti-Chinese sentiments more directly the following month. It accused the Venetiaan III administration of granting New Chinese preferential treatment, and demanded to know of any role the PRC might have in the issue. It further demanded that the ‘money flows’ of these New Chinese be investigated, that Chinese migrants be required to pass a citizenship test (the Dutch word *inburgeringsplicht* directly imported from Dutch discourse on immigration and ethnic diversity), and that New Chinese be required to undergo medical screening upon arrival to protect against ‘new and alien diseases’.7 After that the emotional patriotism and anti-Chinese themes of Surinamese civic discourse briefly surfaced in the Dutch daily De Volkskrant, where it blended with Western discourse of China as the new imperialist and colonizer, Dutch immigration discourse, and Dutch stereotypes of Chinese as the ideal minority group.8

Global developments also directly impact the local context in the current world economic crisis, and as the social position of ethnic Chinese in Suriname is so fundamentally tied to the promise of entrepreneurial success, they too are directly affected. Whether the specific pattern of New Chinese entrepreneurial chain migration will prove to be sustainable in Suriname remains to be seen. The current global economic crisis has strongly impacted the Chinese economy, with demand for cheap consumer goods evaporating.

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6 De Ware Tijd 1 December 2008, ‘KTPI had altijd nationale opstelling’ (KTPI always had a national outlook). Apparently Soemita said: “...maar straks afhankelijk van China zal worden” (lit.: “but will soon become dependent of China”).

7 De Ware Tijd 24 December 2008, ‘Middenblok wil parlementaire enquête over Chinese invasie’ (Centre Bloc wants parliamentary inquiry into Chinese invasion). With regard to the reference to disease, the exact words were: “Dit om van [sic] nieuwe ziekten die niet in Suriname voorkomen (zoals vogelgriep) te minimaliseren en of voorkomen.” (lit.: ‘This in order to minimalize or prevent [the introduction] of new diseases that are alien to Suriname.’)

8 De Volkskrant 21 February 2009, ‘De Nieuwe Chinezen’ (The New Chinese). The feature by Stieven Ramdharie, a Dutch journalist of Surinamese origin, was placed next to another full-page item on the growing non-working class constituency of the Islamophobic, anti-immigrant Dutch politician Geert Wilders. The item on New Chinese included a photograph of Chinese-looking people standing in the doorway of Kong Ngie Tong Sang (the ‘Old Chinese’ huiguan), and illustrated the increasing New Chinese population with a graph containing rather misleading data on residence permits issued to PRC nationals by the Surinamese Ministry of Justice and Police. Though those numbers are clearly increasing, they do not differentiate between renewals and new applications, and therefore neither between ‘Old Chinese’ and New Chinese. Part of the increase may be explained by the Ministry clearing up a backlog of Chinese applications.
This has led to the closure of thousands of factories and exporting companies, and mounting job losses. Yiwu, which is completely dependent on the export of cheap, low-end, labour-intensive consumer products, cannot escape the effects of any global economic downturn, as well as domestic factors such as rising costs of production. In an April 2008 report, Tao Dong, chief Asia economist at Credit Suisse in Hong Kong, wrote: “The end of an era in terms of China’s mighty export industry has just begun.” In January 2009, the deputy mayor of Yiwu City, Li Xuhang, was quoted as saying that business has been slowing down since the end of the first semester of 2008.

Yiwu is unlikely to remain the same driving force behind Baihuo Business in Suriname, and New Chinese will need to either find another way to sustain chain migration or adapt their chain migrant network. Perhaps some will even move away from Suriname if the local market for Chinese goods weakens, which it inevitably will. Chinese migration might decrease, but the ‘Old Chinese’ networks might see renewed migration. 60% of PRC exports originate in the southeast coast of the PRC, which includes the Fuidung’on and Wenzhou areas. Average monthly wages in Dongguan, the largest manufacturing centre in the PRC, increased from RMB 1,284 in 2001 to RMB 2,594 by the end of 2006. But in the light of the global credit crisis and the ensuing global financial crisis, the demand from the USA and Europe has diminished, and this has severely impacted PRC manufacturing and exports. From January through October 2008, 15,661 enterprises in Guangdong closed. More than half closed in October.

Dongguan in the Fuidung’on Hakka heartland was particularly hard hit, with many thousands of factories closing under the impact of the global economic crisis and soaring production costs. Many local Hakkas lost substantial income from real estate and suffered job losses. The Dongguan government requested suspension of the national Labour Contract Law, which would allow a freeze of minimum wages and suspension of employers’ social-insurance

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contributions.\(^\text{12}\) Yet when enterprises started failing or relocating and job losses mounted, social unrest followed. In November 2008 about 500 workers rioted when 80 migrant workers were laid off at the Kai Da Toy Factory in Zhongtang in Dongguan. Police vehicles were wrecked and the factory offices trashed.\(^\text{13}\) With Fuidung’on Hakka once again facing problems in the qiaoxiang, who knows if the pattern of Hakka chain migration will be revived soon, and the new Chinese migrants of the future will be ‘Old Chinese’ once again.

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APPENDIX 1: The Frame of Chinese Stereotypes

The following is a list of common Chinese stereotypes in Suriname that were noted in the various media and during interviews, particularly - but not exclusively - with non-Chinese; ethnic Chinese informants, in particular Laiap, also often displayed interesting stereotypical views of Chineseness in Suriname.

Table 6: Chinese Stereotypes in Suriname

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
<th>POSITIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTAMINATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese are nasty.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese spread diseases (SARS, Bird Flu).</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You never know what you’re eating if you have Chinese food.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese food is healthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chinese population is taking over; Numbers of Chinese immigrants are increasing (‘The Yellow Peril’).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Most people in Suriname have a Chinese ancestor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their primary loyalties are to China or the local Chinese organizations; They are one big family that extends from China across the world.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese don’t belong here; They are foreigners, on their way to other countries.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suriname wouldn’t be Suriname without the Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Chinese are members of mafia or triads; They are all involved in secret societies that perpetuate the vices of illegal immigration, gambling, drugs and prostitution.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese hardly ever get in trouble with the police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese people are too hardworking and intelligent; Chinese here are too obsessed with their occupations; They are a-political, only interested in making money.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (men) are shopkeepers; China is represented by the Chinese shop, take-away, etc.; All Chinese are urban dwelling merchant-middlemen who tend to cluster in Chinatowns.</td>
<td>There are many Chinese professionals such as doctors and lawyers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>They are cutthroat and unscrupulous in business; They are all immersed in an intricate web of ‘networks’ by which they achieve unfair advantages in business; Chinese like to take advantage of locals.</td>
<td>Chinese are naturally business-minded; Most Chinese are successful and achieve upward mobility within a single generation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese pose a threat to local business; Chinese disturb the overall workings of this country; Chinese businessmen are exploiting locals.</td>
<td>Chinese workers are an example for us; Surinamese could always purchase stuff on credit from Chinese shopkeepers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBMISSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Assertive Chinese will be called ‘aggressive’); Chinese people are disrespectful, rude and racist.</td>
<td>Chinese here are shy, quiet, and unobtrusive; Chinese are soft-spoken, polite, respect age, and are innocent victims of racism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese are physically weaker people; Chinese men have no muscles; Chinese are a submissive people.</td>
<td>Don’t mess with Chinese shopkeepers, they might know martial arts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese are cruel and violent</td>
<td>Chinese martial arts are defensive and require years of training under a master; All Chinese know martial arts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power-mad sadists and faceless hordes ready to do their leaders’ bidding.</td>
<td>Chinese are solid, simple, courageous folk, steadfastly taking what fate deals them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese girls are subservient; (old) Chinese women are horrible dragon ladies.</td>
<td>Chinese women are elegant and graceful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese men are obsessed with their tiny dicks.</td>
<td>Chinese women are desirable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSCRUTIBILITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese are inscrutable; Chinese are clannish and their community is closed to the outside world; There are special menu cards for Chinese in Chinese restaurants.</td>
<td>Chinese are mysterious.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALIENNESS</td>
<td>CIVILIZATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese are a homogenous mass of similar-looking people; Chinese have no individuality.</td>
<td>Chinese are superficial peasants; Chinese are inferior, uneducated lower class people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese are disciplined, hardworking and get things done, they’re like ants.</td>
<td>Chinese are profoundly spiritual, because of their ancient philosophies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese music is horrible and discordant noise.</td>
<td>Chinese are addicted to gambling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese language is completely unintelligible (“It’s all Chinese to me”); Chinese just won’t stop speaking Chinese.</td>
<td>Chinese tradition and religion are not as civilized as Western traditions; Chinese are heathens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese writing is scribble.</td>
<td>Chinese culture is ancient.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese calligraphy is almost impossible to learn.</td>
<td>Mah-jong is a complex and fun game that everyone with a Chinese background can teach you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese eat disgusting things, like rats and mice; Chinese are dog eaters; Chinese eat rice or noodles with chopsticks all the time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following is a list of Laiap statements on New Chinese and Surinamese-Chinese encountered in the media and during interviews, organized according to the matrix of Chinese stereotypes in Suriname above.

**Table 7: Content of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ Label**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEW CHINESE</th>
<th>SURINAMESE-CHINESE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTAMINATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their numbers are increasing; They’re flooding into Suriname.</td>
<td>Though we are a minority, our numbers are not as low as everyone thinks; Our contributions to Suriname society are greater than our numbers would suggest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are foreigners and temporary residents on their way to other countries.</td>
<td>We are loyal Surinamese citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are members of mafia or triads, involved in illegal immigration, gambling, drugs and prostitution.</td>
<td>We don’t get in trouble with the police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BUSINESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are a-political and only interested in making money.</td>
<td>We deserve to have a say in what goes on here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They all run supermarkets.</td>
<td>We have many professionals such as doctors and lawyers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They cannot be trusted; They are all immersed in an intricate web of ‘networks’ and connections by which they achieve unfair advantages in business; They take advantage of locals.</td>
<td>We are naturally business-minded; We are successful and achieve upward mobility within a single generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They pose a threat to local business; They are a disturbance to the overall workings of this country; They are exploiting locals.</td>
<td>We are an example for the locals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBMISSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are aggressive, disrespectful, and racist.</td>
<td>We are quiet and unobtrusive; We are soft-spoken and polite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are cruel and violent.</td>
<td>We are peaceful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They will do anything for money.</td>
<td>We are simple and hardworking people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their women are prostitutes.</td>
<td>Our women are elegant and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSCRUTIBILITY</td>
<td>graceful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are all the same (Zetgongzai).</td>
<td>We are all disciplined and get things done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALIENNESS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They speak all kinds of different dialects; They refuse to speak Sranantongo.</td>
<td>We speak Kejia; We speak the language of the land (Sranantongo / Dutch).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They eat eels caught in the gutters; More dog meat is eaten here since they arrived.</td>
<td>We have introduced many Chinese elements to Surinamese cuisine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIVILIZATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are dirty, inferior, uneducated lower class people.</td>
<td>We are respectable, well-educated, middle and upper class people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are addicted to gambling.</td>
<td>We brought many good things to this place, like Mah-jong, ROSCAs, songbird culture, kites, foodstuffs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are rude and disrespectful.</td>
<td>We are polite and respect our elders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2: Tong’ap Lives through Chinese Texts

1. Secret families

It will probably never be clear how widespread dual family systems were among Fuidung’on migrants in Suriname, but it was certainly far from uncommon for Chinese who already had a family back home to have a wife (legal or common-law) and children in Suriname. In any case, many migrants kept their lives in China secret from their Surinamese children. The secret of grandfather Zhang Sifa’s (Kejia: Zong Sifat; Chinese courtesy name: Zhang Youjun; Kejia: Zong Yuzun. Formal Western names: James Tjon Sie Fat, James Chong) other wife in Dongguan was revealed in the late 1970s, when a letter in Chinese arrived from a refugee camp in Thailand addressed to my father from a family whose mother claimed to be Zhang Sifa’s granddaughter, and therefore my father’s niece. She explained that her father, Zhang Ruiwen, was Zhang Sifa’s eldest son. He had moved to Vietnam where he became known as Trương Văn (the Sino-Vietnamese pronunciation of the characters for zhang and wen). He later resettled in Laos where he married and had children, and had died some years earlier.

The letters required my father, uncle and aunts to explain what they knew. Apparently, great-grandfather was unable to pay a village healer for treating his son for a boil on the head, and instead it was agreed that the young boy should marry the healer’s daughter. As Zhang Sifa explained, he left his wife in China without children, and so a son was purchased for her. Regardless of whether Zhang Ruiwen was Zhang Sifa’s biological son, it would have been difficult to explain to his Anglican wife from Guyana that she was technically a concubine rather than the principal wife, particularly after a conspicuously opulent wedding ceremony in the Kong Ngie Tong huiguan. We also found out that our grandmother, née Sue, was from the Hopetown Project in Demerara, and that her brothers had helped fund Zhang Sifa’s enterprises. Grandfather Zhang Sifa’s first son, whose existence we were not aware of, turned out to have contracted leprosy and to have died in obscurity in Paramaribo in his late thirties.
In the early 1990s we were overwhelmed by more information on grandfather’s family background, when another grandchild of his contacted me. In his letter he carefully avoided the issue of which of grandfather’s wives was the concubine and equally carefully raised the issue of family inheritance and real estate in the then booming economy of Dongguan:

Dear cousin: greetings!

A relative in our ancestral village wrote me and remarked that you visited in June of this year, and I’m very happy about that. Unfortunately I was not aware of your plans, or we cousins could have all been together in the hills of our ancestors, how much better that would have been!

Our grandfather Zhang Sifa (courtesy name Zhang Youjun) moved to Suriname when he was young. According to what my father Zhang Ruiwen (courtesy name Zhang Zuanming) told me once, Grandfather was well-known there because of his business selling chocolate and he often sent remittances back home. Later my grandmother died. At the beginning of the War of Resistance against Japan \(^1\) we received a family picture from grandfather in South America. (I saw this photograph myself. I remember there were over ten men and women of various ages, among which the faces of Grandfather and Second Grandmother. The others were perhaps Uncle Ruilin and Uncle Ruipeng \(^2\) and cousins of yours.) Contact between Grandfather and home were lost since that time. Before you know more than half a century has passed. Your return to the ancestral village represents Grandfather’s wishes and was accompanied by the deepest goodwill of my uncles and your whole family. Now there is the hope for renewed relationships in our unfortunate but also happy family.

Please forgive us for not keeping in contact for so long. I know nothing with any certainty about Uncle Ruilin and Uncle Ruipeng, I also do not know how many brothers and sisters you have. And what is the current situation? I hereby, on behalf of my brothers and sisters (who live spread over Canada, America, France, Belgium, Taiwan), send you cousins our heartfelt greetings, and to our uncles and aunts the most respectful greetings and affection.

My father Ruiwen and mother passed away shortly after each other some years ago (in Laos and Thailand). My brothers and sisters later moved to quite a lot of different countries. I am the only brother who returned to China from Laos to study and find work. I am 52 already this year. When I was young I graduated from a university in Beijing. Now I am a technician in a chemi-

\(^1\) 1937-1945.

\(^2\) Zhang Ruilin: my uncle I. Tjon Sie Fat; Zhang Ruipeng: my father H. Tjon Sie Fat.
cal plant. A few decades ago I worked in a city in northern China, Tianjin. The last few years I returned to Guangdong Province to work. Every year I go home once or twice.

Our grandfather left two houses in the village of Bolang Xinwei, one is still in good condition, the other was destroyed by fire and now a plot of open land remains. I don’t know whether anyone made this clear to you when you returned on this occasion? Connected to the burnt-down house were four additional houses that belonged to the other four uncles. (There were five brothers in our grandfather’s generation. Our grandfather is the fourth brother.) The five brothers of that generation drifted abroad one after the other to earn money and most never returned. Most of the sons and daughters in the generation after them lived abroad. Only Zhang Zihuan (courtesy name Zuanlin), the son of uncle Zhang Youye (who used to work with Grandfather in Suriname) returned from Hong Kong and built a beautiful Western-style house at the old address. This house embodies the fondest wish of Uncle Zihuan. It towers on good land of the whole Zhang Clan, welcoming foreign relatives on their increasingly numerous visits. In the last years Qianzhi, a French cousin, I, and you have returned.

The most exciting development in this process of return to the village is that I and cousin Zhuansheng (the eldest son of Uncle Zihuan) found the grave of the worthy Zhang Xikun on a nearby hill. The worthy Xikun was Grandfather’s grandfather and therefore our great-great-grandfather. His heir (son) was our great-grandfather Benqiu. Benqiu had five sons and one daughter. All the old buildings, residences, persons and things originate from these five brothers. Now, as Uncle Zihuan (the son of the ‘Fifth Brother’ Zhang Youye) built a magnificent Western house on family land in order to receive foreign relatives, the relatives that return to discuss the family situation and search for their roots will not be able to leave the comfort of this house, and so will not be able to do without the intervention and help of cousin Zhang Zhuansheng and other cousins. Cousin Zhuansheng lives in Hong Kong. He decided that next year during Qingming sacrifices will be offered to our ancestor, the worthy Zhang Xikun again for the first time. Then everyone will carry a roast pig up the hill. So all relatives returning from far and near are invited to come back around that time. Now that I have told you of this decision I don’t know whether you will be able to come back again next Qingming Festival (a number of days in March or April)? I hereby can tell you that the names of a number of generations of children and grandchildren are engraved on the funerary stele of Mr. Xikun. Among these are his heir (son) Benqiu, a grandson Youjun, and a great-grandson Ruilin, and some other names.

Greetings from afar, good fortune to all the family,
Cousin Zhang Boxiang, 27 July 1991
2. Severed ties

Remittances were a heavy burden for migrants, and severe loss of face could result when this obligation could not be met. Li Dingyao (Kejia: Li Tinyao), who was born in Dongguan on 3 October 1900, died in Paramaribo on 15 March 1995. Among his personal belongings, the Laiap family he had spent his whole life with found letters from his family in China spanning a period of more than fifty years, and I was allowed to copy them. There is no way of telling if and what ‘A-soek’ Li Dingyao wrote back to his family in China.\(^3\) One of the earliest letters was from his mother-in-law, dated 30 May 1932, which gives some idea of the emotions that prevented Li Dingyao from returning home and talking about his past:

Dingyao, my son-in-law;

We all know how many years have passed since you left. And there have not been many letters and we do not know your plans. You have not returned to your family and you have not sent any money for your family’s upkeep. Moreover, your family has no fertile fields. What should your wife and child live from? And your son has to go to school too. With regard to rearing sons, and old adage has it that sons you invest in now will be there for you in your old age, like grain hoarded to guard against famine. The education of sons and younger brothers is an important stage in life as well as the basis for future enterprise. It is the responsibility of parents to send you to school to learn to read and write when you are small. When you, my son-in-law, left all these years ago to look for work abroad, your wife had to be there for her child. Who must the poor woman count on now? While your father-in-law was still alive there was still some help. Now he’s passed away, who can I look forward to? Everything is finished now, what are we to do? We are waiting for letters with money. Good son-in-law, you must do something to help things. In all sincerity, do every effort, send a little bit of money. Come back to China, to your wife. Work for your family’s happiness. You’re ancestors were glorious. You did not leave for nothing, otherwise you are just idling abroad without work. I keep seeing your friends return triumphantly. Are you not ashamed? Dying pointlessly abroad, how can you do that to your father, mother, wife

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\(^3\) A-soek is a rendition of Fuidung’on Kejia: *asuk* 阿叔, ‘father’s younger brother; term of address for an uncle; affectionate term of address for an older unrelated male.’
and child? Year after year abroad, nowhere to settle, is that not shameful? I truly hope that you will take this plea to heart. Make sure to respond when you receive this letter.

Your mother-in-law, Mrs. Li.

The last letter Li Dingyao received was from his son, dated 29 July 1949. Then suddenly, a little over than half a century after the letter from his mother-in-law, contact was re-established. A letter dated 2 September 1984 came from his son’s family in Lihe Village, Qingqi, in Dongguan:

Dearest Grandfather Dingyao;

It is hard to believe that more than sixty years of monumental changes have passed since you left your family to cross so far beyond the seas. Since your departure so many things have changed beyond imagination. Fortunately we retain a sharp image of you, abroad at your advanced age. Now we have a letter from far away telling us of how your are, which has caused so much happiness for the whole family. Let me now tell you of some family developments, I hope you will be delighted. Not much changes in the village, people come and people go. Your daughter-in-law Luoyou had three boys and two girls. The eldest daughter, Wenzhen, married a Liu and had two boys and a girl. When she grew up she moved to Zhangmutou and she works in the hospital. Newest Sister married a Huang from Luhuju village and had one boy and two girls who have now all adults. Wenkai is married and has two boys and a girl who are studying. Jiangren is married and has two boys and a girl who have graduated and are working. Wenlin is 29, unmarried, and works in a brick factory. We are all together, we are self-sufficient, we are healthy, one might say that our lives are okay.

How is your life abroad, Grandfather? How strange it all is. We were destined to receive a letter telling us about you. Perhaps Heaven may set an occasion to rejoin your family here. Unable to see you face to face for an eternity that spread like blotted ink, such sentiments can only be vaguely expressed in writing. And being told about something is nothing like seeing it, and that is nothing like being there yourself. I hope this opportunity is real and no mistake. I hope so much that you could plan to return to China sometime in the future. We should keep regular contact, and pray that those relatives who have gone to Suriname or further abroad or have good prospects will all reunite. I can hardly contain my emotions. This is the wish of the grandchildren, that we will have the greatest luck and that you will respond to this heartfelt request.

Sincerely yours, looking forward to your response, your daughter-in-law Luoyou.
3. Life in Suriname

There are very few texts in Chinese that express the relationship between Fuidung’on Hakka huaqiao in Suriname and their qiao-xiang in the Fuidung’on Region in their own words. One notable exception is the works of ‘Afoeng’ Chiu Hung (formal Chinese name in PTH: Qiu Hong; Kejia: Hiu Fung), former chairman of Kong Ngie Tong Sang and the very first Chinese immigrant to take Surinamese nationality. He set personal observations and social commentaries to the melodies of Hakka san’go or ‘mountain songs’. Qu quite a number of the texts are about the feelings and priorities of Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants. A few examples:

Nr. 108, pg. 182 嘆窮日 Poverty
Debts every year, with heavy interest.
Nobody to borrow from, everyone is poor.
No money for rice, your stomach is empty.
Nothing in the pot all day long.

Nr. 109, pg. 182 嘆寒天 Cold
Panic breaks out when the wind turns north.
Threadbare clothes don’t help against the cold.
The poor fear days with northerly wind the most.
When will there be a good day again?

Nr. 110, pg. 182 嘆饑荒 Hunger
How far can you share a midday meal?
With rice running short you make congee.
You feel no hunger with congee in your stomach.
When your stomach is empty, your belly hurts.

Nr. 3, pg. 163 什咏 A Song
Hands pale as jade hold a golden cup.
She asks her husband: “When will you be back?
Don’t touch the wild flowers along the roadside.
A branch of cherry blossom waits at home.
We say our goodbyes in my bedroom. Come back to me.”

4 A Short Biographical Sketch of Afoeng Chiu Hung / 丘鴻先生八八壽辰紀念特輯
(Commemorative book on the occasion of Mr. Chiu Hung’s 88th birthday).
“When I've learnt to do business, I'll be back.
I care not for roses with their divine perfume.
All my heart longs for the cherry blossom at home.”

Nr. 118, pg. 183 自感一生 My Life
At sixteen I left school in China.
My family was poor, you see.
I went to look for work in Hong Kong as a youth.
There are no words to describe the alienation there.
At eighteen I met a rich man in China.
I borrowed money to go abroad.
Crossing the sea took three months.
Once in Suriname I tried to get settled.
In Suriname I was initially apprenticed to a goldsmith.
I suffered innumerable hardships.
It was during the Great Depression;
All businesses were hit hard.
Sixty-two years I lived in Suriname,
Working hard every day, non-stop.
It was hard, but I had self-respect.
I strove to get on and attain glory.

Nr. 60, pg. 173 寒舍失竊 Burgled
I came home in good cheer and climbed the stairs.
But thieves had ransacked the place, I was all shaken.
Money finishes your peace of mind, only Heaven grants security,
remember that Jesus saves and blesses.

Nr. 78, pg. 175 廣義堂月會 Kong Ngie Tong Sang's Savings and Credit System
This excellent system benefits Chinese merchants.
Everyone joins together to provide mutual assistance.
Resources are pooled so businesses can be opened.
Mutual help and love flow like a great river.
Our brothers arrive here empty-handed.
Pooling their money they shared resources.
This system is for those who want to go into business.
Be hard working and patient and you need not worry about poverty.

Nr. 34, pg. 169 無題 Untitled
The community of Overseas Chinese is one great family.
The first immigrant started business for those who followed.
The associations of the immigrants work for the greater good.
Organizing things is to bring peace to the community.
Leaders should not act selfishly, and should not make plans that harm people. They should act sincerely and justly, to reach and connect all Overseas Chinese. You don’t just waste the family’s firewood. The aspirations of the Huaqiao community should be lofty. One cannot go and ruin reputations. Proper association must be the standard. Every action must be sincere. Nepotism must never occur and none should be favoured. There is so much talent in the Overseas Chinese community; With gifted people at the helm the huiguan will be as new.

Nr. 58, pg. 172 思亡妻(金蓮) Thinking of My Late Wife (Jin Lian) My wife passed away years ago. The day she died was a dark and hateful day. Will I ever stop remembering her? I drift like a white cloud, constantly depressed. Her life was over, she did not grow old. She would stand by me in the shop at the break of dawn. Those who have completed their business should go first. Sadness chokes me, disappointment overwhelms me.

Nr. 35, pg. 169 送子回國讀書有感 Reflections on Sending Sons to Be Educated in China It was very hard making a life abroad. I never forgot how my travels cost me my youth. Sending a son back to learn civilization, is to continue the idea of training a successor. Everyone thinks of his glorious ancestors, feelings for the Old Country run very deep. I have laboured half a life without any luxuries, hoping that my son would return to become a man. I still dream of family and friends and how they are. The huge distance brings me down. The last three years he has studied diligently, he finished his studies and honoured his ancestors.

Nr. 106, pg. 180 雨天 Rainy Season Every afternoon peals of thunder. Roaring rainstorms, flooding the town. A pedestrian, quiet and alone, looks up at the sky; will this ever end?

Nr. 100, pg. 179 家鄉巨變 Huge Changes in the Village
Today the village is not the same.
There is telephone, electric light,
Television, refrigerators, washing machines.
Living standards improve each year.
Tall buildings block the sky.
Industry and agriculture are developed.
Many old sojourners are returning.
‘Leaves of a tree returning to its roots’, happy in old age.

Nr. 122, pg. 184 感懷 Thoughts
‘There is moonlight at the foot of my bed.’
A breeze carries the scent of fresh flowers.
Sojourners stick together abroad.
Homesick at the edge of the world.
Decades passed since they left home.
Drifting to far-off lands in search of money.
Now the Homeland is doing so well.
‘Leaves returning to roots’, to end their days.

4. Returning home

Sojourning was not a complete lie. It will never be clear what exact proportion of Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants in Suriname returned home, but returnees did exist. One example is Li Runting (Kejia: Li Yuntin), born in the village of Fengchuilian, Qingqi (Dongguan), in 1873. He arrived in Suriname alone, not as a chain migrant, at the age of twenty. He started out as an assistant in a gambling den, but ended up as a successful entrepreneur importing Chinese goods. At the age of 37 he instructed his older brother Dingting to invest the remittances in real estate – houses, agricultural land, lychee orchards. Finally, at 48, he returned to Qingqi. During the next two years he and other big names in the village refurbished the Qingqi market, in which he acquired two shops. He became a handling agent and informal banker for Overseas Chinese business. In 1927 Li Runting became president of the Qun An Automobile and Transport Co., and a plan to construct a highway linking Qingqi to the world beyond the hills was hatched and completed in 1932.

5 An allusion to Thoughts on a Still Night (靜夜思) by Li Bai (701-762), the huaqiao ‘anthem’: ‘Moonlight before my bed; It looked like frost; I gaze up at the bright moon; then lower my head and think of home.’
In the meantime he and other returnees also planned to set up a school for boys.

The Overseas Chinese had already invested quite some capital in the two public projects – the Qingqi Bazaar and the Qingqi-Zhangmutou Highway. So it was no surprise that the project of the Luming school faced funding problems. But they were determined, quite determined, to achieve that goal. Once again Li Runting invested in a trip across the ocean, to return to Suriname and personally convince the Overseas Chinese there to donate funds. Because of the connections and friends he had in Suriname, Li Runting managed to gain the support of the leaders of the Overseas Chinese in that same year. The status of those leaders abroad was such that if they gave the call, donations followed immediately. Li Runting accomplished his task successfully and returned to Qingqi with significant funds for the construction of the school. He took with him a young coconut palm which he planted in the schoolyard the next day. Later he took along Mrs. Chen Donghai to Vietnam to get money from the Overseas Chinese. Because of the tense situation in Vietnam at the time they had to take care with the funds. Departing male travellers could be checked by customs officers at any time. As a security measure, Li Runting converted the cash into small gold bars which he made Mrs. Chen carry to avoid trouble. Again he brought back small trees, two Flamboyant seedlings.6

Li Runting and his friends used the funds to set up the Luming school, and later he also helped found the Guangyu school. Li started a quicklime factory, and was instrumental in the construction of the Maoshe Reservoir. In this way he accumulated considerable prestige:

In the Republican era there were often conflicts between different clans. The chronicles of the Fengchuilian Li family record that: “In the Xianfeng Period7 of the Qing Dynasty the Li’s of this village fought the Zhu’s of Yuliang Village. In the middle of the night Li Sipu, the 17 year-old son of Li Bingquan, bravely took explosives to the roof of the Zhu clan house. He spied on the enemy until they had all gathered inside. Then he lighted the charges and threw them down into the building. He wanted to kill the enemy,

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6 Delonix regia, *Phượng Vĩ* in Vietnamese. The tree with its masses of fiery red flowers is strongly associated with students and summer in Vietnam. The two Flamboyant trees and the coconut palm were a tangible link to the Vietnamese and Surinamese contributors. It is unclear what other symbolism, if any, Li Runting invested in the coconut palm.
7 1851-1865.
but unfortunately he did not escape the conflagration himself. His injuries were very severe. The doctor could not help him and eventually he died."
The example above shows that vendetta was an early phenomenon in Qingqi. In order to provide a solution Li Runting was willing to compensate the losses of both sides, which made people respect him even more. That is why, when vendettas or other conflicts broke out, Li Runting would always be chosen as a peacemaker to find solutions and arbitrate.

The biography goes on to relate that when the People’s Republic was proclaimed, Li Runting moved to Hong Kong. Land reforms were started in 1951 and Li’s family were branded Overseas Chinese Big Landowners. His wife, Chen Dongmei, was ‘struggled’ during mass meetings in the village, and she and two sons lost everything. Cut off from his family, Li Runting had become a devout Christian in Hong Kong. He suffered a stroke in 1958 and died in his sleep the following year at the age of 86.8

5. Hidden quarrels

The image of a quiet, closed community of hard-working Chinese was partly fostered by ethnic Chinese themselves who extended the taboo against bringing out family secrets to anything regarding the Chinese ‘community’. The ubiquitous quarrels and scandals remained hidden from non-Chinese Surinamese, mostly because of a language barrier exacerbated by a tendency of the Chinese-language media to self-censorship. Traces of dissident voices do survive, however. In the early 1990s a number of anonymous stencilled pamphlets highly critical of the huiguan elite, in particular the Kong Ngie Tong Sang leadership, circulated among Chinese in Paramaribo. The texts had been copied out in a mixture of traditional and PRC orthography, with some characters fitting neither category. The following example is fairly typical.

‘The Rites are Over – Dismiss the Monks’
Du Yuefang donated 30,000 to the Chinese School. Only to be kicked out after a year on the board. That’s this world for you, unfair, especially with small-minded people in charge. The chiefs of Kong Ngie Tong Sang are an unscrupulous bunch.

8 Li Runting’s granddaughter in Suriname, Mrs. W. Hermelijn-Lie Kie Sang, provided documentation, which included Chinese-language texts prepared by Mr. Sammy Li / Li Linquang, a grandson of Li Runting’s in Hong Kong.
Look, someone donates 10,000 guilders, has been chairman for five years (including this year), and still refuses to hand over the reins. At the elections of 1993 though the ballots were readied early, six new board members each had a hundred votes, but ex-board member Du Yuefang got a paltry 57 votes?! The most pitiful results were for Zhuo Boyou and Li Yongrong, and these two gentlemen got the job. The guys in charge were clearly pulling a fast one, ‘proving’ to us Chinese that our elections are ‘democratic’, and ‘free’. You didn’t manage to get the highest vote, so people ‘don’t support you’. That’s what’s called playing for high stakes!

I don’t get these so-called leaders. All rotten on the inside and all correct out front. Their activities go unchecked. They owe money and don’t pay it back. They have no integrity or talent. But big surprise, they’re good friends and frequent visitors of the PRC embassy. Me, A-Fu, I’m really ashamed of them, I avoid having to deal with them, I avoid having to shake hands with these people who follow every priest who promises them heaven, and when I have to I wash my hands a number of times. But that our PRC embassy keeps them of all people as friends, that’s strange. In the Chinese community there are many of whole character and high prestige, yet the embassy does not deal with them. Is the Chinese embassy really serving the Chinese people? Or are they out to make things difficult? People here with a Chinese passport, if they should lose their passport they can’t get a replacement in anything less than six months. Even getting a new Surinamese passport doesn’t take as long as six months!

Now that this matter of Du Yuefang has been proven, do you want to donate to the Chinese school? By all means do, but if you want to be on the board, you can only do that for one year. Moreover, in that year you will need to ‘cover up’ your talents. Just listen to what is said and you might be allowed to continue. Otherwise, please pack your bags on your own accord. The chiefs of Kong Ngie Tong Sang use this kind of tricks to keep control of Kong Ngie Tong Sang. Every Chinese here needs to open his eyes. Da Fu, 1 February
APPENDIX 3: Chinese Ethnic Identification in Suriname

For a group that is considered easily identifiable, ethnic Chinese in Suriname are not easily labelled. The experience of diversity showed up in my fieldwork journal:

20 October 2002, around noon, in the restaurant along the Suriname River. The sky is overcast for the first time, signalling the end of the Dry Season. About 90 guests have gathered for M’s 40th birthday. All save maybe ten people have at least one Chinese grandparent, but only about ten of the guests might pass for pure Chinese. The birthday girl has one non-Chinese great-grandmother. “They tell me that today is the anniversary of the arrival of the first Chinese indentured labourers,” her mother tells me. “It’s a pity nobody took any notice. Someone should have organised some kind of celebration.” Her brother had already remarked something about the date when I met him at the ‘Chinese Market’ that morning. People may look Chinese, but ‘Chinese’ is not a serious subject while we wait at the table. Jokes and disparaging remarks seem necessary to keep the Chinese décor and red tablecloths in perspective. The modern style calligraphy against the wall remains safely unnoticed. None of the waiters is Chinese, except for one girl who is not in uniform. Everyone had been provided with a spoon and a fork and a pair of disposable chopsticks. There were no individual bowls, only dinner plates. The menu of East River Style Hakka cuisine had been ordered in advance: Salt-roasted Chicken, stuffed tofu and mushrooms with fish-paste balls, roast duck, roast suckling pig, beef and vegetables. Desert consists of Surinamese rum cake, pudding cake and pineapple tartlets. We’re having loads of outrageous fun, but suddenly it’s over, and we find ourselves shovelling leftovers into plastic containers and doggy-bags. On my way back from the restroom I see an even more Chinese-looking party in the section next to ours. I chat in Putonghua with the Cantonese lady who owns the place, I’m surprised to hear how quickly five years have passed – the pregnancy is now happily in kindergarten.

The articulation of Chinese ethnicity in Suriname is protean at the level of personal identification; a constantly shifting identification picked from a collection of labels that are limited by ideas of race,
gender, and class. This ‘Chineseness’ is multisituational, which means that agents may be excluded from certain options, but can and do actively shift a range of strategic identifications in the interest of maintaining and extending social networks; though ‘Chineseness’ is embodied and racialized (and to a lesser extent gendered; ‘Chinese are male shopkeepers’) in the eyes of all actors in Suriname, ethnic Chinese are not locked in any single identity. At this level, ‘Chineseness’ cannot become one single word and is never an issue of an isolated individual; to make sense of it one needs to consider who the agents and subjects are, which audience is present, and the location and timing of the act of labelling.

Chinese identity in Suriname is thus a function of relationships between individuals, and is about meaning rather than categorization. The following example of two ethnic Chinese individuals in Paramaribo illustrates just how complex the web of multiple, situational, and performative identities can be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. A</th>
<th>Miss B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man, 65 y.o., stereotypical ‘Chinese’ looks; Born in Bao’an County (Guangdong Province); Married, two children, relatives in Hong Kong and the USA; Middle-class, owner of Chinese corner-shop; Speaks: Kejia, Cantonese, Mandarin, Sranantongo, some English, little Dutch; Fully literate in Chinese, less so in English, not literate in Dutch.</td>
<td>Woman, 40 y.o., able to pass for ‘Chinese’; Born in Paramaribo; Single, with extensive transnational family network; Upper-middle class, manager of Chinese wholesale / retail shop; Speaks: Dutch, English, Kejia, Sranantongo; Fully literate in Dutch and English, not literate in Chinese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Self-Identification</th>
<th>Surinaamse: Dutch, spoken and written; 1. neutral, formal category related to Citizenship; 2. positive, before broadest SR public; Chinees: Dutch, spoken and written, carefully used neutral, before broadest Surinamese public; Laiap: Kejia, only spoken; joking pejorative, before limited in-group.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tongnyin: Kejia, neutral, before Kejia-speakers; Tong’ap: Kejia, neutral / joking pejorative, before Kejia-speakers; Zhongguoren: Chinese; 1. neutral, inclusive, before Chinese readers; 2. neutral, inclusive, before Mandarin-speakers; Huaren: Chinese; 1. neutral written Chinese; 1. neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mutual Identification</td>
<td>By Miss B:</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Omu (Sneisi):</strong></td>
<td>Sranantongo, joking pejorative, before Surinamese non-Chinese;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinees:</strong></td>
<td>Dutch, spoken and written, neutral, before broadest Surinamese public;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tong’ap:</strong></td>
<td>Kejia, (joking) pejorative, before Kejia-speaking in-group;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tongnyin:</strong></td>
<td>neutral / positive, before Kejia-speaking public.</td>
</tr>
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| **Sneisi:** Sranantongo, neutral / (joking) pejorative, before Sranantongo-speaking public; |
| **Mis’ Amoi:** Sranantongo, (well-meant) sexist term of address; |
| **Chinees:** Dutch, spoken and written, neutral, |
| Identification by Ethnic Chinese in Suriname | Tongnyin: by Kejia-speakers, neutral, before other Kejia-speakers; Tong'ap: by Kejia-speaking local-born, carefully used neutral, before Kejia-speaking in-group; Hakganyin: by Kejia-speakers, neutral, inclusive, before Kejia-speaking in-group; Zhongguoren: by Chinese writers, neutral, inclusive, before Chinese readers; 2. by Mandarin speakers, neutral / positive, inclusive, before general Mandarin-speaking public; Huaren: by Chinese writers, neutral, inclusive, before Chinese readers; 2. by Mandarin speakers, neutral / positive, inclusive, before general Mandarin-speaking public; Huaqiao: 1. by Chinese writers, neutral, inclusive, before Chinese readers; 2. by Mandarin speakers, neutral / positive, inclusive, before general Mandarin-speaking public; Kejiaren: 1. by Chinese writers, neutral before broadest Surinamese public; Javaan: Dutch, neutral (mistaken identity, Miss B can pass for someone of Malay descent), before limited SR public; Surinaamse: Dutch, spoken and written, positive, before Surinamese public. | Laiap: 1. by Kejia-speaking migrants, pejorative, before Kejia-speaking in-group; 2. by Kejia-speaking local-born, neutral / positive, before Kejia-speaking in-group; Sneisi: neutral, before broadest SR public; Moksi Sneisi: by (established) Fuidung’on Hakka, carefully used neutral, before Surinamese public; Sulinanren: by Chinese writers and Mandarin speakers, neutral description of formal category, before Chinese readers and general Mandarin-speaking public; Huayi: by Chinese writers, inclusive in combined ‘huaqiao-huayi’, carefully used neutral equivalent of ‘laiap’, before Chinese readers; Huaren: by Chinese writers, neutral, inclusive, before Chinese readers; 2. |
| Identification by Surinamese Government | **Houder van Hong Kong paspoort**: Dutch ('one holding a Hong Kong passport'), formal category related to citizenship  
**Chinees**: Dutch, spoken and written, ascribed label in formal use | **Surinaamse**: Dutch ('Surinamese woman'), spoken and written, formal category related to citizenship  
**Chinees**: Dutch, spoken and written, ascribed label in formal use |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Guangdongren 廣東人: 1. by Chinese writers, neutral inclusive / ascriptive, before Chinese readers; 2. by New Chinese, neutral, ascriptive, before general Mandarin-speaking public. | by Mandarin speakers, neutral / positive, inclusive, before general Mandarin-speaking public;  
**Huaqiao** 華僑: 1. by Chinese writers, neutral, inclusive, before Chinese readers; 2. by Mandarin speakers, neutral / positive, inclusive, before general Mandarin-speaking public |
| Kejiaren 客家人: 1. by Chinese writers, neutral inclusive / ascriptive, before Chinese readers; 2. by non-Hakka, neutral, ascriptive, before general Chinese public. | |
APPENDIX 4: GLOSSARY OF CHINESE TERMS

The following is a list of Chinese terms in the text with their appropriate Chinese orthographies

- Chinese orthographies are given in traditional characters (fantizi 繁體字).
- Transcriptions are simplified for the purpose of this text, which means that no tones are indicated for any variety of Chinese.
- Transcriptions of Chinese terms and names are consistently italicized in the text, except for Chinese names which occur in Suriname in some existing romanization or the other. Italics therefore indicate a transcription that is not commonly used in written non-Chinese sources.
- Chinese dialect is identified between brackets. Unless specified differently in the text, PTH transcriptions stand for terms originating from written Chinese sources rather than specific dialects. Character orthographies for Kejia terms are mostly phonetic transcriptions, derived from MacIver's dictionary (1926). Kejia pronunciations are colloquial and not literary. An example of such a distinction would be the pronunciation of the character 國: get versus gok.

Nouns and names in written Chinese sometimes appear like the result of over-enthusiastic abbreviation or poetic license. One reason is that the characters with which each is written cover an abundance of overlapping and elusive meanings, for instance 華: Flower, China; a surname; magnificent; splendid; flowery; name of a mountain. In addition, the number of syllables in Chinese words is limited, which causes an impression of terseness in compound nouns.

Further complicating the translation of Chinese nouns and names is the fact that their meanings may vary by context. Whether a noun is reflexive, inclusive, collective, etc. is often left to context. Nouns are almost never inflected, and number in particular is often implicit. In some cases a plural suffix (們) may actually emphasize the fact that the noun includes the speaker and the (im-
plied) public, for example 僑胞們 (qiaobaomen), ‘(We) Overseas Chinese’.

Translations of Chinese are also vague when a wide range of Chinese terms really have only one equivalent in English. For example, the word ‘Chinese’ may reflect characters such as 中, 華, and 唐 in various compounds, or may even be implicit, as in 僑 (qiao, sojourner from China). As a noun, ‘Chinese’ may refer to 中國人, 華僑, 華人, 華裔, 華人華裔, 唐人, etc., all of which refer to subtly different things depending on context.

**a-fan** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 阿番: ‘foreigner’; ‘barbarian’, term for mixed Chinese children among Fuidung’on Hakkas in Malaysia.

**a-moi** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 阿妹: ‘younger sister; girl’. Less than respectful male term of address for young women.

**baihuo** (PTH) 百貨: (as in ‘Baihuo Business’) general merchandise.

**Bai Lian Hua** (PTH) 白蓮花: *De Witte Lotus* sports club in Paramaribo.

**baisan** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 拜山: grave-sweeping rituals for dead relatives on Chongyang and Qingming.

**bang** (PTH) 幫: group; gang; party. Hence: group identity of Chinese migrants on the basis of shared language, native place, or other criteria such as surname / kinship, friendship, or occupation.

**Caofeng Qiaokan** (PTH) 曹峰僑刊: magazine for migrants from Xianyou, Fujian Province.

**chaoshi** (PTH) 超市: supermarket.

**Chongyang** (PTH) 重陽: ‘double yang’ or ‘double ninth festival’ because it falls on the ninth of the ninth lunar month (nine being a yang number). Currently a festival associated with hiking / climbing mountains, appreciating fall (autumn leaves and chrysanthemums), healing and caring for the elderly, and for some a day to pay one’s respects at the graves of the dead.
Chung Fa Foei Kon (Fuidung’on Kejia: zungfa fuigon) 中華會館: Fuidung’on Hakka / ‘Old Chinese’ association
Chung Hwa Hui (Fuidung’on Kejia: zungfa fui) 中華會: Chinese organization in the Netherlands, now defunct.
Chung Hwa Hui Tsa Chih (Fuidung’on Kejia: zungfa fuigon)中華會雜志: magazine published by Chung Fa Foei Kon.
Chung Tjauw Fu Li Foei (Fuidung’on Kejia: zungkiao fuli fui) 中僑福利會: Fuidung’on Hakka / ‘Old Chinese’ association, linked to the NPS.
congsam (Fuidung’on Kejia) 長衫: ‘long robe’, cheongsam.
diao nya mi (Fuidung’on Kejia) 屌惹姆: Kejia expletive.
Dongguan Tongxiang Hui (PTH) 東莞同鄉會: New Chinese (in this case recent Fuidung’on Hakka) migrant association in Suriname.
Fa Foe Foei (Fuidung’on Kejia: fa fu fui) 華互會: Working group organized by the Fuidung’on Hakka / ‘Old Chinese’ associations to deal with the political establishment
Fa Len Sa (Fuidung’on Kejia: fa lèn sa) 華聯社: Fuidung’on Hakka (Laiap) association, now defunct.
Fa Tjauw (Fuidung’on Kejia: fakiao) 華僑: the Chinese branch of the NPS.
Fa Tjauw Koen Sang (Fuidung’on Kejia: fakiao gungsan) 華僑公山: Chinese burial ground and funeral fund in Paramaribo, jointly run by the three oldest Fuidung’on Hakka associations.
Fa Tjauw Song Foei (Fuidung’on Kejia: fakiao songfui) 華僑商會: Third oldest Fuidung’on Hakka association, linked to the KMT.
Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foei (Fuidung’on Kejia: fakiao cènfui) 華僑全會: Federation of Chinese Associations in Suriname, entity created in 2007 by established Fuidung’on Hakka and New Chinese associations in Suriname to publicly reject calls to officially recognize Taiwan.
falang (PTH) 髮廊: barbershop; hairdressing salon.
fan’ap (Fuidung’on Kejia) 番鴨 : ‘foreign duck’. Duck breed in southern China. See laiap.

fuicèn (Fuidung’on Kejia) 會錢: traditional Fuidung’on Hakka rotating savings and credit association organized by the huiguan.

fuidung’on (Fuidung’on Kejia) 惠東安: anagram of the names of the Huiyang, Dongguan and Bao’an Counties (Fuidung’on Kejia: Fuiyong, Dunggon, Baooon), i.e. the Fuidung’on Region.

Fujian Luogu Dui (PTH) 福建鑼鼓隊: Fujianese percussion troupe.

Fujian Tongxiang Hui (PTH) 福建同鄉會: New Chinese (Fujianese) association.

Gan Di Ya (Fuidung’on Kejia) 關帝爺: ‘Imperial Lord Gan’. See Guan Di.

guan (PTH) 館: guesthouse; hall; public building.


guangda qiaobao (PTH) 廣大僑胞: ‘all our Overseas Chinese brothers and sisters’.

gasan (Fuidung’on Kejia) 掛山: ‘climb the mountain’, grave sweeping rituals performed on Chongyang. See baisan.

Guang Yi Tang jinian lou (PTH) 廣義堂記念樓: ‘Kong Ngie Tong Memorial Building’, community centre run by the established Fuidung’on Hakka associations.

Guangzhou Tongxiang Hui (PTH) 廣州同鄉會: New Chinese (Guangzhou, Guangdong Province) association.

gui (Fuidung’on Kejia) 鬼: ghost; demon.

guoyu (PTH) 國語: ‘national language’, i.e. Mandarin.

Hainan Huaqiao Lianhe Hui (PTH) 海南聯合會: New Chinese (Hainanese) association.

Hainan Tongxiang Hui (PTH) 海南同鄉會: New Chinese (Hainanese) association.

hakganyin (Fuidung’on Kejia) 客家人: Hakka person.

Hakka (Fuidung’on Kejia: hakga) 客家: Hakka, used here to distinguish the ethnic group from the language. See kejia.
Han (PTH) 漢: ethnic Chinese, particularly in the context of PRC multicultural discourse.

heiren (PTH) 黑人: ‘black people’; Afro-Surinamese.

hionggoninyin (Fuidung’on Kejia) 香港人: persons from Hong Kong.

hoklao (Fuidung’on Kejia) 福佬: ‘men from Fujian Province’. Specifically referring to seafaring Min-speakers from Chaozhou, eastern Guangdong Province.

hua (PTH) 華: China; Chinese.

Hua Cu Hui (Fuidung’on Kejia: fa cu fui) 華促會: Fuidung’on Hakka / ‘Old Chinese’ association.

huagong (PTH) 華工: Chinese indentured labourers.

huajuan (PTH) 華眷: dependents of sojourners in the qiaoxiang.

huaqiao (PTH) 華僑: Overseas Chinese.

huaqiao bangongshi (PTH) 華僑辦公室: offices managing Overseas Chinese relations.

Huaqiao Cujin Hui (PTH) 華僑促進會: See Hua Cu Hui.

huaqiao shehui (PTH) 華僑社會: Overseas Chinese society / the ethnic Chinese in Suriname.

huaren (PTH) 華人: ethnic Chinese


huaren-huayi (PTH) 華人華裔: ethnic Chinese. Ascriptive term specifying both immigrants and local-born.

huaren qiaobao (PTH) 華人僑胞: ethnic Chinese. Inclusive term implying ethnic Chinese in Suriname and beyond.

huaren shehui (PTH) 華人社會: the ‘Chinese community’.

huashang (PTH) 華商: Chinese traders.

Huawen Zhoubao (PTH) 華文周報: Chinese-language newspaper established by a New Chinese (Shandongese).

huayi (PTH) 華裔: people of Chinese descent.

huiguan (PTH) 會館: Chinese voluntary association. See shetuan.

hui kuan (PTH) 匯款: remittances.
**jiaotonghui** (PTH) 教童會: ‘association for the instruction of youths’. Traditional huiguan school for children of migrants.

**kejia** (PTH) 客家: ‘Hakka language’, used here to distinguish the language from the ethnic group.  
**kejiaren** (PTH), see Hakganyin.  
**kepmoi** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 甲梅: to mix.  
**keu nyuk** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 扣肉 lit. ‘buttoned meat’, Hakka dish.  
**Kong Ngie Tong** (Fuidung’on Kejia: gong nyi tong) 廣義堂: oldest Fuidung’on Hakka association in Suriname.  
**Kong Ngie Tong Sang** (Fuidung’on Kejia: gong nyi tong sang) 廣義堂生: current name of the above huiguan.

**lai sulinan** (PTH) 來蘇理南: ‘come to Suriname’.  
**laiap** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 泥鴨 / 堪鴨: hybrid duck breed from southern China, the offspring of a male fan’ap and a female tong’ap. Fuidung’on Hakka term in Suriname for local born or mixed Chinese.  
**Lam Foeng** (Fuidung’on Kejia: lam fung) 南風: ‘South Wind’. Fuidung’on Hakka newspaper in Suriname, now defunct.  
**lao huaqiao** (PTH) 老華僑: ‘older Overseas Chinese’.  
**laokeh** (Southern Min) 老客: earlier migrant cohorts or established migrants.  
**laoteu** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 佬頭: people from outside one’s hometown.  
**Lie Tsie Sa (Lie Tse Sa)**: Chinese orthography unclear. Fuidung’on Hakka (Laiap) youth organization, now defunct.  
**loi feu** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 來埠: ‘come to the port’ (i.e. Paramaribo), Fuidung’on Hakka expression for chain migration from the qiaoxiang to Suriname.  
**long** (PTH) 龍: dragon.

**maoyi gongsí** (PTH) 貿易公司: trading company.
**mu kilin** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 爾麒麟: Hakka equivalent of the Lion Dance, performed by two people animating a kilin ('unicorn') costume.

**mu liung** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 舞龍: dragon dance performed by a group of people animating a dragon following a ‘pearl’.

**mu su** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 舞獅 / **mu suzai** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 舞獅子: southern Chinese Lion Dance, performed by two people animating a lion costume.

**Ngien Mien Len Hap Tong** (Fuidung’on Kejia: nyin min lèn hap tong) 人民聯合黨: ‘United People's Party’, *Verenigde Volks Partij* (VVP), Fuidung’on Hakka political party active in the 1970s.

**nya mi bin ngai diao** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 起姆份涯屌: Kejia expletive.

**onnamzai** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 安南仔: Fuidung’on Hakka remigrants to Suriname from Vietnam.

**pakgui** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 白鬼: ‘white ghosts’, i.e. white people.

**pak hap piao** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 白鴿票, “White Dove Tickets”, full name of the piauw lotto, popular in Suriname between 1912 and 1947.

**Punti** (Cantonese: bun di) 本地: literally ‘of this place’, i.e. the established. Southern Chinese term for Cantonese-speakers (as non-immigrants versus Hakka outsiders).

**qiao** (PTH) 僑: ‘sojourner’, i.e. Overseas Chinese.

**qiaobao** (PTH) 僑胞: ‘Overseas Chinese brothers and sisters’.

**qiaobaomen** (PTH) 僑胞們: same as above, with emphatic plural.

**qiao hui** (PTH) 僑匯: remittances from Overseas Chinese.

**qiaoling** (PTH) 僑領: Overseas Chinese leadership.

**qiaotuan** (PTH) 僑團: Overseas Chinese association.

**qiaoshe** (PTH) 僑社: Overseas Chinese community.
qiaoxiang (PTH) 僑鄉: hometown of Overseas Chinese. Refers specifically to the huaqiao-qiaoxiang model of transnational circuits and resource mobilization.

qipao (PTH) 旗袍: ‘banner robe’, i.e. cheongsam.

qigong (PTH) 氣功: traditional therapeutic practices based on movement and breathing techniques.

Qingming (PTH) 清明: ‘Bright and clear’, the Grave Sweeping Festival held on the 104th day after the winter solstice, usually around 4 April.

quanti sulinan huaren (PTH) 全體蘇理南華人: (all) the Chinese of Suriname.

samfu (Fuidung’on Kejia) 衫 褲: ‘unlined shirt and trousers’. Traditional suit of unlined shirt and trousers of cotton or waxed silk common in southern China.

san qiaotuan (PTH) 三僑團 / san tuan (PTH) 三團: ‘the Three Organizations’, i.e. Kong Ngie Tong San, Chung Fa Foei Kon, and Fa Tjauw Song Foei.

san’go (Fuidung’on Kejia) 山歌: ‘mountain song’. Type of southern Chinese song based on a duet between two lovers.

sepo (Fuidung’on Kejia) 細婆: secondary wife.

shanghai (PTH) 商會: commercial association.

shaoshu minzu (PTH) 少數民族: minority nationalities in the PRC.

shetuan (PTH) 社團: voluntary association.

shuang shi jie (PTH) 雙十節: ‘Double Ten Day’. Taiwanese national day celebrating the start of the Wuchang Uprising of 10 October 1911.

si (Fuidung’on Kejia): 死 ‘death’; 屎 ‘shit’; 屍 ‘corpse’.

sinhak (Fuidung’on Kejia) 新客: recent migrant cohorts.

sinkeh (Southern Min) 新客: recent migrant cohorts.

Soeng Ngie & Co. (Fuidung’on Kejia: sun nyi) 循義公司: wholesaler and retailer of Chinese products in Paramaribo, established in 1940.

sulinanren (PTH) 蘇理南人: Surinamese person.
suona (PTH) 嗡吶: Chinese shawm.
suzai (Fuidung’on Kejia) 獅子: lion. See mu su.

taipo (Fuidung’on Kejia) 大婆: primary wife, official wife.
taiwan duli / tai du (PTH) 台 灣 獨 立 / 台獨: ‘Taiwanese Independence’.
tènsong sinsèntung, tiha sulilam (Fuidung’on Kejia) 天上神仙洞,地下蘇理南: Fuidung’on Hakka slogan, ‘Up in heaven is the realm of gods and immortals, down on earth you have Suriname’.
Tian Dao / Yiguan Dao (PTH) 天道 / 一貫道: Daoist sect based in Taiwan.
tong’ap (Fuidung’on Kejia) 唐鴨: duck breed in southern China from which Laiap ducks derive. Hence: China-born Fuidung’on Hakka in Suriname, Fuidung’on Hakka migrant. See laiap.
tongnyin (Fuidung’on Kejia) 唐人: ethnic Chinese.
tongsan (Fuidung’on Kejia) 唐山: China; the qiaoxiang / homeland in China.
tongshu (PTH) 通書: traditional Chinese almanac.
tongxiangbang (PTH) 同鄉幫: group based on shared hometown.
tongxianghui (PTH) 同鄉會: hometown association.
tongyehui (PTH) 同業會: association based on shared occupation.
Tshoen Tjien Church (Fuidung’on Kejia: zung zin) 基督教崇真堂: Chinese congregation within the Surinamese Moravian Church.
tuina (PTH) 推拿: traditional Chinese therapeutic massage.
tusang (Kejia, Cantonese) 土生: local-born ethnic Chinese.
tuhua (PTH) 土話: local patois.
tuwa (Fuidung’on Kejia), see tuhua.

waiji huaren (PTH) 外籍華人: ethnic Chinese with foreign citizenship
waixiang (PTH) 外鄉: person from outside one’s hometown.
wenzhouhua (PTH) 溫州話: dialect of the Wenzhou area.
**Wenzhou Tongxiang Hui** (PTH) 温州同鄉會: Wenzhounese Hometown Association.

**wo huayi** (PTH) 我華裔: ‘we people of Chinese descent’.

**wo huaren / women huaren** (PTH) 我華人 / 我們華人: ‘we ethnic Chinese’.

**women xin huaren** (PTH) 我們新華人: ‘we New Chinese’.

**wugui** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 烏鬼: ‘black ghosts’, i.e. black people.

**Xin Hua Lin Liang Xin** 新華林良鑫: New Chinese (Xianyou, Fujian Province) association, now defunct.

**xin huaren** (PTH) 新華人: New Chinese.

**xin huaren tongbao** (PTH) 新華人同胞: ‘our New Chinese brothers and sisters’.

**xinlao huaren** (PTH) 新老華人: ‘Old and New Chinese’.

**xin yimin** (PTH) 新移民: New Migrants.

**Xing Shi Tuan** (PTH) 醒獅團: Lion Dance troupe of the Fa Tjauw Song Foei huiguan.

**Xunnan Ribao** (PTH) 洵南日報: Chinese-language newspaper formally associated with the Kong Ngie Tong Sang huiguan.

**yige zhongguo zengce** (PTH) 一個中國政策: the One-China Policy.

**zai sulinan de huaren qiaobao** (PTH) 在蘇理南的華人僑胞: ‘our Overseas Chinese brothers and sisters in Suriname’.

**zetgongzai** (Fuidung’on Kejia) 浙江仔: pejorative term for New Chinese / Wenzhounese.

**Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui** (PTH) 浙江同鄉會: New Chinese (Wenzhounese) association.

**zhong** (PTH) 中: centre, middle; China; Chinese. Abbreviation of zhongguo.

**zhongguo** (PTH) 中國: China.

**zhongguo anmo** (PTH) 中國按摩: Chinese massage.

**zhongguoren** (PTH) 中國人: people / person from China.
Zhonghua Ribao (PTH) 中華日報: Chinese-language newspaper formally associated with the Chung Fa Foei Kon huiguan.

Zhongwen Xuexiao (PTH) 中文學校: the Chinese school facilitated by the huiguan in the Guang Yi Tang jinian lou community centre.

zuguo (PTH) 祖國: motherland.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ABS**: Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek (General Bureau of Statistics).

**ABOP**: Algemene Binnenland Ontwikkelingspartij (General Interior Development Party; Surinamese political party, Maroon).

**ASEAN**: Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

**ATV**: Algemene Televisie Verzorging (General Television Provider; television station in Suriname).

**BEP**: Broederschap en Eenheid in de Politiek (Brotherhood and Unity in Politics; Surinamese political party, Maroon).

**BVD**: Basispartij voor Vernieuwing en Democratie (Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy; Surinamese political party, VHP splinter, East Indian).

**BVSS**: Bedrijven Vereniging Sport en Spel (Entrepreneurial Association for Sports and Games).

**CAMA Suriname**: Christian and Missionary Alliance Church Suriname (基督教蘇理南宣道會, Christelijke en Zending Alliantie Kerk van Suriname).

**CARICOM**: Caribbean Community.

**CATIC**: China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation (中國航空技術進出口總公司).

**CBB**: Centraal Bureau Burgerzaken (Central Registry Office).

**CI MC**: China International Marine Containers (Group) Co., Ltd. (中國國際海運集裝箱(集團)股份有限公司).

**CI MCHK**: China International Marine Containers Hong Kong (中國國際海運集裝箱(香港)有限公司).

**CSME**: Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

**D21**: Democraten van de 21e eeuw (Democrats of the 21st Century; Surinamese political party, KTPI splinter).

**DA91**: Democratisch Alternatief '91 (Democratic Alternative '91; Surinamese political party, liberal, non-ethnic).

**DNP 2000**: Democratisch Nationaal Platform 2000 (Democratic National Platform 2000; Surinamese political party, NDP splinter, non-ethnic).
DOE: Democratie en Ontwikkeling in Eenheid (Democracy and Development in Unity; Surinamese political party, non-ethnic).

DPP: Democratic Progressive Party / 民主進步黨 (Taiwanese political party).

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment.


KTPI: Kerukunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil (Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Level; Surinamese political party, Javanese).

NDP: Nationale Democratische Partij (National Democratic Party; Surinamese political party, non-ethnic).

NF: Nieuw Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling (New Front for Democracy and Development; Surinamese grand coalition).

NPS: Nationale Partij Suriname (Surinamese National Party; Surinamese political party, Creole).

NS: Nieuw Suriname (New Suriname; Surinamese political party, East Indian).

NU: Nationale Unie / Hernieuwde Progressieve Partij (National Union / Renewed Progressive Party; Surinamese political party, BVD splinter, East Indian).

OIS: Organisatie van Inheemsen in Suriname (Organization of Indigenous People in Suriname).

PALU: Progressieve Arbeiders en Landbouwers Unie (Progressive Workers and Farmers Union; Surinamese political party, originally leftist, non-ethnic).

PLA: People’s Liberation Army.

PNM: People’s National Movement, Trinidad & Tobago political party, dominated by Afro-Trinidadians.

PPP: Progressieve Politieke Partij (Progressive Political Party; Surinamese political party, BVD splinter, East Indian).

PPRS: Partij Pembangunan Rakyat Suriname (Party for the Development of the Surinamese People; Surinamese political party, Javanese).

PORIM: Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia.

PRC: People’s Republic of China.

PTH: Putonghua (Mandarin-based official language of the PRC).

PVF: Politieke Vleugel van de Federatie van Agrariërs en Landarbeiders (Political Wing of the Federation of Agriculturalists and Farmers; Surinamese political party, East Indian dominated).

ROSCA: Rotating Savings and Credit Association.
RVP:  *Revolutionaire Volkspartij* (Revolutionary People's Party, leftist, non-ethnic Surinamese political party, now defunct).

SARS: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

SBB: *Stichting Bosbeheer en Bostoezicht* (Forest Management Authority).

SPA: *Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid* (Surinamese Labour Party; Surinamese political party, non-ethnic).

STVS: *Surinaamse Televisie Stichting* (Surinamese State TV).

SVF: *Surinaams Vrouwen Front* (Surinamese Women’s Front; Surinamese political party, defunct).


UPS: *Unie van Progressieve Surinamers* (Union of Progressive Surinamese; Surinamese political party, combination of *Naya Kadam* (New Choice, VHP splinter), *Hervormde Progressieve Partij* (Reformed Progressive Party, split from the *Hernieuwde Progressieve Partij* – Renewed Progressive Party), and the Girjasing-Sewradj Panday group (BVD splinter), East Indian).

VHP: *Vatkan Hitkari Partij / Verenigde Hervormings Partij* (United Reform Party; Surinamese political party, East Indian).

VVP: *Verenigde Volks Partij / Ngien Mien Len Hap Tong* 人民聯合黨 (United People’s Party; Surinamese political party, Chinese).

VVV: *Volksalliantie Voor Vooruitgang* (People’s Alliance for Progress; Surinamese grand coalition).

XNRB: *Xunnan Ribao / 洪南日報*.

ZHRB: *Zhonghua Ribao / 中華日報*. 
MAPS

Map 1: Republic of Suriname

Central Suriname Nature Reserve

Nieuw-Nickerie
Nickerie
Coronie
Saramacca
Para
Paramaribo
Comme-Ri
Marowijne
Albina
Patamacca
Pokigon
Sipaliwini
GUYANA
SURINAME
ATLANTIC OCEAN
BRAZIL

0 100 km

National Boundaries

District Boundaries
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This study outlines the challenges to the local positioning of the Chinese community in Suriname in the context of the arrival of new Chinese migrants in the early 2000s. The main conclusion of this study is that the local in many ways takes precedence over the global; Chinese migrants freshly arriving in Suriname are not ‘Chinese’ yet, but they become so in light of Surinamese expectations of what being Chinese means, and in terms of pragmatic choices in securing a livelihood. As it emerges from this study, the positioning of New Chinese in Suriname mirrors that in South-east Asia and Africa, where the meaning of ‘Chineseness’ is either rearticulated under renewed immigration, or becomes a focus in political rhetoric.

Instrumental Ethnic Identification as a Result of Local Positioning

As a type of ethnic identification in Suriname, ‘Chineseness’ is instrumental and often strategic, and is therefore multiple and situational, and contingent on the particular agents articulating this identity, and the particular audience that is witness to the process of articulation. Chinese positioning in Surinamese society has been utterly pragmatic and relies on locally relevant notions of Chinese ethnic identity. Socio-economic positioning of migrants has produced a fairly stable and durable, albeit distinctly local and instrumental, Chinese ethnic identity in Suriname. Adaptive strategies produced an ethnic ownership economy, Chinese organizations (which at least initially were adaptive organizations of migrants), and entrepreneurial chain migration, all mutually reinforcing each other. The collective ethnic resources of Chinese migrants as an ethnic group help its members to overcome disadvantages of having the status of an outsider and they maximize the value of human and financial capital. This in turn creates the necessity to maintain and manage Chinese ethnic resources, and drives the development of ethnic communal activities, institutions (huiguan and shetuan as adaptive organizations of migrants), and elites.
Socio-political positioning produces a different type of Chinese ethnic identification. I propose that public articulation of ethnic identities of immigrants in Suriname is determined by apanjaht multiculturalism: consociational power-sharing and associated clientelism, and the ideology underpinning political power-sharing by determining who is to be included or excluded in the way multicultural Surinamese society is imagined. Apanjaht consociationalism is a type of ethnopolitics based on political power-sharing among a cartel of elites of a constellation of ethnic groups within the context of the formally non-ethnic liberal democratic Surinamese State. Surinamese political elites present diversity as a problem to be solved, and treat the nationalist ideal of the non-ethnic Surinamese State as fundamentally unachievable; apanjaht consociationalism is a way to manage diversity and thus legitimize elite dominance.

The ideological framework for the articulation of boundaries between pragmatic ethnic groups in apanjaht consociationalism is a response to the Creole-dominated nationalist view of assimilation. Apanjaht invokes the image of modular ethnic groups through a popular, commonsensical belief in fixed, primordial ethnic or racial categories, but does not actually require continuously and sharply defined ethnic boundaries, as quantifying changes in the number and sizes of ethnic groups could upset the consociational apple cart. Instead, recognition of ethnic group identity is framed within the popular Mamio (Sranantongo: ‘patchwork quilt’) stereotype. In the image of a multi-coloured checkerboard pattern mamio patchwork, ethnic groups are like equally sized and spaced pieces of cloth stitched together into a larger whole. The narrative of the Mamio Myth within apanjaht ideology provides the framework for performative ethnicity, especially with regard to politics of recognition. The positioning of collective identities within the larger narrative is quite literally articulated in public performances of ethnic pride, cultural variety, and ultimate national unity. Apanjaht ideology produces collective belonging through different, simultaneous representations of Suriname; Suriname exists because Surinamese imagine themselves as culturally varied within a territorially defined state.

**Old and New Chinese**

The Chinese presence in Suriname grew via chain migration from a core of indentured labourers in the late nineteenth century. They fairly quickly developed an ethnic ownership economy based on retail trade and established their own adaptive institutions. Even-
ually integration and assimilation produced a generational cleavage within the community between those born in China (tong’ap) and those born in Suriname or of mixed background (laiap). ‘Old Chinese’ migration to Suriname can be said to have transformed four different times: First there were the indentured labourers from Hakka villages in the Fuidung’on Region in the late nineteenth century; then Fuidung’on Hakka entrepreneurial chain migrants up to the first half of the twentieth century; next acculturated Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants via Hong Kong in the second half of the twentieth century; and finally Fuidung’on migrants who left the People’s Republic of China after economic reforms and the abolition of restrictions on emigration in the late twentieth century.

By the early 1990s, renewed Chinese migration in the context of new globalized migration became noticeable in Suriname. The ‘New Chinese’ as they were soon called in Suriname, are associated with a sudden and remarkable increase in Chinese immigration in the 1990s. New Chinese Migrants are literally found all over the globe as part of renewed migration after almost thirty years (between the founding of the PRC in 1949 and the relaxation of emigration barriers in 1978). Compared to earlier Chinese migrants, New Migrants (xin yimin) typically have new types of transnational ties with the PRC as their homeland, through modern mass media and mass transit. The New Chinese in Suriname have come from every imaginable region in the Chinese world, but the vast majority arrived from the coastal provinces of the PRC, from Hainan in the south all the way to Liaoning along the North Korean border. The largest New Chinese group is from the southern part of Zhejiang Province. With the arrival of New Chinese, the linguistic and cultural situation within the Chinese segment of Suriname became unusually complex.

The available evidence indicates that the bulk of Chinese migration to Suriname basically remains sponsored migration based on privately owned businesses of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs. New Chinese migrants have adopted a wider range of survival and adaptive strategies upon their arrival in Suriname, but also carved out a separate niche in the Surinamese retail sector and have developed an ethnic ownership economy that competes with the Chinese ethnic ownership economy of the ‘Old Chinese’ (commodities versus foodstuffs, with an overlap in non-food daily necessities). In this system, migrants develop transnational business networks that exploit the drive of privately owned businesses in Zhejiang Province to increase exports, and the need for self-employment among New Migrants who as outsiders in their host societies face limited oppor-
tunities for socio-economic advancement. The New Chinese ethnic ownership economy is thus based on access to migrant networks that link Zhejiang Province to various migrant destinations abroad, including Suriname, and it is fundamentally a migrant self-help strategy for New Chinese who find themselves excluded from the Fui-dung’on Hakka ethnic ownership economy.

It is debatable whether globalization of the PRC economy drives migration to destinations like Suriname or whether it is New Migrants from China who are introducing PRC products to new markets. In any case, New Chinese socio-economic positioning had a clear impact on the image of Chinese in Suriname, as the new supermarkets came to represent the most concrete sign and outcome of New Chinese migration and of the growing influence and power of the PRC in the Caribbean and Latin American region. The Surinamese public tends to misunderstand the PRC’s presence in Suriname in terms of globalization and geopolitics and conflate the PRC, Chinese migrants survival strategies and ethnic Chinese as ‘China’ / ‘Chinese’. This has two major consequences. On the one hand, non-Chinese in Suriname - the general public as well as individual agents in the apparatus of the state - base their perception and approach of the PRC and Chinese migrants on such misunderstandings. On the other hand, Chinese migrants and ethnic Chinese in Suriname need to choose their positioning strategies with the general image of monolithic Chineseness in mind, in which ‘China’ and ‘Chinese’ are inextricably intertwined.

The current relationship between the PRC and the Republic of Suriname is based on the goals of PRC policy in the region: recognition as the only true undivided Chinese state (‘pocket-book diplomacy’ in the context of the One-China Principle, since the 1970s), and access to natural resources (since the 1990s). Untransparent links between resource extraction (usually logging) companies and the PRC government may be passively or actively misrepresented as development programs, usually by Surinamese counterparts. As a result the general public never fully understood the exact role of the PRC and made up its own minds about it through patriotic rhetoric of decolonization: the Chinese were replacing the Dutch as the new colonizers and exploiters. As in the rest of the Caribbean, PRC technical cooperation projects in Suriname are not real PRC outward FDI but are generally intended to elevate the prestige of the PRC. PRC multinationals are not actually directly investing their own capital in Suriname, but are indirectly funded by PRC government loans to Suriname. PRC resource extraction projects in Suriname are commercial projects to harvest and process
timber for the purpose of supplying the Chinese market, organized through transnational Chinese personal and business networks.

This centrality of the PRC in relation to renewed Chinese identifications is an important reason why Chinese ‘groupness’ evokes negative images among non-Chinese audiences in Suriname. Immigrants from the PRC and people with an ethnic Chinese background in Suriname are guided and limited in their articulation of identity by the way Chineseness is viewed by non-Chinese. Historically, such ascribed Chinese identity has been articulated instrumentally by elites in local media as a reaction to perceived competition by socially mobile Chinese migrants, although recently it is articulated by non-elites as a form of anti-government (anti-establishment and to a certain extent anti-globalist) protest. Anti-Chinese sentiments are fundamentally anti-immigrant sentiments that arise in the local context of civic discourse, which defines and binds Surinamese in a community of victims of inept rulers, and locate specific phenomena such as migration in the context of governance failure.

Anti-Chinese sentiments cannot be separated from anti-establishment protest; any social or political issue related to the idea of Chinese identity or China becomes symbolic of perceived government failure, either consciously in naïve monarchic resistance or unconsciously in an anti-government conspiracy theory. This is embedded in a framework of stereotypes (both negative and positive) about ethnic Chinese in Suriname. These stereotypes also inform the specific anti-New Chinese stereotypes that provide the performative content for ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ identity. In this way, anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname – generally anti-Chinese or specifically anti-Chinese immigrant – reveal the limits to situational and performative Chinese identity. In the narratives which are constructed around Surinamese anti-Chinese sentiment, Chineseness implies membership of a closed community, the unwillingness or inability to integrate, the eternal orientalist Other. The Tong'ap response to the negative image of Chinese in Suriname had been to retreat from public view as much as the marketing requirements of their economic niche would allow. The Laiap power brokers responded by shifting negative imagery onto New Chinese as outsiders, and rearticulated the idea of ‘Surinamese-Chinese’ as the only legitimate Chinese in Suriname.
Socio-political Positioning and Participation

Chinese elites could hope to acquire a share of political power either through politics of recognition to access apanjaht consociationalist grand coalitions, or by being recognized as ethnic representatives by acquiring governing positions in Chinese adaptive organizations. For effective politics of recognition, Chinese ethnic identity needed to be articulated in line with the narratives of apanjaht ideology. Elites wishing to participate in apanjaht consociationalism still need to legitimate their claim to be ethnic representatives to the general public as well as to their coethnics. The general public needs to recognize the constituency of the new elite as a legitimate ethnic group: tied to this place, authentic, ancient. Elites need to articulate this narrative of their ethnic identity to their constituency and position themselves to their constituency as representatives of the ethnic group striving for emancipation of their social group, against the hegemony of other political factions established in the political arena. In this way apanjaht consociationalism is not just the result of ethnic pluralism but also the generator of ethnic identity; in other words in order to participate, one cannot but be ethnic.

To be useful for ethnopoliticization, Chinese group identity would have to be fundamentally and very publicly performative. Chinese ethnicity was already allocated a niche in the national Mamio myth, though this ethnic identity was performed through orientalist stereotypes and not in ways that signalled modernity, for example, either in terms of citizenship in the Republic of Suriname or in relation to the power of the Chinese homeland. Unlike Chinese ethnic resources in the Chinese ethnic ownership economy, which were defined within the community and generated by the requirements of Chinese migrants, Chinese identity in apanjaht ideology would have to be articulated towards non-Chinese Surinamese as well as serve to define and mobilize an ethnic Chinese constituency of voters. By the start of the millennium members of the ethnic Chinese elite realized that there would soon be unique opportunities to use Chinese ethnic identity to position themselves in the centre of power; in October 2003 it would be 150 years since the first Chinese indentured labourers arrived in Suriname, and in May 2005 elections were to be held for the new Assembly and government. The symbolic capital which would be produced during the Commemoration would strengthen the claims of the Laiap elite to leadership within a larger Chinese community as well as force public recognition of Chinese ethnicity by the state through the logic of the Mamio Myth.
The Celebration was in many ways a clear success. The creation of a ‘Chinese ethnic group’, or at least the image of a unified, essential and important Chinese ethnic group instead of the reality of fragmented groups and undefinable ethnic labels, was the political goal of the organizers of the Commemoration, and that goal had been achieved. The Celebration was also a success as a response to the anti-Chinese sentiments linked to illegal immigration and the controversial Chinese transnational construction and logging companies. There were also concrete results with regard to Chinese ‘infrastructure’ for future use in apanjah multiculturalist discourse; the Chinese had confirmed their recognized status as one of the Surinamese ethnic groups, and had acquired the props (Chinese markers in the Surinamese landscape, and new iconic cultural items such as a dragon for dragon dances) to negotiate their position in multiculturalist discourse (i.e. the Mamio Myth). Outsiders were generally unaware of alternative New Chinese claims in the parade; Tong'ap observers at least were now acutely aware that Chinese cultural identity in Suriname was no longer exclusively Hakka, Hongkongese, or even the homogenized Chinese-ness of globalized Chinese culture.

The collective identity and ethnic belonging presented in the celebrations provided elements that people could make into a basic script: Chinese in Suriname are settlers, not foreigners, respectable citizens, not temporary residents; They are the descendants of the nineteenth century Chinese indentured labourers; Chinese are integrated into Surinamese society without losing their authentic Chineseness, which is reflected by the many things that are familiar in Surinamese culture that were introduced by Chinese; Chinese are also integrated because many Surinamese have Chinese ancestors, so everybody is invited to claim Chinese roots; Chinese are successful and organized, and so on. This script fits into the broader multiculturalist discourse: because Chinese in Suriname can trace their roots back to bonded labour, they too suffered under colonial rule as involuntary immigrants and so their presence in Suriname is equally legitimate as that of Afro-Surinamese (seen as descendents of slaves) or as East Indian and Javanese (also descendents of bonded labourers).

The following year saw a New Chinese elite challenge Fu-dung’on hegemony, by inviting State recognition of their role as representatives of an important source of support, albeit of non-voters. Non-naturalized Chinese immigrants do not have direct access to political power, but can organize themselves in the face of the Surinamese State in such a way as to be recognized as re-
representatives of an otherwise unreachable but important (through association with existing ethnic groups and therefore political blocs) ‘community’. When this happens, ethnicity becomes a political resource for these organizations; consequently ethnicity comes to be located and generated within the adaptive organizations. Laiap middle class elites have exploited their recognition by the Surinamese State as representatives of ‘the Chinese community’ to become ethnic power brokers via membership of the board of a huiguan, despite lacking the specific cultural capital necessary to be recognized as legitimately ‘Chinese’ by Chinese migrants.

In Suriname, there has never been a united Chinese institution in which a unified Chinese position could be developed and internal conflicts could be managed outside the public view. Instead, the Chinese institutions of Suriname form loose networks of personal platforms. Up to 2004 there were no specific organizations for New Chinese. This allowed the Fuidung’on Hakka huiguan establishment to present itself as gatekeepers to the New Chinese while at the same time marginalizing their participation. New Chinese elites copied this established strategy of setting up or joining a non-political and non-government group as platform for recognition by the State by founding a New Chinese socio-cultural association, first Zhejiang Tongxiang Hui in January 2004, soon followed by hometown associations for people from Hainan, Fujian, Dongguan, and Guangzhou, among others. Fuidung’on Hakka elites could now no longer dictate the views of ‘the Chinese community’ to the Surinamese State and the relationship between Chinese associations in Suriname came to be reinterpreted as reflecting various subgroups.

The 2005 Legislative Elections

By the end of 2003 the established Fuidung’on Hakkas and the New Chinese had both signalled that they could independently mobilize a substantial ethnic Chinese constituency and funds. For the Chinese elites in Suriname, Old or New, the status quo to be challenged in the face of the 2005 national elections was the absence of ethnic Chinese agents where it mattered, at the centre of political power in the Surinamese State. Ethnopoliticization of Chinese in Suriname – in the sense of mobilization of an ethnic Chinese constituency concurrent with the articulation of Chinese ethnic identity and ethnic resources – was very weak up to the 2005 legislative elections. As a small ethnic minority, Chinese in Suriname had very little success with their own political parties; small numbers
translated into a numerically weak constituency. Issues of represen-
tation in an ethnic Chinese group that was only as communi-
minded as their ethnic ownership economy would allow, and which
was fragmented along lines of assimilation, also meant that it was
very difficult to find candidates willing to stand for public office who
were qualified as well as acceptable to all sides (Chinese as well as
non-Chinese). In practice, the most successful ethnic Chinese bids
for political power were orchestrated by elites who rose within the
structures of Chinese adaptive organizations, and who stood a good
chance of achieving political influence through collaboration with
apanjaht parties.

Chinese participation via other apanjaht parties was no less
a challenge, as Chinese could find themselves isolated within spe-
cial Chinese wings of non-Chinese parties. In Surinamese elections
no ethnic party achieved a clear electoral majority, and although
the resulting grand coalitions basically reflected a balancing act
between the two largest ethnic groups of Creoles and East Indians,
the balance of power was multi-polar; the Javanese elites were the
wild card, because they were virtually guaranteed a place in the
grand coalitions by virtue of their position as representatives of the
third largest ethnic group. New ethnic elites - i.e. the elites of exis-
ting minorities and migrant groups - are not automatically accomo-
dated as they risk unbalancing the power-sharing system. As new
ethnic groups that are too substantial to be ignored by the apanjaht
parties are unlikely to arise unexpectedly, new elites really have
only one realistic choice if they wish to participate, that is, they
must move to one of the poles in the system. As apanjaht consos-
ciationism is about carefully maintaining the balance of power,
immigrants signal instability, as potential new ethnic groups or as
extensions of existing groups. Especially against the backdrop of
anti-Chinese sentiments in Suriname, this meant that Chinese were
potentially dangerous for apanjaht parties to include.

In the run-up to the 2005 elections, a Javanese route was
chosen by rivals of the Chinese wing of the Creole NPS; in return
for the ethnic Chinese vote and material and financial support, an
ethnic Chinese minister as well as an ethnic Chinese member of the
National Assembly were virtually guaranteed. Probably for the first
time a heated Chinese election campaign erupted in the huiguan-
run Chinese language newspapers in Suriname to mobilize and re-
veal the actual strength of the ethnic Chinese vote, which pitted
three Chinese views (associated with the Javanese Pertjajah Luhur,
the Creole NPS, and the anti-apanjaht NDP) against each other.
Though the Javanese route was successful and an ethnic Chinese
minister and member of the Assembly were installed, in the power-sharing negotiations following the 2005 elections, Pertjajah Luhur traded the post of Minister of Trade and Industry, which had been held by two ethnic Chinese in succession, in favour of a specially created ministry in charge land allocation. Not only had the limited size of the ethnic Chinese vote become apparent, but the Chinese agents at the centre of the power-sharing negotiations were shown to be at the mercy of its Javanese-led partner.

After the elections, Pertjajah Luhur overreached itself by challenging the One-China Principle in an attempt to persuade the PRC to raise the stakes in its dollar diplomacy, which alienated ethnic Chinese supporters in Suriname even further and diminished the standing of those who had worked to unify the Chinese vote during the 2005 elections. This would seem to indicate that Chinese ethnopolitics – the bid for structural participation of ethnic Chinese in Surinamese apanjah politics beyond the established Chinese power bases – had failed. No matter how instrumental Chinese ethnic identity is evoked, and no matter what political entity will be prepared to host Chinese ambitions, reliable mobilization of a Chinese constituency will depend on what role ethnic Chinese agents will be able to play in specific contexts in the future. For example, realignment of Chinese identity with the PRC could unify Chinese in Suriname, but would likely hamper their political empowerment if they would come to be viewed as representatives of a foreign power. The majority of ethnic Chinese in Suriname – people of Fuidung’on Hakka heritage, whether Tong’ap, Laiap or New Chinese – could conceivably claim a public Surinamese-Chinese identity, but that would effectively mean foregoing Sinocentric Chineseness on which traditional notions of Chinese migrant identity are based. In any case, the logic of apanjah ethnopolitics dictates that future Chinese participation will depend on public articulation of ethnic identity on specific occasions.
Deze studie is een beschrijving van de problemen waarmee de Chineese gemeenschap in Suriname geconfronteerd werd bij hun positionering in de Surinaamse maatschappij, onder invloed van de komst van nieuwe Chinese migranten in het begin van het derde millennium. De belangrijkste conclusie van dit onderzoek is dat plaatselijke ontwikkelingen veelal belangrijker zijn dan mondiale; pas gearriveerde Chinese migranten in Suriname gearriveerd zijn nog niet ‘Chinese’, maar worden dat onder invloed wat Surinamers van Chinees-zijn verwachten, en in de context van pragmatische keuzes die men maakt met betrekking tot het voorzien in het levensonderhoud. Uit deze studie blijkt dat de positionering van Nieuwe Chinezen in Suriname lijkt op die in Zuidoost-Azië en Afrika; daar leidt hernieuwde immigratie tot een nieuwe interpretatie van ‘Chinees-zijn’, of het duikt op in de plaatselijke politieke retoriek.

**Instrumentele etnische identificatie als gevolg van maatschappelijke positionering**

‘Chinees-zijn’ is een vorm van etnische identificatie in Suriname, en als zodanig is het instrumenteel en veelal strategisch van aard, en daarmee ook meervoudig, situatiegebonden, en afhankelijk van wie deze identiteit articuleert, alsook het specifieke publiek dat het proces van etnische articulatie aanschouwt. Chinese maatschappelijke positionering in Suriname is altijd uitermate pragmatisch geweest, en is afhankelijk van opvattingen over Chinese etnische identiteit die daar relevant zijn. De Sociaaleconomische positionering van migranten produceerde een vrij stabiele en duurzame, maar duidelijk plaatselijke en instrumentele Chinese etnische identiteit in Suriname. Adaptieve strategieën resulteerden in structureel Chinees etnisch ondernemerschap, Chinese organisaties (in ieder geval aanvankelijk adaptieve organisaties van migranten), en kettingmigratie op basis van ondernemerschap, die elkaar allemaal onderling versterkten. De gezamenlijke etnische hulpbronnen van Chinese migranten, stellen migranten als etnische groep in staat om de achterstand te als gevolg van uitsluiting als nieuwkomer te
overwinnen, en vergroten de waarde van menselijk en financieel kapitaal tot het uiterste. Hieruit vloeit de noodzaak voort om Chineese etnische hulpbronnen te behouden en te beheersen, wat weer de ontwikkeling van gemeenschappelijke etnische activiteiten, instituties (huiguan en shetuan, de adaptieve migrantenorganisaties), en elites bevordert.

Sociaal-politieke positionering heeft een ander soort Chine se etnische identificatie tot gevolg. Mijn stelling is dat publieke articulatie van de etnische identiteiten van migranten in Suriname wordt bepaald door apanjaht multiculturalisme: de verdeling van politieke macht in een systeem van consociationalism, met het cliëntelisme dat daarmee gepaard gaat, plus de ideologie die ten grondslag ligt aan de politieke machtsverdeling en die bepaalt wie opgenomen of uitgesloten is in de manier waarop de multiculturele Surinaamse samenleving wordt uitgebeeld. Apanjaht consociationalism is een vorm van etno-politiek die gebaseerd is op de verdeling van politieke macht onder de elites van een constellatie van etnische groepen binnen de context van de officieel niet-etnische, liberaal-democratische Surinaamse Staat. Surinaamse politieke elites schilderen diversiteit af als een probleem dat een oplossing vereist, en behandelen het nationalistische ideaal van de niet- etnische Surinaamse Staat als een fundamenteel onbereikbaar doel; apanjaht consociationalism is volgens hen een manier om diversiteit te beheersen, waarmee ze vervolgens hun dominantie legitermeren.

Het ideologische raamwerk waarbinnen de grenzen tussen pragmatische etnische groepen gearticuleerd wordt in apanjaht consociationalism, is een reactie op de sterk met Creolen geassocieerde, nationalistische visie ten aanzien van assimilatie. Apanjaht roept het beeld op van modulaire etnische groepen vanuit een algemeen en vanzelfsprekend geloof in het bestaan van vaste, primordiale etnische of raciale categorieën, maar vereist niet dat etnische grenzen constant en scherp worden gedefinieerd, omdat het vaststellen van de aantallen en grootten van etnische groepen de rust van het apanjaht-systeem zou kunnen verstoren. In plaats daarvan vindt erkenning van etnische groepsidentiteiten plaats binnen het stereotiepe beeld van de mamio (Sranantongo: ‘lappendeken’). Vertaald vanuit het beeld van een veelkleurig damdorp-patroon van een mamio-lappendeken, zijn etnische groepen de precies even grote vierkantjes textiel die samengestikt zijn tot een groter geheel. Het narratief van de Mamio Mythe binnen de ideologie van apanjaht levert het raamwerk voor de performatieve uiting van etniciteit, vooral wanneer het gaat over politics of recognition. De plaatsing van gemeenschappelijke identiteiten binnen het
overkoepelende narratief wordt vrij letterlijk uitgebeeld tijdens publieke voorstellingen van etnische trots, culturele diversiteit, en uiteindelijk nationale eenheid. De ideologie van apanjaht produceert maatschappelijke saamhorigheid langs verschillende, gelijktijdige uitbeeldingen van Suriname; Suriname bestaat omdat Surinamers zichzelf zien als toonbeeld van culturele diversiteit binnen de territorium van hun Staat.

### Oude en Nieuwe Chinezen

De aanwezigheid van Chinezen in Suriname kan worden teruggevoerd naar een groep contractarbeiders in de twee helft van de negentiende eeuw. De groep ontwikkelde vrij snel een op de detailhandel gebaseerde etnische economie en vestigde haar eigen adaptieve organisaties. Als gevolg van integratie en assimilatie ontstond er een generatiekloof tussen degenen die in China geboren waren (tong'ap) en degenen die in Suriname geboren werden of van gemengde afkomst waren (laiap). Men kan zeggen dat de migratie van 'Oude Chinezen' naar Suriname vier keer van aard veranderde. Eerst kwamen de contractarbeiders uit Hakka-gemeenschappen in het Fuidung'on-gebied tijdens de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw; zij werden gevolgd door Fuidung’on Hakka kettingmigranten, tot in de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw; in de tweede helft van de twintigste eeuw volgden geaccultureerde Fuidung’on Hakka kettingmigranten die via Hong Kong reisden; en uiteindelijk kwamen Fuidung’on migranten die de Volksrepubliek China verlieten na de economische hervormingen en de opheffing van de beperkingen op emigratie aan het eind van de twintigste eeuw.

Aan het begin van de jaren negentig van de twintigste eeuw werd hernieuwde Chinese migratie, in de context van nieuwe wereldwijde migratiestromen, ook in Suriname merkbaar. De 'Nieuwe Chinezen' zoals ze al snel in Suriname heetten, worden geassocieerd met een plotselinge, opvallende toename van Chinese immigratie tijdens de jaren negentig. Nieuwe Chinese migranten (xin yimin) meestal nieuwe soorten transnationale banden met de VRC, hun thuisland, door moderne massamedia en internationaal vervoer. De Nieuwe Chinezen in Suriname komen uit elke denkbare regio van de
Chinese wereld, maar de overgrote meerderheid kwam uit de kust-provincies van de VRC, vanaf de provincie Hainan in het zuiden tot aan de provincie Liaoning langs de Noordkoreaanse grens. De grootste groep Nieuwe Chinezen is afkomstig uit het zuiden van de provincie Zhejiang. Met de komst van Nieuwe Chinezen werd de taalkundige en culturele situatie binnen de Chinese bevolkingsgroep van Suriname uiterst complex.

De beschikbare feiten wijzen erop dat de meerderheid van Chinese migratie naar Suriname in de grond van de zaak nog altijd gesponsorde migratie is op basis van de eigen bedrijven van etnisch Chinese ondernemers. Nieuwe Chinese migranten hebben een grotere keus aan overleven- en aanpassingstactieven wanneer ze in Suriname aankomen, maar hebben onderhand ook een eigen plek binnen de Surinaamse detailhandel gemaakt, in de vorm van een etnische economie die concurrerend met de Chinese etnische economie van de ‘Oude Chinezen’ (consumptiegoederen tegenover voedselproducten, met enige overlap met betrekking tot alledaagse behoeften). In dit systeem ontwikkelen migranten transnationale zakelijke netwerken die gebruik maken van de drang van privéondernemingen in de provincie Zhejiang om hun export te vergroten, en de behoefte aan zelfstandige inkomsten onder Nieuwe Migranten, die als buitenstaanders in hun gastlanden slechts beperkte mogelijkheden hebben om sociaaleconomisch mee te tellen. De Nieuwe Chinese etnische economie is dus gebaseerd op toegang tot migrantennetwerken die de provincie Zhejiang koppelen aan verschillende plaatsen waar Nieuwe Migranten neerstrijken, waaronder Suriname. Het is fundamenteel een strategie waardoor Nieuwe Chinezen, die merken dat ze uitgesloten zijn van de etnische economie van de Fuidung’on Hakka’s, zichzelf kunnen bedrijven.

Men zou zich kunnen afvragen of de globaliserende economie van de VRC de migratie naar plekken als Suriname aanstuurt, of dat Nieuwe Migranten uit China producten uit de VRC in nieuwe markten introduceren. Wat het geval ook mag zijn, de sociaaleconomische positionering van Nieuwe Chinezen had een duidelijke invloed op het imago van Chinezen in Suriname, omdat de nieuwe supermarkten als het meest concreet resultaat van Nieuwe Chinese migratie werden gezien, alsook van de groeiende invloed en macht van de VRC in het Caribisch Gebied en de Latijnsamerikaanse regio. Over het algemeen begrijpt het Surinaamse publiek de aanwezigheid van de VRC in Suriname slechts in termen van globalisatie en geopolitiek, en dus worden de VRC, de overlevingsstrategieën van Chinese migranten, en etnische Chinezen samengetrokken onder

De huidige band tussen de VRC en de Republiek Suriname is gebaseerd op de beleidsdoelen van de VRC in de regio: erkenning van de VRC als de enige ware, onverdeelde Chinese Staat (‘portefeuillediplomatie’ in het kader van het Één-China-principe, sinds de jaren zeventig), en toegang tot natuurlijke hulpbronnen (sinds de jaren negentig). Ontransparente banden tussen bedrijven betrokken bij grondstofwinning (meestal houtkap) en de overheid van de VRC kunnen opzettelijk of niet als ontwikkelingsprojecten worden aangeduid, vaak door Surinaamse partners. Het gevolg is dat het grote publiek nooit goed begreep wat de rol van de VRC nu precies was, en toen maar zelf besloot, via de patriottistische dekolonisatieretoriek, dat de Chinezen de plaats van de Nederlanders aan het innemen waren als de nieuwe kolonisatoren en uitbuiters. Net als in de rest van het Caribisch Gebied zijn technische samenwerkingsprojecten van de VRC geen echte directe buitenlandse investeringen vanuit de VRC, maar zijn eerder bedoeld om het prestige van de VRC te vergroten. Multinationals uit de VRC investeren niet echt hun eigen kapitaal rechtstreeks in Suriname, maar krijgen indirect geld van de VRC via overheidsleningen aan Suriname. Grondstofontginingsprojecten in Suriname zijn commerciële houtkap- en verwerkingsprojecten om de Chinese markt te voorzien, en die via transnationale Chinese persoonlijke en zakennetwerken georganiseerd worden.

Deze centrale positie van de VRC met betrekking tot hernieuwde Chinese identificaties is een belangrijke reden waarom Chinese ‘groepeheid’ negatieve associaties oproept bij niet-Chinese toeschouwers in Suriname. Immigranten uit de VRC en mensen met een etnisch Chinese achtergrond in Suriname worden in de articulatie van hun identiteit gestuurd en beperkt door de manier waarop het Chinees-zijn gezien wordt door niet-Chinezen. Historisch gezien werd dergelijke Chinese identiteit-van-buitenaf op instrumentele manier gearticuleerd door elites in de plaatselijke media als reactie op veronderstelde concurrentie van Chinese migranten die op de sociale ladder opklommen. De laatste tijd wordt

**Sociaal-politieke positionering en participatie**

Chinese elites konden streven naar een aandeel in de politieke macht door via *politics of recognition* toegang te verkrijgen tot de grote coalities binnen het systeem van apanjaht consociationalism, of door erkend te worden als etnische vertegenwoordigers door leidinggevende posities te verkrijgen in Chinese adaptieve organisaties. Voor een doeltreffende *politics of recognition* dient Chinese etnische identiteit gearticuleerd worden in overeenstemming met
de ideologie achter apanjaht. Elites die wensen te participeren in apanjaht consociationalism mogen niet vergeten om hun aanspraak op de status van etnische vertegenwoordigers te legitimeren tegenover het grote publiek en hun etnische achterban. Het is nodig dat het algemene publiek de achterban van de nieuwe elite erkend als een legitieme etnische groep: ze horen bij deze plaats, ze zijn authentiek en oud. Elites moeten dit narratief van hun etnische identiteit bewoorden naar hun achterban toe en zichzelf tegenover hun achterban als vertegenwoordigers van hun etnische groep tegen de hegemonie van andere politieke facties in het politieke veld. Op deze wijze is apanjaht consociationalism niet slechts het resultaat van etnisch pluralisme, maar genereert ook etnische identiteit; anders gezegd, als men wenst te participeren moet men wel etnisch zijn.


De Herdenking was in veel opzichten duidelijk geslaagd. De vorming van een ‘Chinese etnische groep’, of in ieder geval het beeld van een verenigde, essentiële en belangrijke Chinese etnische groep in plaats van de werkelijkheid van gefragmenteerde groepen en ondefinieerbare etnische benamingen, was het politieke doel van de organisatoren van de Herdenking, en dat doel had men
gehaald. De Herdenking was ook een reactie op de anti-Chinese gevoelens die te maken hadden met illegale immigratie en de controverse Chinese transnationale bouw- en houtkapbedrijven. Er waren ook concrete resultaten met betrekking tot Chinese ‘infrastructuur’ ten behoeve van toekomstig gebruik in het discours van apanjaht-multiculturalisme; de Chinezen hadden hun status bevastigd als een van de Surinaamse etnische groepen, en hadden de rekwisieten verkregen (Chinese bakens in het Surinaamse landschap, en nieuwe kenmerkende culturele voorwerpen zoals een draak voor de drakendans) waarmee ze onderhandelingen kunnen voeren over hun plaats in het multiculturele discours (m.a.w. de Mâmio Mythe). Buitenstaanders waren zich over het algemeen niet bewust van alternatieve Nieuwe Chinese claims tijdens de parade; in ieder geval beseften Tong’ap observatoren nu wel degelijk dat Chinese culturele identiteit in Suriname niet langer uitsluitend Hakka, Hongkongees, of zelfs de gehomogeniseerde Chinese identiteit van geglobaliseerde Chinese cultuur was.

De groepsidentiteit en etnische saamhorigheid die tot uiting kwamen tijdens de vieringen leverden elementen die gebruikt konden worden in een basisscript: Chinezen hebben zich in Suriname gevestigd, ze zijn geen buitenlanders maar fatsoenlijke burgers, geen tijdelijke bewoners; ze zijn de afstammelingen van de negentiende-eeuwse Chinese contractarbeiders; Chinezen zijn in de Surinaamse samenleving geïntegreerd zonder dat ze hun authentieke Chinese identiteit kwijtgeraakt zijn, wat blijkt uit de vele bekende dingen in de Surinaamse cultuur die door Chinezen geïntroduceerd werden; de integratie van Chinezen blijkt ook uit het feit dat zoveel Surinamers Chinese voorouders hebben, en dus staat het iedereen vrij om een Chinese achtergrond te claimen; Chinezen zijn succesvol en georganiseerd, enzovoorts. Dit script past binnen het grotere multiculturalisme-discours: aangezien Chinezen in Suriname hun wortels kunnen herleiden tot de periode van contractarbeid, hebben ook zij als onvrijwillige immigranten geleden onder het koloniale bewind, en dus is hun aanwezigheid in Suriname even legitiem als dat van Afro-Surinamers (beschouwd als afstammelingen van slaven) of van Hindostanen en Javanen (die ook afstammelingen zijn van contractarbeiders).

In het jaar daarop werd de hegemonie van de Fuidung’on Hakka’s uitgedaagd door Nieuwe Chinese elites die de Staat uitnodigden om hen te erkennen als vertegenwoordigers van een belangrijke bron van steun, al was dat niet in de vorm van stemgerechtigden. Niet-genaturaliseerde Chinese immigranten hebben geen rechtstreeks toegang tot politieke macht, maar kunnen zich


De nationale verkiezingen van 2005

Tegen het einde van 2003 hadden zowel de gevestigde Fuidung’on Hakka’s als de Nieuwe Chinese aangegeven dat ze onafhankelijke van elkaar een aanzienlijke etnisch Chinese achterban en fondsen konden mobiliseren. Voor de Chinese elites in Suriname, de Oude zowel de Nieuwe, was de status quo die moest veranderen voorafgaand aan de verkiezingen van 2005, de afwezigheid van etnisch Chinese agenten waar het belangrijk was, in het politieke machts-
centrum van de Surinaamse Staat. Etno-politieke omvorming van Chinezen in Suriname – in de zin van het mobiliseren van een etnisch Chinese kiezersachterban tegelijk met de articulatie van Chinese etnische identiteit en etnische hulpmiddelen – was tot aan de verkiezingen van 2005 tamelijk zwak. Als een kleine etnische minderheid hadden Chinezen in Suriname weinig succes gehad met hun eigen politieke partijen; kleine aantallen betekenden een zwakke achterban. Problemen met betrekking tot vertegenwoordiging onder etnische Chinezen die slechts zo gemeenschapsgezind waren als hun etnische economie dat toeliet en die verdeeld zijn door assimilatie, betekenden ook dat het zeer moeilijk was om kandidaten te vinden die bereid waren om zich kandidaat te stellen in verkiezingen en die ook nog gekwalificeerd waren en voor iedereen (Chinezen én niet-Chinezen). In de praktijk waren de meest succesvolle etnisch Chinese pogingen om politieke macht te verkrijgen georganiseerd door elites die stegen binnen de structuren van Chinese adaptieve organisaties, en die een goede kans hadden om politieke invloed te winnen via samenwerking met apanjaht-partijen.

Chinese participatie via andere apanjaht-partijen was niet minder moeilijk, omdat Chinezen het risico liepen om geïsoleerd te raken binnen speciale Chinese afdelingen van niet-Chinese partijen. Tijdens Surinaamse verkiezingen behaalde geen enkele etnische een duidelijke meerderheid, en hoewel in de coalities die dan gevormd werden in de grond van de zaak een evenwicht gezocht werd tussen de twee grootste etnische groepen (Creolen en Hindostanen), waren er meerdere polen in het machtsevenwicht te vinden; de Javaanse elites vormden een troefkaart omdat ze vrijwel gegarandeerd een coalitieplaats kregen omdat ze gezien werden als vertegenwoordigers van de derde grootste etnische groep. Nieuwe etnische elites – de elites van bestaande minderheidsgroepen en migrantengroepen – worden niet automatisch opgenomen omdat ze de verdeling van de politieke macht in gevaar zouden kunnen brengen. Aangezien het niet erg waarschijnlijk is dat nieuwe etnische groepen die te groot zijn om te kunnen worden genegeerd door de apanjaht-partijen onverwacht ontstaan, hebben nieuwe elites eigenlijk maar een realistische optie als ze willen participeren, en dat is voor een van de polen in het systeem kiezen.

In de aanloop tot de verkiezingen van 2005 kozen de rivalen van de Chinese vleugel van de Creoolse NPS een Javaanse route; tegenover etnisch Chinese stemmen en materiële en financiële steun, stonden vrijwel gegarandeerd een etnisch Chinese minister en een etnisch Chinees Assembleelid. Waarschijnlijk voor het
eerst ontstond er een verhitte Chinese verkiezingscampagne in de Chineestalige kranten van de huiguan’s. In een poging om etnisch Chinese stemmers te mobiliseren en de kracht van een Chinese achterban te tonen stonden drie Chinese standpunten (geassocieerd met de Javaanse Pertjajah Luhur, de Creoolse NPS, en de anti-apanjaht NDP) tegenover elkaar. Ondanks het succes van de Javaanse route en de installatie van een etnisch Chinese minister en Assembleelid, ruilde Pertjajah Luhur tijdens de onderhandelingen over de verdeling van de macht het Ministerie van Handel en Industrie, waar twee etnische Chinezen na elkaar minister waren geweest, tegen een speciaal opgericht Ministerie van landverdeling. Niet alleen was de beperkte omvang van de Chinese kiezersachterban duidelijk geworden, maar ook was gebleken dat de Chinese agenten die deelgenomen hadden aan de onderhandelingen ondergeschikt waren aan hun Javaanse partners.