

Introduction

Creole Identity and Postcolonial Diversity

This book is a contribution to the study of the social construction of collective identities in postcolonial societies.¹ More generally, this study focuses on the interaction of ethnic, local and national identifications in Jakarta and on the role that creole identity plays in this regard. While examining contemporary such processes, focussing on the years following Suharto's fall, this study also contextualizes the phenomena under study historically, tracing their origins and development in light of the social conditions prevailing in a given historical period of time.

With an extremely heterogeneous population of around twelve million people, Jakarta is one of the largest cities worldwide, the largest metropolis in Southeast Asia and in many ways an example par excellence of contemporary postcolonial society. It is in such postcolonial settings, which are shaped by a high degree of ethnic, cultural and social heterogeneity – and in which the majority of the world's population lives today – that creole groups and identities often play an important role in processes of interaction and exchange and, hence, identity formation. This is above all due to the fact that, because of their heterogeneous origins, they can be conceptualized and identified with in ethnic and transethnic terms. It is, therefore, particularly in postcolonial societies in which ethnic identities constitute an important dimension of social organization and individual and group identity that creoleness can develop its potential in terms of transethnic integration and – following from this – for the promotion of a specifically postcolonial national consciousness. It is not primarily as an identity-related and ideational 'interstice' in and between minds that creole identity unfolds its particular social and political efficacy but rather in social relationships – on the terrain of the societal reality of contemporary postcolonial societies. However, as a late effect of colonialism and its overcoming, creole culture and identity are often linked with a considerable degree of ambivalence as well.

Processes of societal integration and differentiation are closely connected to (re-)configurations, (re-)constructions and transformations of social meanings, values and actions at a particular time and place. In seeking to understand these processes in terms of actual human experience the current study investigates and analyses them both in their respective historical as well as contemporary social contexts.

Ethnic versus Transethnic Identity

The crucial role frequently played by creole culture and identity in processes of social integration and differentiation, particularly within postcolonial, ethnically heterogeneous societies, stems above all from the fact that, because of their heterogeneous origins, they encompass both ethnic and transethnic dimensions. Before moving on it is therefore important to consider the relationship between ethnic and transethnic identity.

Ethnic identities are collective identities. Both collective and personal identities are socially constructed and have a reciprocally constitutive relationship with one another. The decisive difference between collective identity – one related to a *we* category – and personal identity – one related to an *I* – consists in the fact that the former has only a symbolic form, whereas the latter constitutes a physical and mental entity – a specific *I* or person – and thus has a *natural* boundary. By contrast, a *we* is not physically limited; its boundaries are constituted through the persons making it up. ‘Collective identity is a question of identification on the part of the individuals involved. It does not exist “in itself” but rather only to the degree that certain individuals embrace it. It is as strong or as weak as its expression in the consciousness of the group’s members and the degree to which it is able to motivate their thought and action’ (Assmann 2002: 132).

The boundaries of a group are not only determined by the individuals making up that group, i.e., internally, but are also influenced by outsiders – by other individuals and groups. Just as the individual and the group constitute one another, so too do groups constitute themselves in relation to and in distinction from one another. Assessing who is a member of a certain group can produce different results on both intra-group and inter-group levels depending on the criteria of membership that are applied. Since the publication of Fredrik Barth’s *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* in 1969, it has been widely accepted that in terms of their expression and intensity ethnic identities are dependent on the prevailing historical, social and political contexts and situations that form the framework in which they are constructed. Ethnic identities are thus flexible and dynamic. They are not fixed entities with clear boundaries and invariant cultural features. Barth understands ethnic identity as a form of social organization whose (flexible) boundaries determine the membership of a group. For anthropological research this means that ‘the critical focus for investigation becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group rather than the cultural stuff it encloses’ (Barth 1969: 15).

The influence of Barth’s work has resulted in self-designation and self-ascription being accorded a central role in most subsequent definitions of what an ethnic group is.² In this context, ethnic identity is also regarded as an ascription that is negotiated, defined and redefined in connection with interests, situations and needs.³ Barth’s chief contribution to anthropological theory and research can

be seen in the turn from the consideration of ethnic groups as static units with particular historical and cultural characteristics to the consideration of ethnic groups as forms of social organization that are not primarily tied to particular cultural and historical characteristics but rather to boundaries of membership developed in the context of social interaction.

This view functions as a corrective to the formerly dominant conceptualization of ethnic groups as fixed units, but it has also led to a neglect of the investigation of the relationship between ethnic identity and culture – and thus of the question as to the extent to which ethnic identity differs from other social identities (Premdas 2002: 177).⁴ This question can only be answered via an exposition of the relationship between ethnic identity and culture because ethnic identity, ethnic classifications, ascriptions and self-designations are reasoned in terms of common culture, origin and history by means of which the existence of one's own (or another) group is substantiated and distinguished from other groups (De Vos and Romanucci-Ross 1982). Ethnic identity is thus both an element of social organization and a cultural element of the respective group of people laying claim to its validity (Vermeulen and Govers 2000). Ethnic identity encompasses a sociopsychological dimension, and it follows that the investigation of ethnic identity needs to include a consideration of the ideologies relating to culture and origin by means of which the respective ethnic identity is constructed and substantiated – despite the fact that these criteria are not in themselves adequate to determining the boundaries of ethnic groups (Vermeulen and Boissevain 1984). Ethnic boundaries can be more or less flexible depending on situation and context and in relation to the subjects constructing them. They are not dependent on the respective features via which they are substantiated but rather on the cognitions and emotions of those who claim these features as their 'own' or as 'ethnic' (Nagata 1974).

Based on these considerations, ethnic identity can be comprehended as the self-attributed and externally attributed membership of a group understood (and understanding itself) as ethnic, which is substantiated by way of a corpus of common historical and cultural characteristics (Premdas 2002). The belief in a common culture as well as in a common origin and history are features of ethnic identity (Eriksen 1993). However, it is possible for self-attribution and external attribution to diverge.

In connection to the theme of this book it is important to emphasize that ethnic identity can be substantiated with reference to the criterion of common origin in both homogeneous and heterogeneous terms. Moreover, ethnic identity may not only be 'inherited' via descent but also acquired and internalized through social convergence and incorporation (marriage, endowment with relevant social and cultural characteristics). This is particularly significant in the case of creole group identities. Furthermore, the expression of ethnic identity is not dependent on whether the history postulated as common and the cultural characteristics

deemed to be shared actually correspond to reality or are merely imagined. What is crucial is that they are cogently communicated within the framework of ethnic self-assertion both internally and to the outside world.⁵ It is therefore important that the claim of shared history and culture can be conveyed as plausible. This is facilitated, on the one hand, by establishing an extensive congruence between claimed history and culture and, on the other, by pointing to obvious and visible evidence. However, the factual reconstructivity of common history does not determine the intensity of ethnic identity. History – both individual and collective – is always the result of processes of selective reconstructions of memory and the invention of what puts the latter in (situational) perspective.⁶

The level of consciousness of ethnic difference and the degree of intensity of ethnic identification vary and are dependent on the respective social context. In particular, (re-)ethnicization processes – in the sense of the (re-)emergence and (re-)intensification of group identity – are often the result of certain collective interests (Cohen 1974). By the same token, there are variations on an individual and a group level with regard to the perception, communication and staging of ethnic identity (Cohen 2000). In short: ‘There is no such thing as one kind of ethnicity’ (Leman 1998: 150). This also means that a person can assign himself or herself to different ethnic groups according to the situation and context, given that the respective group boundaries allow for the requisite flexibility (Nagata 1974). Moreover, ethnic identities always exist in relation to other collective – for example, social, political, religious and gender-specific – identities. The meaning that accrues to ethnic identity is related to the meaning that accrues to other identities.

Despite – or because of – their contextual and situational character, ethnic identities are particularly significant for individuals and groups because they simultaneously comprise social and cultural orientations and connect these with a particular origin and history and with a particular place or territory. The connection of social, cultural and origin-oriented affiliations often lends ethnic identity a particular integrative power compared to other identities (Gardels 1991).

The existence of transethnic identifications presupposes the existence of a heterogeneously ethnic society in which ethnic ascriptions matter. Differences in ethnic identity may be transcended by means of different categories of identification – like urban, religious and national ones – according to situation and context. Likewise, categories of identification may on their part – and again dependent on situation and context – assume ethnic and transethnic relevance for an individual or a group. For example, Jakarta can have a primarily ethnic reference for someone who relates to Jakarta in ethnic terms – which, in Jakarta, is the case mostly among the Betawi. Local (Jakartan) identity in this case is connected with ethnic (Betawi) identity; it is a feature of ethnic identity for those who refer to it. Jakarta can also have transethnic reference if referred to as a category of

identification irrespective of ethnic identity, if, simply put, a person identifies as Orang Jakarta without being Orang Betawi. I will come back to this later.

National Identity in the Context of Ethnic and Transethnic References

The following remarks focus on the connection between national and ethnic identity in ethnically heterogeneous societies.

First things first: national identity is not the opposite of ethnic identity. The two are linked by extensive structural commonalities and connections. For example, ethnic affiliation is frequently associated with a specific territory and in this context often forms the basis of national identity. 'Ethnic affiliation and territorial location have long been acknowledged as sources of national identification. ... Many ethnic communities feel a strong association with a particular relatively clearly defined segment of territory' (Coakley 2003: 2). Ethnic and national identifications presuppose the existence of other ethnic groups or nations, as do their strategies of delimitation. In contrast to ethnic identity, national identity within an ethnically heterogeneous nation(-state) refers to the nation as a whole, which is often represented by a state or aspires to statehood (Eriksen 1993).

Ethnic and national identities are above all emotional in nature and the communities they refer to primarily imagined ones. As Benedict Anderson argues, 'It [the nation] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion' (1991: 6). In his critical analysis of concepts that interpret nationalism as 'imagined' and therefore 'false' in contrast to other communities, Anderson argues that '[i]n fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined' (1991: 6).⁷

Specificities relating to ethnic groups are often regarded as constitutive of the national. Which group(s) and characteristics are perceived as representing a specific nation may vary according to situation and context. Internal hierarchies and relationships between and within ethnic groups also depend on their proximity to the national (Heinrich 1984). National communities often exhibit interethnic differences with regard to the intensity and meaning of national identity. Ethnic identities can thus exhibit differing degrees of national reference – some ethnic identities correspond more, others less with the prevailing national identity. In Indonesia, for example, the national identity of the Javanese is generally more marked than that of the Ambonese.

In contrast to the definition of national identity by Peoples and Bailey (2001) – which focuses on the Western model of the nation – ethnic identity is not understood per se as subnational identity here. It is possible for ethnic identity to

(also) have a subnational character, but this need not necessarily be the case. Ethnic identities can position themselves in opposition to the nation or accrue meaning largely independently of national references, for example within a framework of transnational networks and alliances.

Ethnic identities are often understood as a breeding ground for national identity or propagated as such by the state, particularly within the framework of postcolonial conceptualizations of the ethnically heterogeneous nation. (State) ideologies of nationalism often avail themselves of a particular selection of what are mostly historical and cultural resources (Elwert and Waldmann 1989; Anderson 1991; Gellner 1999; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1999). In this context, state-prescribed ideologies of national consciousness can be more or less congruent with the actual national feelings of the citizens concerned.

National identity presupposes ethnic identity particularly where the latter constitutes an important factor of societal organization on the level of society as a whole (Knörr 1995, 2007a, b). In this context ethnic groups within a nation are seen as the roots from which the national tree is nourished.⁸ Ethnic identities are construed as part of the nation just as the nation is construed as being closely tied to 'its' ethnic identities. Ethnic identity thus has national dimensions just as national identity has ethnic dimensions.

Just as *particular* ethnic affiliations can separate people, so too can the fact of the significance of ethnic identity *in itself* be interpreted as a form of commonality – for instance, as typical of a particular nation, as typically African, etc. As a Ghanaian once told me, 'It's typical for us to belong to tribes, it's typical for us Ghanaians and it's typical for us Africans in general.' According to this conceptualization membership of a particular 'tribe' may separate a person from members of other 'tribes', however, all Ghanaians and all Africans are united by their affiliation with the 'tribe' as a societal and identity-related organizational form.

It is particularly in the capital cities of (postcolonial) nation(-states) characterized by ethnic heterogeneity that the relationship between ethnic and national identity finds specific expressions due to the proximity of the national in the form of state institutions, media, national symbols, etc. In this context, proximity to the national can also generate transethnic ties, which does not imply that the significance of ethnic identities is necessarily diminished, especially if the latter are seen as the roots of the national. Indeed, it is often the case in the capitals of postcolonial nations that the ethnic and cultural diversity of their inhabitants is staged as a national cornucopia rather than as antithetical to the national.

The City as Locus and Focus

This study is based on anthropological research carried out above all *in* the city. This approach is based in part on the assumption that cultural phenomena in the city do not necessarily have to differ from cultural phenomena outside the

city – even though this is often the case due to specifically urban circumstances. It follows that cultural change in the city cannot automatically be equated with modernization. In fact, the example of the Betawi shows that the construction and transformation of identity in the urban context can also consist in the development and defence of tradition. Phenomena encountered in the urban milieu thus need not necessarily be ‘typically’ urban phenomena.

However, this study is also based on anthropology of the city *in itself*, where the reference to the city is central to identity-related processes. We are concerned here with phenomena that exist *in* Jakarta and pertain *to* Jakarta. The ‘locus’ of this study is thus also understood as its ‘focus’ (Bommer 1991).

Urban anthropology has often looked at postcolonial cities (cities that developed as the result of colonialism) as somewhat non-native – in much the same way postcolonial nationhood and postcolonial nation-state boundaries were construed as mere outcomes of colonial interference. The maintenance of ethnic and origin-related relationships and the establishment of corresponding networks have been regarded as evidence that identities emphasizing (real) origin and (ethnic) tradition retain their primacy in the (colonially constructed, modern) urban context. This anthropological emphasis on the preservation of people’s own and native identity and culture in the urban environment has its justification in that it is often overlooked in research focusing on degrees of modernization in the sense of a purported process of Westernization. However, the downside of such a perspective lies in the fact that the bonds that have developed between urban dwellers and what they perceive as their city as well as the establishment of transethnic identities and interethnic networks have often been underestimated or interpreted as indicative of social disintegration and alienation from the presumed original ethnic culture and identity.⁹ The significance of specific urban circumstances for processes of identification has likewise been largely neglected. By avoiding the ethnic lens (without neglecting the importance of ethnic identities) and by focusing on social relationships and identity-related processes in a wider frame of reference it becomes apparent that irrespective of their (partly) colonial origins, both cities and nation-state boundaries have been incorporated by the postcolonial subjects to a significantly higher degree than suspected by the (researching and observing) descendants of their former colonial masters.

In the examination and assessment of the relationship between native and foreign culture, between tradition and modernity in the postcolonial world, there is a persistent tendency to classify tradition as native culture and primarily associate it with the rural space. Conversely, change and modernity tend to be associated with foreign (Western) culture and assigned above all to the urban space. As a consequence, it has been assumed that urban culture worldwide largely conforms to Western lifestyles, values and attitudes. However, more recently, it has been demonstrated that modernity can be configured in a variety of ways that are distinct from the Western variant (Eisenstadt 2005; Knörr 2002a, 2002b).

A further reason for the neglect of urban-oriented (transethnic) identity lies in the fact that city dwellers are often primarily understood and studied as migrants, and the bonds between them and their suspected places of origin are emphasized. To be sure, it is often the case that a large proportion of urban populations can be classified as migrants in as far as they have originally come from areas outside the city. However, this characteristic cannot necessarily be seen as constituting the decisive factor in the identity formation of city dwellers. On the contrary, one finds an increasing tendency among such migrants to identify themselves primarily with the city in which they live rather than with the area from which they originate. An ever increasing number of people are born in cities, grow up there and share the experience of urban life. Jakarta is thus not only a spatial reality for the people living there but also serves them, independently of specific regional origins and ethnic affiliations, as an object of identification, engagement and discourse. In this sense, Jakarta is both a representation and a constituent of urban culture(s).¹⁰

Although we cannot speak of a universal city or urban culture exhibiting characteristics that are independent of the specific social and cultural backgrounds of its respective inhabitants, the spatial, social and cultural aspects of the city as phenomenon do exhibit certain important structural commonalities. For instance, social and ethnic heterogeneity and high population density lead to city-specific forms of social organization and interaction. It is not the absence of tradition that is characteristic of the city but rather the extensive encounters that occur (1) between different traditional ways of life, (2) between traditional and de-traditionalized or alternative ways of life and (3) between the different de-traditionalized or alternative ways of life (Nassehi 1999).

Cities provide a wealth of material for research into processes of social and cultural change. Groups with different ethnic, cultural and regional origins co-exist in (comparatively) dense spatial conditions. Interethnic relationships and intercultural interaction – preconditions for such processes – are usually particularly marked in cities. Within a city – especially one as large and featuring such a high degree of heterogeneity as Jakarta – the construction and transformation of community and identity always take place in the context of an engagement with what is more one's own and more someone else's culture. Indeed, Bruner (1974: 220) argues that 'As the capital and prime city of a country with over three hundred ethnic groups, Jakarta is the multi-ethnic city "par excellence".'¹¹ In Jakarta the simultaneous operation of different configurations of sociality and culture has been part of everyday interaction for centuries. It is thus particularly the urban environment that provides an illustration of how, in the course of intensive confrontation and engagement between 'one's own' and the respective 'other', both are socially and culturally implemented, transformed and perpetuated. This also applies in cases where the bond to a place of origin or an ethnic group becomes less significant or undergoes a change of meaning.¹² In a city

like Jakarta it becomes particularly clear that external cultural influences are not comprehended and absorbed in their original form. Rather, they are selected, interpreted, transformed and reconfigured in accordance with the respective local background. And just as differences in the adaptation of external culture emerge on the basis of city dwellers' diversity, so too do new identities and communities emerge (Knörr 2002a, 2002b, 2007a).

When it comes to the relationship between ethnic and national identity in the postcolonial context of ethnic diversity, Jakarta, as the national capital of Indonesia, offers a rich source of material. It is particularly here, in a framework of ethnic and cultural diversity in close proximity to the nation(-state), that one can observe how the national ideology of 'unity in diversity' (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) is conceptualized, communicated and staged as the root of (Indonesian) nationhood. I will be returning to this aspect later.

The investigation of the emergence of urban variants of identity also provides general insights into the emergence of shared, transethnic identity against a background of ethnic and cultural heterogeneity and difference. This may enable us to discern how and under what conditions transethnic identity emerges or is hindered or (re)fragmented. Moreover, one can identify the dimensions of culture that are most suited to the endowment of shared identity as well as those in which differences are maintained and defended. Culture, as a process of interaction and negotiation, can be seen as comprising mutually referential and corresponding phenomenal or material expressions, on the one hand, and relational or cognitive-emotional expressions on the other. Phenomenal expressions are understood here as the perceptible manifestations and materializations of culture, relational expressions as people's social actions, perceptions and emotions in relation to them. The phenomenal and relational dimensions of culture interact and influence each other and in order to identify and understand continuities, discontinuities and transformations related to them require investigation and analysis in terms of this very interaction and mutual influence.

Such an investigation and analysis calls for the understanding of the emic meanings of cultural representations and conceptions, hence, the meanings that the insiders associate with the latter.¹³ That this is necessary becomes particularly evident where specific social and cultural forms and habits are automatically and naively regarded as evidence of the Westernization of individuals and societies. Such assessments are commonly based on the concept of a contextually and culturally independent equivalence of meanings, on the assumption that the adoption of characteristics of external origin implies the adoption of their original meanings and valencies. In simple terms, there are – for example – McDonald's branches in Jakarta and in Düsseldorf in which (almost) the same hamburgers are sold. However, the social meaning of a visit to McDonald's in Jakarta and the consumption of a burger there differs from the social meaning of a visit to McDonald's in Düsseldorf and the consumption of a burger there.¹⁴ Social meanings

and valorizations are thus contextual and are related to the respective societal, cultural and historical situation.

In the process of social and cultural interaction external influences are invested with meaning and deployed in relation to local specificities. A cultural trait of external provenance can thus be adopted without this entailing the adoption of its external meaning and valency, i.e., the meaning and valency it has in its original context as seen from the point of view of the incorporating society. An external cultural trait is invested with new meanings that make sense within the incorporating, local society. The social meaning of any specific cultural feature depends on the respective cognitive-emotional relationship a given society or social group develops towards it. Therefore, its meanings can only be deciphered via an investigation of this very relationship. The emic perspectives and conceptions concerning a given (appropriated) phenomenon are thus part of the phenomenon to be investigated. It is only by deciphering these conceptions that we are able to recognize, for example, that the meaning of purportedly European characteristics found in an African society may be very different from their meaning in the European society from which they originate. Vice versa, the incorporation of African cultural traits into urban European culture does not imply the incorporation of their original African meanings. New and external social and cultural forms are always perceived, selected, interpreted, and (re)configured against the background of the respective locality, and in a context defined by what is familiar, established, one's own. This process is characterized by creativity, activity and exchange and not by one-sided and passive acceptance and adoption. The configuration potential that, given the plethora of foreign social and cultural influences is particularly pronounced in urban environments, is thus limited by the preexisting social and cultural context and the conceptions inherent to it. The incorporation and integration of new, external forms and features as a consequence of exchange and interaction does not entail estrangement from one's own culture but rather a '*de-strangement*' (*Ent-fremdung*) of the external culture via its (meaningful) incorporation into what is familiar. Accordingly, what emerges is not a variant of the external foreign(er's) culture but a variant of one's own, local culture.

Categories of Identification and Social Discourses as Objects of Observation and Analysis

The construction of ethnic, local and national identity in Jakarta operates first and foremost via the categories of '(Orang) Betawi (*Asli*)', 'Orang Jakarta' and 'Orang Indonesia', with the category of '(Orang) Betawi' assuming a key role.

Orang means 'human being' or 'category of human being' – an Orang Jakarta is thus a Jakartan, and an (Orang) Betawi is a member of the group of the Betawi. Because Jakarta is (also) the name of the city, the prefix *Orang* is required in Indonesian to distinguish the category 'Jakarta human being' from the category

'Jakarta city'.¹⁵ By contrast, although *Betawi* is also the Indonesian term for Batavia, the (Dutch) name used for the city of Jakarta during the colonial period, it is today almost exclusively used to denote the Betawi group of people and thus does not require the prefix *Orang*. *Asli*¹⁶ means 'original', 'indigenous', 'genuine' and is commonly attached as a suffix to Betawi when the intention is to emphasize the (ethnic) authenticity of a Betawi or a group of Betawi. Terms used to denote this group and its language once varied widely, but the terms Betawi, Orang Betawi and Betawi Asli have now become the established appellations. The term Orang Jakarta is also used on occasion to refer to the Betawi, usually with the attached suffix *Asli*.

The categories Orang Betawi and Orang Jakarta have a reciprocal relationship with the category Orang Indonesia, which refers to the national, Indonesian context of identity, which has particular significance for the capital Jakarta.

The Betawi are regarded as the original inhabitants of Jakarta – as *orang asli*, who emerged at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries via processes of cultural creolization of different groups that had immigrated to Batavia from Indonesia and regions in South and Southeast Asia. The Betawi see themselves as a people or ethnic group (*suku bangsa, kelompok etnik*)¹⁷ and are classified as such by others. They are ascribed particular social, cultural and historical characteristics as ethnic features.¹⁸ Today, the Betawi live for the most part in centrally located parts of Jakarta, in a number of peripheral areas and in the neighbouring cities of Bekasi and Tangerang.

There are several intra-ethnic differentiations among Betawi groups that are significant within the framework of this study and that are recognized both by the Betawi themselves and by others. In the context of the construction and transformation of ethnic and transethnic identities in Jakarta, these differentiations often play an important role.

Orang Jakarta (without the suffix *Asli*) denotes a primarily transethnic category of people whose overriding social and cultural orientation is the Jakarta of the present.¹⁹ A person is Orang Jakarta on the basis of his or her individual cognitive-emotional relatedness to Jakarta, which is expressed in certain views, behaviours and parlance. 'Orang Jakarta as a transethnic label refers to a category of people rather than to a group. No conceptual distinction is made between Orang Jakarta who, besides identifying as such, also ascribe themselves to specific other ethnic groups and those who do not. However, distinctions are gradually emerging with regard to the intensity and authenticity of Jakartan identity that do not necessarily correlate with the absence or presence of other ethnic affiliations but primarily with the expression of social and cultural characteristics that are regarded as typically Jakartan.²⁰ The orientation to Jakarta is thus not an expression of a collective or ethnic consciousness; rather, it is expressed primarily – and extensively – at the level of the individual and the respective social group. The transethnic category Orang Jakarta is in manifold ways related to the eth-

nic category (Orang) Betawi – a relationship that finds expression in both the effort to delimit one category from the other as well as in the construction of commonalities.

(Orang) Betawi and Orang Jakarta denote, on the one hand, groups and categories of people who are ascribed Jakartan culture and identity by themselves and others by means of historical, social and cultural ascriptions and delimitations. On the other hand, the concepts of (Orang) Betawi and Orang Jakarta also comprehend meanings that, although they are connected with certain groups and categories of people, are not necessarily identical with them. This applies particularly to the category Betawi, which comprehends a corpus of ascriptions and meanings only some of which are directly connected with the Betawi as an ethnic group, whereas others are increasingly being constructed independently of or only in a loose association with them.

Orang Indonesia denotes all Indonesians as members of the Indonesian nation. The particular significance of national identity in Jakarta as the national capital is constructed, mediated and staged by means of multifarious connections of the national category Orang Indonesia with the Jakarta-related categories of Orang Betawi and Orang Jakarta.

Although Orang Betawi contains a primarily ethnic, Orang Jakarta a primarily local and Orang Indonesia a primarily national reference, the conceptions and social performances connected with these categories constantly relate to, condition and influence one another. They closely interact with one another and with other identity-related categories in processes of inclusion and exclusion in Jakarta. Therefore, their social meanings can only be understood by investigating and analysing the manifold ways in which processes of identification related to (trans-)ethnic, local, and national categories are communicated and socially interrelated.

It is important to bear in mind that identity-related processes do not always become evident in terms of features and actions observable from the outside, but often at the level of conceptualizations and ideologies. This applies, among other things, to the construction of origin in connection to ethnic, local and national identifications. Ascriptions and differentiations in relation to origin can often not be grounded in historical fact and their significance (which is not therefore reduced) cannot be evaluated solely via the investigation of actual, historical processes. This applies all the more to groups – such as the Betawi – whose origins are heterogeneous and who have emerged via creolization processes, in the course of which a new common identity was forged on the background of ethnic diversity (Knörr 2007a, 2008a, 2008b, 2009c, 2010a, 2012). Nevertheless, it is often the more visible, so-called phenomenal level of identification processes that proves more accessible for the initial steps in a research process and provides a platform from which the level of conceptualizations and ideologies can subsequently be accessed.

Identification processes concerning categories of collective identification and groups of people are likely to become evident in central social discourses at the individual and group level. Such discourses are represented, performed, negotiated and related to one another in manifold ways.²¹ Discourses are understood here as social praxis that has both linguistic and nonlinguistic dimensions. Discourses do not emerge arbitrarily but rather in connection with particular social developments and at a particular time. They have historical roots, the identification of which facilitates the understanding of their contemporary significance. Their contextual meaning is dependent on ideologies, power structures and aims. Correspondingly, statements and stagings need to be comprehended and interpreted as elements of a particular discourse or discursive strand, of a particular social praxis at a particular historical time. Discourses are processes in which the conceptualizations, values and constraints are formed by means of which reality is comprehended and differentiated. Social reality is constituted by discursive praxis and thus subject to constant change. Discourses are a consequence of historical developments and influence the formation of social reality. They exercise a guiding effect on action. Conversely, social praxis and the institutional frameworks determine what can be said when and how.

The investigation of central discourses is particularly suited to tracing identity-related processes that entail strategies of inclusion and exclusion, integration and differentiation, because they constitute the loci at which identity and its social meanings are negotiated, are rendered visible and audible.²² These discourses occur parallel and in constant interchange with one another, and their meanings can only be evaluated when their reciprocal dynamic is made part of the analysis. For this reason the central discourses relating to the processes being investigated here also constitute the analytic units around which research questions are organized and according to which the results of research are evaluated and presented.

Notes on Field Research

I refrain from a detailed analysis of the role of the researcher in the field and his or her influence on the research environment and thereby on research results. Instead, I will focus on a number of particularities relevant to the theme of this book. I regard my role in the field as having only a very limited effect on the lives of those I have researched and thus assume that neither the constructions of identities in Indonesia nor Indonesians' conceptualizations of them have been significantly influenced by my person. Good research – including anthropological research – focuses on the research topic and not on the researcher conducting it (except where he or she is the object of study). It is common knowledge that establishing a balanced relationship between proximity and distance is central to the acquisition of knowledge particularly where knowledge of what (other) people think, do and feel is concerned. The degree of proximity/distance needed

to conduct good research may vary from researcher to researcher – one needs more proximity, the other more distance. At the latest, it is when the work is done that it becomes evident whether one has been too close or too distant from those studied – in both cases acuity and analytical thickness suffer. It is up to the reader to decide whether either alternative applies to this work.

This study is based above all on so-called classical anthropological research methods.²³ I was a participatory observer in many settings that exhibited or potentially offered a connection to the theme of the study. I conducted interviews, both highly and loosely structured, and had many conversations in which aspects of the research topic were (also) addressed. The interviews were for the most part conducted in an informal atmosphere. They were organized around questions central to the study, which served as a guideline and which, in the course of research and with the accumulation of knowledge were supplemented, varied and changed. I aimed at an open conversational atmosphere that allowed informants as much scope as possible to develop and express their own standpoints. Conversations with representatives of state and non-state institutions occasionally assumed a more formal character. However, even in the course of more formal interviews I endeavoured to create an atmosphere that allowed interviewer and interviewee to develop the theme together and offered informants the opportunity to interrogate the questions I was asking, to raise new and sometimes (seemingly) other issues than those related to my research questions, issues, that in many cases then proved highly relevant for the understanding of the theme of this study. To create a setting that was as informal and relaxed as possible I refrained (with a few exceptions) from recording interviews because this seemed to inhibit informants when it came to freely expressing their opinions and created the impression of a test in which there were correct and incorrect answers. Instead, I took notes during or immediately after conversations.

Particularly when themes are linked with personal emotions, ideas and conceptions it is often expedient to present research questions in the context of personal experience rather than in direct relation to the object of study. We often learn more about – for example – ethnic identity when someone tells us about an experience or an event in which ethnic identity played (or did not play) a role than when someone expresses his or her opinion about ethnic identity as such, hence, without placing it in the context of personal experience. The meanings of identifications unfold above all in specific personal and social contexts. For this reason it makes sense to investigate identity-related ascriptions and processes within the contexts in which meaning accrues to them. The meanings of identifications and delimitations become clear in the context of both discussions and actions. They must therefore be investigated in the context of conversations as well as by means of (participatory) observation of the activities via which they are negotiated, staged and substantiated.

Personal biographies also played an important role in interviews and interactions; they encouraged informants to describe personal attitudes and behaviours and to link them to the questions under discussion. (cf. Lehmann 1983; Knörr 1990, 1995, 2007a).

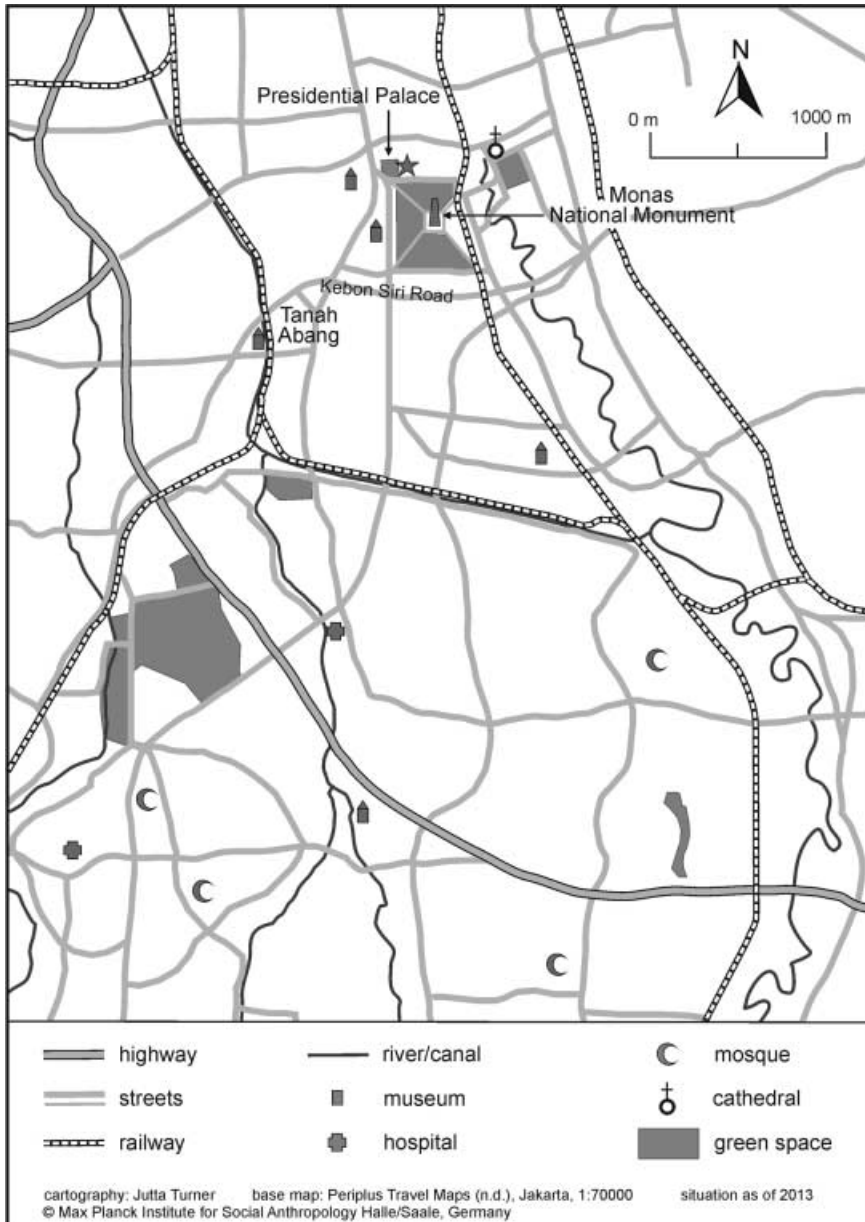
Apart from the conversations and interviews that explicitly contributed information to the research project, I also had many conversations and discussions in many different places – in *warung*,²⁴ taxis, buses, bars, government offices, shops, at markets, etc. – discussions that were not initially related to my research but then often led to discussions of particular aspects of it. As a conspicuous foreigner in Jakarta I was constantly asked who I am and what I was doing in the city. My answers often sufficed to initiate a conversation that addressed thematic aspects of my study. Moreover, such random settings make for a more relaxed atmosphere than an interview setting and thus for greater openness. Finding the ‘right’ person or situation to achieve ‘theoretical saturation’²⁵ is less important than having the appropriate questions at hand (or discovering them) when the ‘right’ person or situation for the clarification (or discovery) of these questions is encountered.

In view of the theme and scope of my enquiry it did not seem appropriate to restrict my research to one or more city districts or *kampung*.²⁶ Limiting my work to a particular locality would certainly have been more pleasant in terms of travel requirements, but it would not have allowed me to gain the insight I needed into the complexity and interdependence of the different identity-related processes whose local point of reference is Jakarta as a whole rather than specific *kampung*.

Jakarta’s diversity does not only function as a symbol of Jakarta in itself but also represents the diversity of all Indonesia in specific ways. Many public events that stage and celebrate the connection between Jakarta and Indonesia take place at locations that symbolically refer to this special link. The *Abang dan Nene Jakarta* (Mister and Miss Jakarta) pageant, for instance, is held in the *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* (TMII)²⁷ – an extensive area in southern Jakarta where the Indonesian archipelago has been replicated in miniature form and where the cultural variety of Indonesia is represented in the form of typical houses, ethnic artefacts and events. The many public Betawi events organized to commemorate Jakarta’s birthday take place for the most part in the inner city at central locations rather than in the *kampung* and areas where the Betawi live. The big meetings of the Betawi organizations are held at locations in Jakarta where the organizations’ presence is most noticeable rather than in the areas where their members live.

This is not to say that the processes studied do not exhibit differences relating to particular districts/*kampung* nor that there are no location-based forms of identification. However, these did not constitute a central focus of this study and were not considered as central to the investigation of the complexity and

interdependence of identifications and delimitations constructed in relation to the categories of identifications at stake here. This study constitutes what might be termed a selective ‘multi-local ethnography’ (Marcus 1995), which aims to achieve as ‘thick’ a description as possible of the interconnections characterizing



Map 0.1. Central Jakarta/Tanah Abang, Kebon Sirih.

the investigated processes (Geertz 1999). Future research may well identify district and *kampung*-specific differences relating to the interconnections that my own research has identified.

Nevertheless, the central questions guiding my research lent themselves to a certain degree of spatial concentration. Processes of integration and differentiation are best observed and investigated where they unfold in interaction with one another. This is particularly the case in the more central areas of the city, which are very heterogeneous in ethnic terms and where the role of Jakarta as the national capital is particularly marked and a subject of identity-related engagement. I chose to live in the centre of Jakarta on the border between Kebon Sirih and Tanah Abang, which are both commercial districts and residential areas in which inner-city (and old-established) Betawi live and work along with many people who classify themselves in terms of different ethnic and transethnic identities (such as Orang Jakarta and Orang Indonesia).

Notes

1. The term *postcolonial* is used here to denote societies that up until the recent past were colonial territories and that are still shaped – hence *postcolonial* – in many respects by the historical experience of colonialism. The erstwhile colonial powers can also be regarded as postcolonial societies in so far as they were part of the colonial system. However, the societies described and treated as postcolonial here are restricted to those that were colonized.
2. E.g., van den Berghe (1975); Parsons (1975); Elwert and Waldmann (1989).
3. E.g., Roosens (1989); Young (1993); Anderson (1991).
4. See also Roosens (1995); Eriksen (2002).
5. See Waters (1990); Hobsbawm and Ranger (1999).
6. See Assmann (2002: 40), who refers here to the philosopher Hans Blumenberg when he writes: ‘There are ... “no pure facts of memory”.’
7. He refers specifically to Ernest Gellner and argues that ‘Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates “invention” to “fabrication” and “falsity”, rather than to “imagining” and “creation”. In this way he implies that “true” communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations’ (Anderson 1991: 6).
8. The ‘tree with roots’ motif as a symbol of the relationship between national entity and ethnic diversity is one I have frequently encountered both in Indonesia and West Africa.
9. Referring to the Chicago school of urban anthropology, Hannerz (1980: 56) writes: ‘They conceived disorganization when they described diversity.’
10. The relationship between modernity and tradition in the context of Southeast Asian urbanization is analysed, for example, by Evers and Korff (2000). Among other things they discuss the (own) cultural symbolism and structure of urban space in relation to the ‘increased homogenization of the morphology of the cities’ (ibid.: 119).
11. See Dhofer (1976: 14) for a discussion of the intensity of interethnic relationships in Jakarta.
12. See Cohen (1974: 271–78) on ethnicity in Bandung (Java) and Medan (Sumatra).
13. ‘An emic model is one which explains the ideology or behaviour of members of a culture according to indigenous definitions. An etic model is one which is based on criteria

from outside a particular culture. Etic models are held to be universal; emic models are culture-specific' (Barnard and Spencer 1996: 180). In simple terms, emic models/categories/concepts are those relating to the perspective of the insider, whereas etic models/categories/concepts are those that make sense from the viewpoint of the observer. See also Headland et al. (1990).

14. In Jakarta, visiting McDonald's is an expression of a middle class lifestyle, a modern way of life and certain level of prosperity; see also Gerke (1995), who made a similar observation.
15. This is also the case with 'Indonesia' and 'Orang Indonesia'.
16. *Asli*: derived from the Arabic *asal* = origin.
17. *Suku bangsa*: refers to an indigenous, ethnic group. By contrast, the term *kelompok etnik*, i.e., ethnic group, does not necessarily signify Indonesian indigeneity. The term *suku bangsa* is more common in colloquial usage.
18. Particular features frequently referred to include origin (heterogeneous descent, indigeneity), language (*Jakarta Malay*, *Omong Betawi*), music (*Rebana*, *Gambang Keromong*, *Tanjidor*), street processions of costumed and masked dancers (*Ondel-Ondel*), religion (link between Islamic and ethnic identity), clothing (*kebaya*, *pasisir*), cuisine (*krak telur*, *kue-kue*), social manner and characteristics of personality (e.g. directness, humour, gregariousness, conservatism).
19. However, *Orang Jakarta* is also used to denote a person as *Orang Betawi* – the given meaning emerges from the context in which the term is used.
20. Characteristics commonly referred to as typical for Jakartans (*Orang Jakarta*) include modernity, progressiveness, openness, cynicism and quick-wittedness.
21. The concept of discourse used here is based on its use by Foucault (1991, 2002); Fowler (1991, 1996); Wodak (1994); Jäger (2004).
22. On the theory and practice of the dynamics of processes of social inclusion and exclusion, see Schlee and Werner (1996); Schlee and Horstmann (2001); Schlee (2008).
23. Apart from these interactive forms of field research and the utilization of scholarly literature, I also drew on Jakartan television broadcasts, newspaper articles and a range of publications relating to the city produced by state institutions and authorities. A range of websites and publications that were (in part) only available online also provided important information. E-mail contact also allowed for a certain level of continuity in communication with different informants while not in Indonesia.
24. *Warung* = small, roofed eatery or mobile wagon selling simple dishes.
25. Theoretical saturation is achieved when the field under investigation (the studied phenomena) has been elucidated to the point where no new knowledge can be expected from additional data (see Glaser and Strauss 1967; see also Strübing 2004).
26. *Kampung* is the Indonesia term for a village or settlement. In the urban context the term refers to residential areas that, particularly in comparison with the modern environment, tend to exhibit a village character.
27. *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* = Beautiful Indonesian miniature park; see Pemberton (1994); Errington (1997).