Chinese new migrants in Suriname: the inevitability of ethnic performing

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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

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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 migrants made up an entrepreneurial middle class as secondary traders, 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 Suriname, 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, omu (‘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 ownership economy straddles both sectors, namely the formal (corner-shops, supermarkets, goldsmiths, etc.) and the informal (migration brokers, rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs), etc.).

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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 unregulated 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. 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. 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).

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.

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.

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. 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.” 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. 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

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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 Jían Adhin in 1957 (see below), which Dew has defined as apanjaht consociationalism.27 Apanjaht consociationalism is “the practice of ethnically based political parties playing upon prejudice, fear, or communal interest to gain support”.28 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.”29 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.30 I propose that public articulation of

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27 Apanjaht (or apan jāt in Sarnámi orthography) is a phrase in Caribbean Hindustani (the largest dialect of which is Sarnámi, spoken in Suriname) meaning ‘one’s own ethnic group’, from apan (‘my own’) and jāt (‘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 in-group 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 apanjaht multiculturalism in the double sense suggested above – apanjaht as consociational power-sharing and associated clientelism, and apanjaht as an ideology underpinning political power-sharing by determining who is to be included or excluded.

Apanjaht 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 – apanjaht – 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; apanjaht consociationalism is a way to

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, apanjeht preceded consociationalism in Suriname; the introduction of general suffrage in 1948 was a precondition for the formation of political parties based on apanjeht 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.\footnote{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.}

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, de Koloniale Staten, was granted full powers as a parliament under the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (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.\footnote{Ledgister 1998: 18.} 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).\footnote{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).} 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.
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

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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.’

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. 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. 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. 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.

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

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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’. 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.’

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-

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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.\textsuperscript{61}

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.\textsuperscript{62} 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.\textsuperscript{63} 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-

\textsuperscript{61} 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.

\textsuperscript{62} 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.

\textsuperscript{63} Meel 1999; Lotens 2006.
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.\textsuperscript{64} 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.\textsuperscript{65} 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.\textsuperscript{66} 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).\textsuperscript{67}

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

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} Lotens 2006
\item \textsuperscript{65} DNP rejoined NDP in 2008.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Jaffe 2008.
\item \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!’
\end{itemize}
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 conceit 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 Mamio (Sranantongo: ‘patchwork quilt’) stereotype noted by Meel in Suriname70. 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. Ethnocultural variety in Suriname thus becomes a myth, a hegemonic public fantasy, and a collective narrative fiction. I would suggest that this 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 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-

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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 Mamio
nalist ideologies and discourses of assimilation, so common in post-colonial Latin America and the Caribbean. ‘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. França elaborates on this view of multicultural imagining in Suriname by comparing the concept of mestizaje in the formation

metaphor suggests a designer (female, i.e. mother?) who unites through needlework a limited of elements into a final, stable design.

72 Koonings et al 1996.

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 (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 eenheid in verscheidenheid as well as modernity.
of Brazilian national identity with the multiculturalism underpinning political participation in the Surinamese state.\textsuperscript{74}

She concludes that apanjaht consociationalism transcends mere political strategy, but as an ideology of ‘\textit{eenheid in verscheidenheid}’ (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’.\textsuperscript{75} 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.\textsuperscript{76} 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.\textsuperscript{77}

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’.\textsuperscript{78} 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.\textsuperscript{79} In fact, racial inequality has persisted precisely because acceptance of hybridity masked the problems of vertical social mobility of black Brazilians.\textsuperscript{80}

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-

\textsuperscript{74} França 2004.
\textsuperscript{75} Stratton & Ang 1998.
\textsuperscript{76} Anderson 1991.
\textsuperscript{77} Wekker 2004; Meel 1998.
\textsuperscript{78} Telles 2004: 33.
\textsuperscript{79} Koonings \textit{et al} 1996: 35.
\textsuperscript{80} Telles 2004: 232.
equality and challenges to the myth are unpatriotic. 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 *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 pilarization 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.

*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 *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.

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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 (Karíña) 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 were 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

Apanjant 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 disenfranchise-ment.

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 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.

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 multiplicitious 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 Chinatown 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 performative nature 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 Ngie 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 Paramaribo93. 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.94 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 quantitative 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,

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.’ 95 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

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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 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.
Table 1: Respondents: Gender, Regional Background, Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigrants</th>
<th>♂</th>
<th>♀</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearl River Delta</strong></td>
<td>Dongguan: 29, 50, 52, 64 years old.</td>
<td>Dongguan: 30, 35, 51, 58 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hong Kong SAR: 32, 56, 65 y.o.</td>
<td>Huiyang: 59 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chixi (Taishan): 41 y.o.</td>
<td>Shenzhen SEZ: 30 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hong Kong SAR: 18 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chixi (Taishan): 38, 44 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shunde: 27 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zhejiang Province:</strong></td>
<td>Wenzhou: 29, 30, 39, 48 y.o.</td>
<td><strong>Hainan Province:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wenchou: 24 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fujian Province:</strong></td>
<td>Sanming: 25 y.o.</td>
<td><strong>Shandong Province:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hainan Province:</strong></td>
<td>Haikou: 32 y.o.</td>
<td><strong>Liaoning Province:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(city unknown): 33 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shandong Province:</strong></td>
<td>Qingdao: 45 y.o.</td>
<td><strong>Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nanning: 29 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liaoning Province:</strong></td>
<td>Dalian: 32 y.o.</td>
<td><strong>Tianjin Municipality:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Beijing Municipality:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Vietnam:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suriname-born</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all Chinese ancestors hark</td>
<td>1st gen.: 16, 17, 25, 31, 33,</td>
<td>1st gen.: 20, 19, 21 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back to Dongguan, Huiyang</td>
<td>47, 60, 61 y.o.</td>
<td>1st / 2nd gen.: 48, 56, 79 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Bao'an in Guangdong</td>
<td>1st / 2nd gen.: 18, 52, 66 y.o.</td>
<td>1st / 2nd gen. mixed: 41, 78 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province)</td>
<td>2nd gen.: 17, 31, 37, 41 y.o.</td>
<td>2nd gen.: 36, 36, 47, 48, 48 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd gen., mixed: 17, 18, 23, 28, 50 y.o.</td>
<td>2nd gen., mixed: 16, 16, 17, 33, 44, 49 y.o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd gen.: 30 y.o.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL 75</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 apantjahaat 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 sociocultural 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.