The Agility and Flexibility of Ondel Ondel: Displacement among the Betawi in Jakarta

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Abstract

The displacement of the Betawi after Indonesia's independence is an example of how processes of evictions in urban cities led to the essentialization of the indigenous culture and a loss of heritage. Urban displacement of Indigenous peoples can cause spatial dispersion, which can break their community's cohesion apart, which in turn can result in a loss of knowledge and identity, together with the possibility of the emergence of smaller local communities. This ethnographic research raises questions concerning the perseverance of the Betawi within Jakarta after their evictions and uses a multimodal approach to explore how they adapt to their new environments, if they experience a sense of displacement, and how they express their heritage. This written text and documentary film are in dialogue with each other. Where the film shows how the Betawi express and perform their cultural heritage, the written text describes the attributes of the moment they express their cultural heritage. Together, they argue that urban displacement negatively impacts the identity of the Betawi since they lost their collective legitimacy for a common identity. The story of the Betawi foregrounds the broader issues of displacement, community, and culture in a postcolonial and urbanized country.

Contents

The "Orang Betawi"

Introduction

The sun shone in the reflection of the water, which was occasionally interrupted by floats on fishing rods. The sound of birds chirping echoed across the body of water. Some bare-chested men reeled in fish with their fishing rods, while the restaurant owners were sweeping and setting up tables near the lake. There was a road that outlined the lake, which was busy with motors, cars, and pedestrians at every moment of the day. This led to a continuous odor cloud of exhaust gases. Suddenly, the smell of roast filled the air. Plumes of smoke floated upwards somewhere behind the set of restaurant buildings. The cooks were roasting the fish caught moments ago. It was fifteen minutes past eight in the morning. I decided it was time to leave Lake Situ Babakan for what it was and explore *kampung* [neighborhood] Setu Babakan. Within Setu Babakan, on the left of Lake Situ Babakan lay *Perkampungan Budaya Betawi* [the Betawi Cultural Village],

Perkampungan Budaya Betawi is located in the south of South Jakarta and was established in 2004 by the governor of Jakarta at that time (Firzandy, 2018:81-82). The planning consultant suggested developing the farmland around Lake Situ Babakan with a bottom-up approach since involving community members in the process would enhance the sense of belonging (Tjahjono, 2003: 64). However, the government officials at that time changed to a top-down approach, making new streets and buildings while partially destructing the already existing environment (ibid.). *Perkampungan Budaya Betawi* is gated and monitored by government security. Across from the entrance lay Museum Betawi, which displayed historical objects used by the Betawi, cultural products made by the Betawi, and important Betawi figures. The visitors of Museum Betawi were primarily children who came as part of their school program. Across from the museum entrance, two doors opened to a model of a traditional Betawi village. Other than representing a traditional housing model, the village simultaneously housed an open theatre, an auditorium, a management office, a small restaurant, and gazebos. A second smaller entrance monitored by security faced the lake.

Next to *Perkampungan Budaya Betawi* was Betawi Online Gallery located. This store sold products related to the Betawi culture, from musical instruments to *ondel-ondel* figures and from clothing items to snacks and drinks. A young woman named Shafira[1] was restocking some products while I entered the store. I asked her if she knew Betawi people in the neighborhood. She initially referred to Museum Betawi. However, I explained to her that I visited the museum, but that I could not ask questions about the Betawi before I had the government's approval, which was pending. She

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[1] Shafira was during this research categorized as a young adult aged between 18 to 20 years old.

mentioned she was actually half-Betawi, her father was Sunni and her mother Betawi. I learned later that being Sunni within Indonesian Islam implied having a Sundanese ethnicity. I asked if she had a Betawi community around her. She looked at the ground. After a moment of silence, she asked quietly if it would be wrong if "there was [*sic*] not any [communities]", still looking at the ground. I said, "Of course not, I am here to learn about your story as a Betawi", after which she looked up and smiled. She seemed relieved. It became clear to me that the Betawi were indeed dispersed over Jakarta, while the hardship of finding a Betawi community became apparent.

Contextual Positioning

The *orang Betawi* [Betawi peoples] date back as far as the 2nd century, as told by Yahya Saputra[2], a Betawi and the head of *Lembaga Kebudayaan Betawi* [the Betawi Cultural Association]. They were known under the name *Proto Melayu Betawi* before the occupations began and were Indigenous to the region considered Jakarta called *Bandar*, which meant "port city". This region was called Jayakarta under Portuguese occupation, Batavia under Dutch rule, and Jakoerata under Japanese governance. The name changed one last time to the well-known Jakarta in 1945, which marked Indonesia's independence.

The Betawi had to move under President Soekarno's rule during the *Orde Lama* [Old Order] from 1945 until 1965 due to the government's developing infrastructure. The government evicted and moved whole villages so communities could stay together. The Betawi were evicted as well under President Soeharto's rule during the *Orde Baru* [New Order] from 1966 until 1998 due to developing infrastructure in privately bought-up areas. The government began to move the Betawi individually during this period. "If the Betawi denied the evictions, they would get harassed by the government until they moved", explained Yahya. During the Reformasi [reformation] in May 1998, the post-Soeharto government built extra housing outside Jakarta at locations where previously evicted Betawi were already living, so their families could move in with them.

One of my interlocutors told me that the Betawi were divided into two groups:

> "Many Betawi people say that the Betawi are divided into two, Betawi Tengah [Central Betawi] and Betawi Pinggir [Marginal Betawi]. Personally, my family and I have always been classified as Betawi Pinggir who lived in this area here, in Depok. So, talking about Betawi Tengah, because of the rapid globalization of the Betawi economic competition, the Betawi Tengah experienced a shift where they sold their land in the city and they switched to living in the outer areas due to several aspects, such as land prices that are cheaper in the outer areas. As a result, the Betawi Tengah established their residences in the outer areas and are building new communities, bringing traditions that originate from the Betawi Tengah."[3] – Opan

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[2] Yahya was during this research categorized as a sexagenarian aged between 60 to 65 years old.

[3] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Banyak masyarakat Betawi bisa dibilang Betawi itu terbagi menjadi dua ya, Betawi Tengah dan juga Betawi Pinggir. Secara pribadi, saya dan keluarga memang dari dulu bisa dibilang, digolongkan menjadi Betawi Pinggir yang tinggal dan berkehidupan di daerah di sini, yaitu di Depok. Nah, kalau ngebahas mengenai Betawi Tengah memang karena pesatnya globalisasi persaingan ekonomi Beta orang-orang Betawi Tengah itu mengalami sebuah pergeseran yang di mana dia menjual tanahnya yang ada di kota, dan dia beralih tinggal di daerah pinggir dikarenakan beberapa aspek seperti harga tanah yang lebih murah di daerah pinggir. Maka dari itu, masyarakat Betawi Tengah berkehidupan di pinggir dan membangun sebuah ekosistem baru di situ, dengan membawa tradisi yang berasal dari Betawi Tengah."

According to Tjahjono (2003: 67), the Betawi consist of three groups. The first group is the *Betawi Tengah*, who were the first to undergo the process of urbanization. The second group consists of Betawi living in South Jakarta and is characterized as devoted religious. This is probably the group that Opan[4] calls the *Betawi Pinggir* because Depok is neighboring South Jakarta. The third group is the *Betawi Udik* [Rural Betawi], who were influenced by the Chinese and Sundanese and reside in the neighboring regions of Tangerang, Bogor, and Bekasi.

The urbanization of Jakarta had a vast impact on the Betawi, as they were evicted to other parts of Jakarta due to urban developments (Dewi, 2018: 1). Shannon *et al.* (2018: 3) explain that environmental degradation and land subsidence of urban infrastructures and spaces are overlooked in policy debates on urban land governance, which can cause what she calls "development induced displacement" for which resettlement is used as mitigation. I will use "urban displacement" instead of "development induced displacement" to refer to the process of getting displaced and relocated because the cause for the displacement is not environmental degradation, but rather urbanization itself. The residential areas of the Betawi were reallocated for business, industrial, or recreational purposes (Nas *et al.*, 2008: 13). The material and natural environment developed by the Betawi suffered, as a portion of the traditional residential spaces were replaced (ibid.).

Moreover, the Betawi were the majority in Jakarta until 1945, after which the urban community transformed due to the arrival of migrants, who came to Jakarta from other parts of Indonesia (Nas *et al.*, 2008: 18). The Betawi as a majority group with its own culture derived from the process of creolization, which led to their capacity to absorb waves of newcomers (Nas *et al.*, 2008: 19). According to A Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology (Welsch, 2018: 4), the concept of "creolization" refers to the blending of cultural elements from various cultures into new cultural patterns. However, the waves of migrants became larger, and they were less inclined to adopt the cultural identity of the Betawi (Nas *et al.*, 2008: 19). The Betawi therefore became the minority within Jakarta.

Dewi (2018: 1-2) agrees that the number of Betawi people declined, as they were evicted to other parts of Jakarta. However, she adds that this happened because of gentrification, which is the transformation process of a neighborhood. Gentrification has two outcomes: on the one hand, physical improvement of the neighborhood occurs; on the other hand, displacement of the local community takes place. According to Nas *et al.* (2008: 17-18), the gentrification of the Betawi resulted in spatial dispersion. They settled together with migrants, in different neighborhoods and

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[4] Opan was during this research categorized as a young adult aged between 20 to 25 years old.

had to adapt to their new environment. In doing so, the cohesion of their community broke apart because of the geographical distance.

The falling apart of their cohesion contributed to the fading of their everyday cultural practices and customs, after which the displaced Betawi reached out to essentialized forms of their culture. For instance, Museum Betawi showed a set of traditional Betawi dishes and drinks such as *Kerak Telor*, which is an egg and rice-based wrap with different spices; *Bir Pletok*, which is called Betawi beer and consists of thirteen spices, and does not contain alcohol; and *Soto Betawi*, which is a coconut milk-based broth with beef. My interlocutors talked enthusiastically about those dishes and drinks belonging to the Betawi culture. However, when I asked them if they or their wives cooked those Betawi dishes at home, they told me that they used to cook those dishes, but do not anymore because it was too hard. While food is one example of those essentialized forms, the museum in itself is also an example, together with *pencak silat* [martial arts] performances, the story of the *ondel-ondel*, and the commodification of clothing. These are not lived experiences, rather they are official ways of expressing culture. Culture thus becomes reduced to essentialized forms of expression.

The anthropological analysis of space and place is called "spatializing culture", where the processes of social construction and discursive practices are produced (Low, 2009: 392). The gentrification of the Betawi resulted in displacement, which caused spatial dispersion that contributed to the loss of everyday cultural practices. This resulted in the search for cultural authenticity in order to (re)create a basis for collective legitimacy (Herzfeld, 2010: 235). Heritage became the main way in which the Betawi tried to find their identity because it can be defined as the inheritance of a specific group (Geismar, 2015: 72). Heritage in this context refers to the Betawi's tangible and intangible heritage like rites, traditions, performances, clothing, or architecture, but also to the direct and indirect commodification of their heritage through commercial products and museums. According to Holtorf (2018: 643), heritage can adapt and change through transformations and continuous development despite the essentialization, objectification, and commodification of that heritage. Heritage can therefore be considered resilient. However, some loss of heritage is inevitable (ibid.), which is evident when looking at the Betawi. Despite efforts to preserve their heritage, they experienced a loss of everyday practices.

My research thus explores the socio-cultural and spatial politics of the Betawi's heritage in and around Jakarta, because I want to understand how the Betawi express their heritage after they were evicted in order to address how urban displacement has a negative impact on the existence of

indigenous peoples. Moreover, my case study discusses the broader issues of displacement, community, and culture in a postcolonial and urbanized country.

Ondel-ondel's Volatility

"Ondel-ondel is an expression of the Betawi people, which emerged a long time ago in the 12th century before Islam became the main faith of the Betawi community. They are a pair of large figures that the Dutch people used to call "poppen om geesten te verjagen" ["dolls to chase away ghosts"], a pair of large dolls to ward off evil spirits. In the past, ondel-ondel was called Barongan. The name Barongan comes from the ancient Betawi language, which means 'group', a community group of artists who perform art. In the early 1900s, the name Barongan changed to Ondel-ondel, which means agile and flexible. They symbolize that there is resistance to something bad. So, positive energy opposes negative energy. Thus, ondel-ondel is a symbol of equilibrium and balance."

— Translation excerpt from 'Ondel Ondel: The Agility and Flexibility of the Betawi'

The pair of *ondel-ondel* figures thus represents a balance between the positive and the negative in life. Every Betawi I encountered was eager to tell me about *ondel-ondel* to the point they used the figures as a metaphor for the Betawi, saying the Betawi stood for balance. However, the urban displacement caused by forced evictions can be described as volatile. So, taken from this perspective of balance as the embodiment of the Betawi, such displacement would have caused the *ondel-ondel* to be out of balance.

Nuttall (2023: 175) offers an anthropological perspective on volatility that assumes human life as inherently volatile. Following this assumption, volatility could give an understanding of how people live their lives considering their dynamic surroundings. Keeping the figures as an embodiment of the Betawi, I propose to see my thesis as *ondel-ondel's* volatility because it gives you an understanding of how the Betawi lived their lives and will continue to live their lives within constantly changing environments. My thesis consists of this written text and the accompanying documentary film 'Ondel Ondel: The Agility and Flexibility of the Betawi'. Both uncover what affect urban displacement has on the Betawi, how the cultural heritage of the Betawi is expressed, and what phenomena lead to the cultural preservation of the Betawi.

Both follow a constructivist approach to the evictions, history, culture, and community of the Betawi and their experiences and beliefs. According to Bennett (2013: 577–581), constructivism is an epistemology found within cultural anthropology that brings together meaning and action across cultures, while foregrounding the idea of "experience" because it reveals knowledge on how events are perceived. Thus, constructivism tells us details about the process of meaning-making (Ignacio and

Paras, 2024: 2). Moreover, Shannon-Baker (2023: 380-389) argues that constructivism emphasizes in an ontological manner how interlocutors construct their own reality through descriptions and narrations of their lived experiences, together with the idea that knowledge is co-produced between researcher and interlocutor.

The written text and documentary film are in dialogue with each other and complement one another. Where the film shows how the Betawi express their cultural heritage through procedural knowledge, which shows how processes are performed; the written text describes the attributes of their cultural heritage through declarative knowledge, which describes factual information about objects or processes. For example, the film shows how the rite *Tutup Buku* is performed, whereas the written text describes information about the moment *Tutup Buku* happened. Furthermore, there are moments in the film where my interlocutors share their embodied or learned knowledge, these types of knowledge are used in the written text to support a claim or argument.

I argue with my thesis that urban displacement negatively impacts the identity of the Betawi through the essentialization of their heritage while demonstrating how the Betawi's expression of heritage leads to the preservation of the Betawi.

From Theory to Practice

Anthropological and Ethnographic Approaches

The Routledge Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology describes "ethnography" as a way in which anthropologists conduct fieldwork and is grouped with the concepts of comparison and contextualization, which form the operational system by which anthropologists obtain data (Sanjek, 2010: 243-244). Anthropologists filter field notes and interpret them against comparative theory, after which they produce an ethnographic body that stimulates theoretical thinking and raises the standards for documented contextualization (ibid.). Ethnographic fieldwork revolves around the viewpoints and concepts of interlocutors, focusing on how those people see and talk about their everyday lives (Sanjek, 2010: 246-247). Fassin (2013: 642,630,634) builds on this notion of ethnography by stating that it can cast light upon the unknown because ethnography as a form of fieldwork allows the ethnographer to witness those in power and the evidence of what is ongoing. Ethnography can thus depict moments in people's lives that could expose the social texture of the relations between actors while perceiving its political and moral implications.

Bakker *et al.* (2021: 23) describe participant observation as a method where an anthropologist follows someone's life by observing someone and participating in their life as much as possible, trying to understand their experiences from "within". However, I have my own bias. This means that even if I am trying to understand someone's experiences, I cannot do so entirely because of my own experiences and knowledge. During the two months in Jakarta, I was treated as an "*anak Betawi*" [Betawi child] by the different Betawi people I met, as I am considered fairly young with my 25 years of age. The Betawi people called themselves "*anak Betawi*" when they did not yet have children or were not yet married. Moreover, detailed knowledge of step-by-step process explanations or specific event dates was not necessarily made available for young Betawi people. For instance, I learned only one night in advance from Nabila[5], who was in contact with Yahya, that I could attend a *Tutup Buku* rite.

> "Before we fast, 15 days before entering the month of Ramadan, we have a rite called "*Tutup Buku*" [Closing the Book], it is also called "Nisfu Night" or "Sya'ban Nisfsu Night". We recite prayers to the Almighty."[6] – Mr. Yahya

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[5] Nabila worked together with Yahya on a heritage project, which I will explain in my findings. She was during this research categorized as a young adult aged between 25 to 30 years old.

[6] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Sebelum kita berpuasa itu 15 hari sebelum masuk bulan Ramadan itu, kita ada ritus, namanya ritus 'Tutup Buku', itu disebut juga Malam Nisfu atau Malam Nisfu Sya'ban. Itu kita ritusnya, kita membaca doa-doa menuju ditunjukkan kepada Yang Kuasa bahwa."

Tutup Buku consisted of the *Maghrib doa* [Maghrib prayer], which recites the Koran; the *Doa Yasin* [Yasin Prayer], which recites the Yasin letter; the *Istiqomah*, which are the *doas* [prayers] for long life, standing firm in faith, and dying in a peaceful way; the Water Prayers; the throwing of money, which is found locally; and the eating of food, which in this case was the snack. The Betawi have been incorporated into Indonesian Islam since the Islamic occupation of Java in the 16th century, which meant the Betawi rite was enclosed in between Islamic prayers. I was a bit nervous, as I had never been to a mosque. Yahya asked my interpreter and me to wear a headscarf inside, which we did because we wanted to show our respect, despite not being followers of Islam. Moreover, we wanted to respect every other person in that mosque.

I noticed upon arriving that the women-section in the mosque was placed behind the house-like building in the mosque, where the men were placed and where the Batawi rite took place. Mr. Yahya explained to me that we could walk and I could film everywhere, as long as we did not touch any men because it is "*Haram*" [forbidden by Islam] to touch people from the opposite gender. In this instance, my role as a researcher was foregrounded because I was not restricted to only the women's section, as long as I obliged by the gender-specific rules. This filled me with a sense of pride because it felt as if I was formally acknowledged as an anthropological researcher.

However, I also felt something else. I felt a kind of guilt towards the attending women because I had access as a woman to something they did not have access to as women. This feeling of guilt strengthened when Mr. Yahya told me that snacks were made by the mosque and were distributed after the closing prayer. Yet, there were not enough snacks. So, only the men got to have them. However, Mr. Yahya handed us a snack after the closing prayer and told us to eat it, which we did out of respect for him. Yet, I felt a bit uncomfortable internally while eating the snack. This is not to say that my experience with Islam or with the Betawi was inherently negative. I therefore want to emphasize that I felt the guilt because of my own bias. Being brought up in the Netherlands with the familiarity of concepts such as "atheism" and "feminism", together with being agnostic, made me feel guilty.

Returning to ethnographic and anthropological methods, I discuss observational cinema in the following paragraph. According to Postma (2022: 118-119), anthropologists use observational cinema as a method to try to convey ethnographic knowledge through ways of understanding and narrating, derived from filmmaking. Film can convey affective knowledge, which means it can convey information, meaning, presence, being, and emotions. In other words, observational cinema tries to understand someone's life experiences and daily patterns through filming. However, during the two

months, I did not gain access to observe and participate in the everyday lives of my interlocutors for longer periods of time. Some of my interlocutors expressed that they and their families did not feel comfortable with me being around them for multiple hours and possibly multiple days. This meant that I had to shift my focus a bit. Instead of focusing only on the everyday lives of my interlocutors, I decided to focus on community gatherings, which in this instance meant focusing on events and rites. I could experience a bit of my interlocutors' everyday lives during the preparation for those gatherings. So, where I could, I tried to write down or capture those everyday moments.

Anthropology of Consciousness

An anthropologist is in search of intimate knowledge behind the masks people have on and the roles they play, behind the theoretical abstractions and voiced generalities (Cohen and Rapport, 1995: 9). Part of the sense-making process is the attempt to contextualize our analysis while we give attention to the imagery and figures of speech people tend to use and their meanings (Cohen and Rapport, 1995: 13). There is a distinction within ethnographic fieldwork between public language and private thought, between communication and interpretation (Cohen and Rapport, 1995: 11). Consciousness therefore becomes more explicit, which aims to explain the ones we encounter and work with (ibid.). According to Kohn (1995: 51), awareness, intention, and appreciation are the parameters anthropologists of consciousness focus on since consciousness in everyday life and consciousness in the extraordinary are equally within reach in the field.

I used interviewing as a method to try and understand if and how urban displacement influenced the identity of the Betawi. I used video elicitation and semi-structured interviews as means to incorporate informal dialogue because formal and fully structured interviews often contain distortions since what people say they do is often different from what they actually do (Barbash and Taylor, 1997: 355). I used video-elicitation interviews to gather information about different processes such as *Rowahan* and *Sedekah Bumi*, which are Betawi rites. I will explain more about these rites in my findings. My interlocutors and I used their video footage to clarify moments within those rites. I also conducted a video elicitation interview with my interlocutors where we used my video footage of *Tutup Buku* to gain an analytical understanding of the rite. However, I have not recorded those interviews because they started as conversations, became discussions, and ended in video-elicitations. Thus, the interpretation of the consciousness becomes apparent through this structured way of progression, while I simultaneously build rapport with my interlocutors.

Furthermore, I used semi-structured interviews to gather specific information from interlocutors about specific topics while leaving room for unexpected information to surface and discuss. The imagery and figures of speech people use and their meanings surface through this operating in a semi-structured manner. I conducted and recorded three types of semi-structured interviews in the field. I had taken three months of Indonesian lessons before I went to Jakarta. However, that is not enough to conduct semi-structured interviews. So, I conducted interviews in English with people who spoke English, I conducted interviews with an interpreter present, and I conducted interviews through a translation app as communication medium.

However, there is a loss of meaning present in all three instances. An interlocutor does not speak in his mother language when the interview is conducted in English, which can result in the interlocutor not being able to express what they mean. If there is an interpreter present, the translation will form through the knowledge and expertise of that interpreter, which can result in wrong interpretations or assumptions. Last, communicating through a translation app can cause misconstruing questions or answers. To combat this, I tried to let every interlocutor answer in Indonesian and let their recordings be translated by an interpreter in the field. I have translated the interviews after coming back from the field as well, by comparing the translation from a translation app with the translation from the interpreter. However, there is still a possibility of a loss of meaning because the medium of translation is present.

During my stay in Jakarta, Betawi and non-Betawi people kept referring to the Betawi as a "tribe". I was surprised by this since "tribe" within anthropology is a contentious and heavily discussed concept as it has colonial connotations, which distinguish the "civilized" from the "savages" and can be seen as outdated and problematic. I asked multiple Betawi people if "tribe" was the world they described themselves and if so, what the word entailed for them. I was met with the answer that it was definitely the right term and that they were proud to belong to "the Betawi tribe". Seeing this was the answer across the Betawi people I spoke to, I accepted the word "tribe" as an emic term. However, when I told one of my interpreters my observation around the halfway mark of my stay, she reacted alarmed. She explained that in Indonesian, *suku pedalaman* meant "tribe" but is often shortened to *suku*, which means "ethnicity". So, both, "ethnicity" and "tribe" are defined by the word "*suku*". "*Suku pedalaman* is used to describe the people who live deep in the forest", she concluded.

Multimodality as Methodology

Writing has been a dominant research mode within anthropology, however, the concept of "multimodality" gained attraction in recent years (Westmoreland, 2022:64). Westmoreland (ibid.) describes that multimodal approaches combine a variety of ways in which anthropology can be conveyed through the use of audio, digital, and visual output. By using multimodality, anthropologists try to understand practices of communication and meaning-making that go beyond written and spoken forms. Moreover, video as a mode for ethnographic research and filmmaking is well established within visual ethnography (Pink, 2021:124). According to Pink (2021:129), ethnographic filmmakers have to be aware of how the cameras and video recorders are part of the relationship with their interlocutors and how these relationships are incorporated into the research process. This is necessary because video recordings that are part of ethnographic research are always subjected to change due to specific circumstances in which they occur (Pink, 2021:130). Thus, video as an ethnographic research mode gives a unique voice to the practices of communication I observed. However, it has to be accompanied by a written text to academically contextualize the research. I will foreground the practices of "meaning-making" by combining a written body and an ethnographic film as one thesis.

The camera can be considered a research instrument while using multimodality, which can capture a variety of data. I used the methods of photographing and filming to capture how the Betawi express their cultural heritage, which consists of commodified Betawi products and intangible and tangible heritage. I handheld my camera most of the time. This ensured that I was responsive in "fast-moving" situations (Lawrence, 2020: 92), such as traditional Betawi dances or rites. I used a tripod for interviews and establishing shots of landscapes. Christian Suhr's *Descending with Angels* (2013) explores the analytic possibilities of Islamic exorcism with the camera, by going along with the movements. I tried to use this technique during events and rites to create a more dynamic scene. This worked out during most of the events like the *ondel-ondel* parade, although the first shots were shot somewhat clumsily and shaky. However, I forgot this idea during the *Tutup Buku* rite I attended because I was overwhelmed by everything that was happening and by the number of cinematic choices I could make. Despite that, I managed to shoot closeup, medium, and far shots from some different perspectives.

Yanara Guayasamin experiments with montage during a ritual in *Table Talk* (2007). With her film, Guayasamin tries to bring the spiritual world and the physical world together through an audio assemblage of video recordings and children's voices. In doing so she depicts the deeper meaning behind the ritual without a voiceover that explains it. I captured the deeper meaning of water in the

rite *Tutup Buku* I attended, through a montage of edited water sound that is getting louder, chanting, and a voiceover accompanied by a montage of rite visuals. In this way, I want to combine the deeper meaning of water from the rite with the deeper meaning of identity placed within religion.

Furthermore, I used mapping as a tool to gain a better understanding of the structure and size of the Betawi communities my interlocutors formed part of. I used this method because the making of maps is a way to depict embodied and emplaced experiences, while the spatial construction of a landscape gives insights into the usage of the space (Westmoreland, 2022: 75). I facilitated coloring pencils and drawing paper for mapping exercises to my interlocutors in the field. I asked them if they could draw and map out their Betawi community and the important buildings for their community. All of them drew an understanding of their local community except Jak, who said he did not have a community. This made me realize their definition of community was intertwined with locality and place.

Shafira also told me she did not have a Betawi community. Only her father had one, which was important to him because it helped preserve the Betawi culture. However, her father was no longer part of that community because of the impact of the ongoing social changes in their area since her family experienced an eviction. She decided to draw the environment of her father's former community (Figure 1). In the left upper corner was their house, in the right upper corner stood a big tree with next to it her grandmother's house, in the middle on the left stood their local mosque, down on the left was the community's commonplace "the Hut", and to the right stood their local middle school.
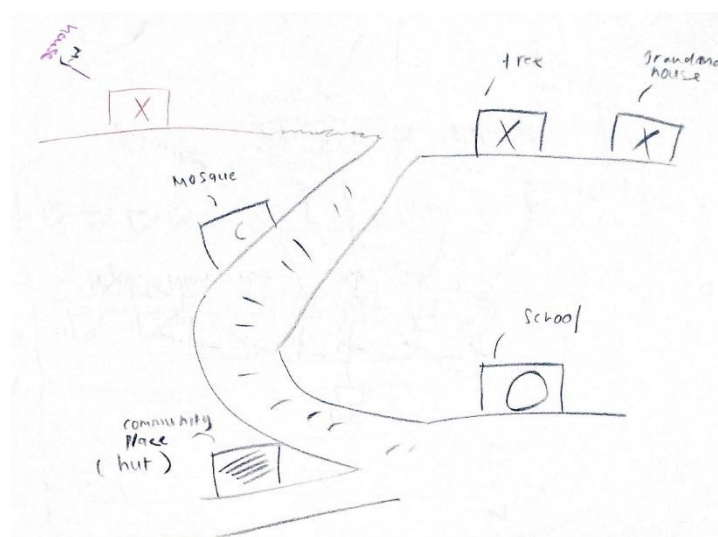

Figure 1. *Shafira's father's former community in South Jakarta.*

Opan told me that his paternal grandmother also experienced an eviction, specifically for the construction of toll roads. Only part of their house was affected, so she still lived there. However, he had lived his whole life in Depok and did not experience an eviction. Opan drew a map of his local community, which was located in *kampung* [neighborhood] Andara (Figure 2). On the left was the film studio where he and his colleagues shot short films and documentaries for Andara TV, a media platform that addressed various Betawi themes. Across from the studio was a traditional Betawi house and diagonally below the studio was his own house. Next to his own house was the Betawi art studio, where he and his colleagues would edit and work on other art projects. Above in the middle was the local mosque and above to the right was a local government office.
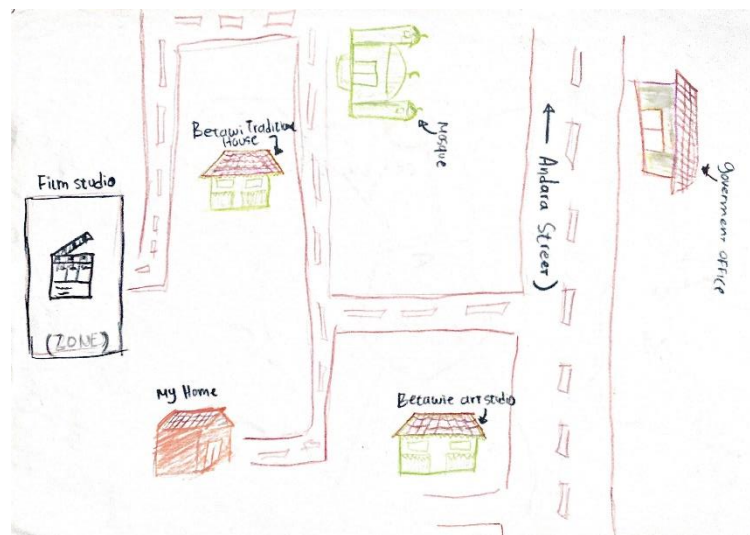
Figure 2. *Opan's community in kampung Andara, Depok.*

Suryadi[7] lived in the Cilandak area, which is one of the remaining places within Jakarta where the Betawi are still located. His community consisted of his *besan* [in-laws] and is considered small because it only ranged across a T-junction (Figure 3). On the top from left to right lived one of his brothers-in-law with his family, his mother-in-law, and his sister-in-law with her family. On the bottom from left to right lived one of his brothers-in-law with his family, another one of his brothers-in-law and his family, his own family, and the last one of his brothers-in-law with his family. When I walked through this neighborhood, I noticed that their local mosque also housed their local school and was placed further down the vertical road.

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[7] Suryadi was during this research categorized as a quadragenarian aged between 40 to 49 years old.
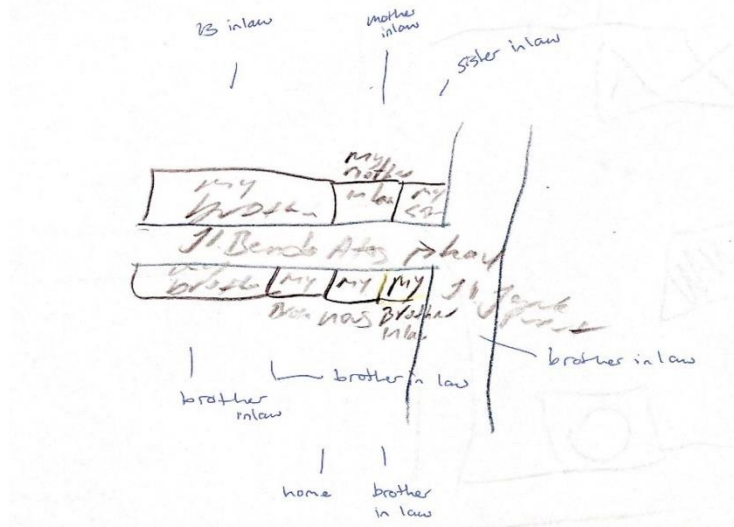
Figure 3. *Suryadi's community in the Cilandak area, South Jakarta.*

Yahya explained that he and his family still owned residential land because he had only been evicted from his rice fields. Yahya mapped out two city blocks within his *kampung* [neighborhood], which he considered his community (Figure 5). He drew the red and pink triangles as representations of roofs to indicate that Betawi people lived there. The blue triangles with yellow dots were the houses in which his *besan* [in-laws] lived. He drew the pink line to indicate they were connected to each other. The blue dot in the red triangle in a light blue square with red dots inside was Yahya's own house. The three triangles with each a crescent moon symbol on top were the local mosques. The bottom one was the mosque we went to for the *Tutup Buku* rite. The community had plans to build an Islamic school on the left of that mosque, while his late grandfather's house stood on the right side, which Yahya's uncle had inherited.
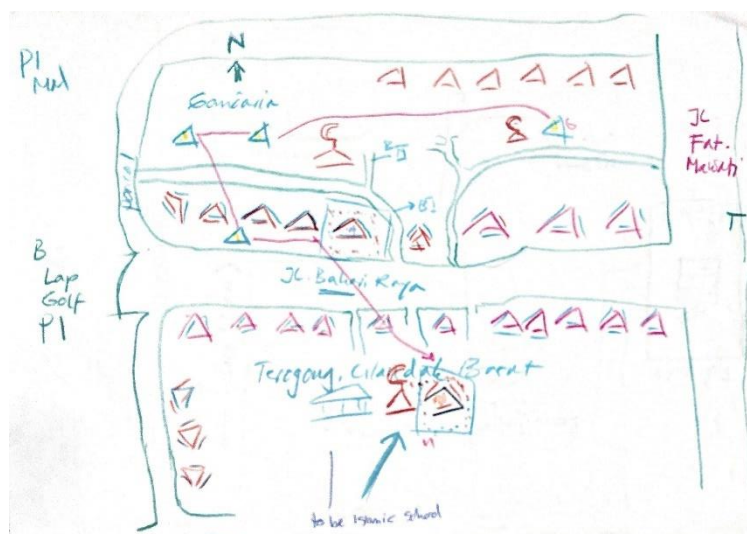
Figure 4. *Yahya's community in the Cilandak area, South Jakarta.*

Jak[8] did not form part of a local community, so he drew where his Betawi friends and family were located (Figure 5). He and his parents lived their whole lives in Central Jakarta, which he marked orange. Some of his childhood friends were still living there. He associated and placed his colleagues from Museum Betawi in South Jakarta, which he highlighted light blue. He drew the cities Depok and Bogor under Jakarta in dark blue to add scale to the map. Six of his friends lived in Tangerang, a city marked pink to the left of Jakarta. Moreover, most of his relatives lived in Bandung, a city marked purple diagonally below Jakarta, Depok, and Bogor. The black dashed line indicated that the true distance was further away than he had drawn.
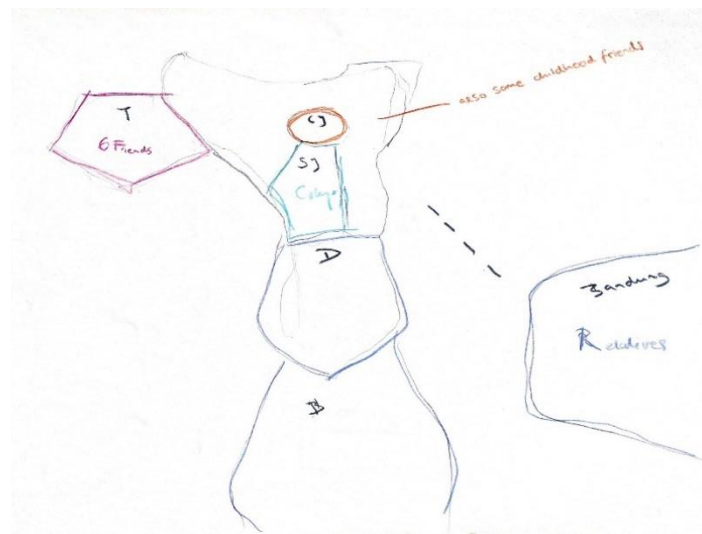
Figure 5. *Jak's friends and family, West Java.*

Nabila told me she did not have a Betawi community because she was a young person who had not lived among the Betawi for a long time due to the evictions of the past. So, she did not want to participate in the mapping exercise.

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[8] Jak was during this research categorized as a quinquagenarian aged between 50 to 59 years old.

After the Field

The process of organizing and logging my data started when I was in the field. Besides my field notes and extensive anthropological reports, I made a Word document where I logged the data and metadata of the gathered footage. After the field, coding my data began. I decided to scan and print my handwritten field notes and reports, so I could categorize and mark every encounter, event, thought, or meeting based on topics and concepts such as evictions, displacement, belonging, community, tangible heritage, and intangible heritage. After that, I transferred those categories into an Excel file to create an overview of my data. I divided my shot footage into those categories as well, adding them to my Excel database. Moreover, I color-coded the transcribed and translated interviews in the same way.

The montage stage and editing process began after coding. From the moment I came back, I knew I wanted to incorporate the story of the *ondel-ondel*. However, I had three narratives to work with: the evictions, the heritage, and the *ondel-ondel*. One of my earlier versions showed those narratives one after the other, without regard to the interview distribution. This made the whole film feel like a sea of information, sometimes without explicit context. It also felt like the film missed a bigger point, a red thread that connected those narratives. I got the suggestion during one of the feedback moments to use more voice-over, which I applied to the whole film. But I overdid it, which made the piece too information-dense, while the audio and the video were in uncomfortable tension with each other. It was only when my thesis supervisor[9] mentioned that the *ondel-ondel* frames represented some kind of emptiness, like not having a community, that I saw the red thread emerging. *Ondel-ondel* became a metaphor for the Betawi from that moment onwards.

In the final version of the film, I combined the essay narrative with the events and portrait narrative. The essay narrative uses voice to guide an academic argument (Lawrence, 2020: 141), which I did through voiceovers and interviews. The events narrative shows activities and special occasional rituals (Lawrence, 2020: 142), which I implemented by showing *pencak silat*, *Tutup Buku*, the *ondel-ondel* parade, and traditional Betawi dances. The portrait narrative ensures that the film follows one or two protagonists (Lawrence, 2020: 141). I used part of my interlocutors' interviews to give context about the evictions, while I applied the portrait narrative to those interlocutors throughout the film so the viewer gets to know them through the way they are presented. Moreover, I included self-recorded diegetic music in the final film because it was part of the observed intangible heritage.

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[9] My supervisor was Mark Westmoreland.

Those who lost their way

"We did not move anywhere,

so I did not experience what it felt like for people who were evicted.

But I saw the behavior of friends who had been evicted and became impoverished.

I saw with my own eyes that they became people who seemed to have lost their way."

"Kita gak pindah ke mana-mana,

tapi saya oleh karena itu saya tidak merasakan bagaimana rasanya orang yang abis penggusuran.

Tetapi saya melihat perilaku teman-teman yang sudah gusuran, yang sudah miskin itu.

Saya juga melihat dengan mata kepala sendiri itu mereka menjadi orang-orang yang seperti kehilangan arah."

– Yahya

A Sense of Displacement and Loss of Culture

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, researchers gave attention to the concept of "urban displacement" (Crawford, 2021: 9). However, the work that was done focused mostly on groups of refugees without considering urban areas and their global policy-making more generally (Crawford, 2021: 10). The concept of "urban displacement" describes a complex and multilayered process that arises from the repercussions of policy and its failure (Crawford, 2021: 14), by which already established land-claims are displaced by new land-claims and relocation has been the mitigation measure (Shannon *et al.,* 2018: 3). However, people who relinquish their land for urban development are generally left worse off (ibid.) because development designs neglect to take into account various epistemic forms, which are operating within the social spaces that are being improved (Bjorkman, 2015: 6). This is the reason why "urban displacement" is a contentious concept within academic development debates.

Historical memory and societal structures become inscribed into social spaces by conceptualizing them through the act of mapping cultures onto places (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 7). In other words, being a person with feelings, thoughts, and cultural practices gives meaning and form to a space, producing a place through everyday patterns (Low, 2009: 392). Moreover, the concept of "spatializing culture" describes the anthropological analysis of space and place by discussing the processes of social production, social construction, discursive practices, and embodiment (ibid.). According to Low (2009: 395,398), two contested meanings of space emerge out of "spatializing culture": a space can be an indigenous-produced place, which carries a complex understanding of the local experience; while a space can also be an urban place that is culturally diverse through the encompassment of conflicting meanings. "Spatializing culture" can therefore be accompanied within practice by "gentrification", which I mentioned in the introduction as the transformation process of a neighborhood where that neighborhood undergoes physical improvement while the local community experiences displacement.

This displacement causes spatial dispersion, which affects the cultural practices of the ones relocated and essentializes their culture. The concept of "essentialism" describes a form of reductionism where it decontextualizes the meaning of words (Herzfeld, 2010: 234). "Essentialism" assumes an unchanged ontology based on historical products of humans or other forms of agency (Herzfeld, 2010: 235). In other words, essentialized beliefs carry the suggested but not expressed assumption that a category is based on a meaningful distinction (Hinton, 2020: 384). In the context of essentializing culture, "essentialism" refers to the process of searching for cultural authenticity in order to create a basis for collective legitimacy (Herzfeld, 2010: 235). Moreover, the concept of

"symbolic boundaries" describes what behaviors or opinions are appropriate for and between people (Edelmann, 2018: 120-21). They separate what is (dis) honorable and (in)appropriate for people who are part of particular social groups (ibid.). Changes in symbolic boundaries can shape the identity of communities tied to a specific field because the identity of a community derives from the collective identity of the field (ibid.). Essentializing culture thus creates a change in the symbolic boundaries of a community, which shapes and therefore changes part of the collective identity of that community.

Adding to this identity is heritage, which refers to knowledge, practices, and objects of cultural worlds over multiple generations (Geismar, 2015: 72). The governance of heritage draws upon a different understanding, defining heritage as the inheritance of a specific group (ibid.). However, according to Geismar (2015: 77), claims by Indigenous peoples to sovereign autonomy over cultural heritage actually strengthen the legitimacy of nationally made claims, which maintains "a colonial status quo". This sheds light on the question of who owns heritage and in what manner, together with the underlying aspects of circulation and commodification of heritage (ibid.). Thus, heritage as a category forms an understanding of the power dynamics that are involved in the recognition of identity (Geismar, 2015: 72). Heritage can therefore be an essential part of a community's collective identity, especially when that community experienced displacement.

Blakely (2015: 488) defines the commodification of heritage as a conversion of cultural property into economically worthy commercial products, which can lower the inherent value of one's cultural heritage. When a government chooses to intervene in community-regulated cultural heritage, it operates typically under cultural preservation in a museum-like function (Blakely, 2015: 497). While preserving indigenous beliefs and practices promotes cultural awareness and social inclusion, it essentializes and objectifies those they aim to empower (Talamayan, 2022: 70). Museums portray certain events, convey messages, and display peoples' way of living by collecting, preserving, or interpreting material culture and intangible heritage (Talamayan, 2022: 78). Thus, museums are important factors in representing cultural identities by using cultural properties (Handler, 1997: 4).

According to Handler (1992: 23), the individual or ethnic identity is under discussion when thinking about the identity of a museum object. With individual identity, the object's significance and value change according to the visitor's knowledge about its creator's identity. However, nothing changes the fact that a specific person created a particular object, which implies that an object's specific identity is associated with the moment of its completion. Handler argues (1993: 35) that the politics of culture centers around "possessive individualism" as an ideology where existence is dependent on the creation and ownership of objects. Thus, the notion of "cultural property" allows social groups to define their identity through the essentialization and objectification of their way of life as "culture."

The creator can therefore be seen as a participant in a tradition rather than self-contained, which makes way for an ethnic identity (Handler, 1992: 23).

When values tied to heritage reinforce a community's collective identity, the cultural resilience of that community strengthens (Holtorf, 2018: 640). Resilience can be defined as a system's capability or process to absorb disturbances (Holtorf, 2018: 639). However, instead of focusing on "bouncing back" to a previous state of being, recent notions of resilience emphasize the process of "bouncing forward" while absorbing, learning, and adapting (ibid.). Whereas Holtorf defines "cultural resilience" as a cultural system's capability to absorb hardships, manage change, and keep developing (ibid.), Crane defines "cultural resilience" as the ability to maintain livelihoods that take into account material and moral needs when confronted with environmental, political, or economic stresses (Crane, 2010: 2). Thus, resilient processes are sustainable because they have the capacity to persist over long periods of time without compromising their preconditions (Holtorf, 2018: 639). Heritage has the same kind of sustainability, where it is capable of adapting to changes through transformations and continuous development (Holtorf, 2018: 643). Heritage can therefore be considered resilient. However, according to Holtorf (ibid.), the loss of specific heritage expressions is inevitable. This loss of heritage and therefore identity can happen during the processes of urban displacement. Yet, the identity of a community can be preserved through the remaining expressed heritage, which strengthens the cultural resilience of that community.

Betawi as an Identity

"Wherever I go and wherever I am,
I appreciate the Betawi culture,
to the point it has becomes a part of me and my surroundings."

"Dan ke mana pun dan di mana pun,
saya sangat-sangat menghargai budaya Betawi,
tersebut sampai masuk ke dalam diri saya mau pun ke dalam lingkungan saya."

– Shafira

The Commodification of Heritage

I went to Jakarta with the somewhat naive assumption that the Betawi had a core community because multiple acquaintances living in Jakarta told me so. In the first two weeks, it became apparent that there was no core community due to the urban evictions. Hence, finding a Betawi community was hard as they were dispersed over Jakarta, its outskirts, and neighboring areas. As I was visiting places all over Jakarta where the Betawi could live, I understood there was no clear field site for me to go to. I also underestimated the time it took to get from one place to another, which meant, for example, I could not easily travel from one appointment in Central Jakarta to another one in South Jakarta. I thus found it a bit difficult to know where to start searching. I thus found it a bit difficult to know where to start searching.

I began with a visit to *Perkampungan Budaya Betawi* [the Betawi Cultural Village] since a few Indonesian people that I had met suggested the village. The museum and all the events held within the cultural village were managed by *Dinas Kebudayaan DKI Jakarta* [DKI Jakarta Culture Department], which was the local government's cultural department. The visitors of the museum and events were students of different ages, Indonesian people who were interested in the Betawi, people who identified as Betawi, and international tourists. Experiencing the museum and the traditional Betawi village made me realize the knowledge passed down was essentialized, objectified, and fixed. If I asked questions to the employees about certain traditions or specific moments in history that were not part of that knowledge, I was met with a shrug of the shoulders or an "I don't know"-like answer. When I asked questions about the supposed Betawi community, the employees told me the museum and its visitors were the Betawi community.

Firzandy interprets the cultural village as part of the Betawi's cultural heritage area in order to manage the process of urbanization (Firzandy, 2018: 84). He defines the area as "the last sanctuary for Betawi people" since the village is a place where Betawi people can go to in order to build up and preserve their culture without possible fear of eviction caused by urban development (Firzandy, 2018: 86). Agreeing with Firzandy, the cultural village and the museum are part of the Betawi's heritage as they represent an essentialized version of the Betawi's identity through the museum objects, architectural buildings, and foods. As how Nabila explained, "The cultural Betawi village is also one of the places we focus on regarding the Betawi culture. So, if people want to see the Betawi culture, they can go to *Perkampungan Budaya Betawi* in Setu Babakan."[10]

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[10] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Itu Perkampungan Budaya Betawi juga salah satunya yang sangat kami pusatkan ya untuk kebudayaan Betawi. Supaya masyarakat kalau mau melihat tentang kebudayaan Betawi, mereka bisa pergi ke Perkampungan Budaya Betawi di Setubabakan."

I found the Betawi Online Gallery store while I explored the *kampung* [neighborhood] Setu Babakan. They sold Betawi-related products such as traditional musical instruments, wooden toys, traditional tableware, handmade bags, traditional service, traditional clothing with Batik, Betawi snacks and drinks, together with big and small *ondel-ondel* figures. This store and its products were a direct manifestation of the commodification of the Betawi's heritage, as the cultural property of the Betawi turned into commercial products with economic worth. Blakely argues that the commodification of heritage can lower the value of a group's cultural heritage (Blakely, 2015: 488). However, this commodification of heritage had a positive impact on the local Betawi as they bought Betawi attributes like the *ondel-ondel* figures for their festive celebrations, while the students and tourists bought Betawi-related memorabilia such as magnets or keychains.

The last place I visited to find a community was *Lembaga Kebudayaan Betawi* [the Betawi Cultural Association]. There I met Yahya, the head of the cultural association and a Betawi researcher who was Betawi himself. The cultural association worked together with Nabila from *Dinas Kebudayaan DKI Jakarta* [DKI Jakarta Culture Department] on a Betawi heritage project.

> "[...] our field preserves cultural heritage, cultural values, museums, and history. I work in the field of cultural values, which preserves cultural elements that are [part of] tangible or intangible cultural heritage. So, every year we gather information on cultural elements in Jakarta to be designated as Indonesia's Intangible Cultural Heritage by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The process takes approximately one year. We submit these elements accompanied by studies, photos, and videos. Then these elements are evaluated. After the evaluation is finished, out of the several elements proposed, the ministry and its team of experts will determine how many will be designated as Indonesia's Intangible Cultural Heritage. After becoming the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia, several cultural elements will be selected again, which will then be submitted to UNESCO to be designated as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage."[11] – Nabila

This heritage project has been part of what UNESCO (2021) describes on their official site as a larger initiative called 'Creative Youth at Indonesian heritage sites', which "aims to promote youth entrepreneurship and raise awareness about cultural and natural heritage by linking local communities' livelihoods with the heritage sites" (UNESCO, 2021). However, the Betawi heritage

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[11] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Kami mengerjakan untuk melindungi bidang perlindungan itu melindungi cagar budaya, nilai budaya, permuseuman, dan juga sejarah. Untuk saya sendiri, kebetulan berada di bagian nilai budaya, yang mana itu melindungi objek-objek kebudayaan yang bersifat, yang bersifat takbenda atau intangible cultural heritage. Nah, setiap tahunnya kami mendata objek-objek kebudayaan yang ada di DKI Jakarta untuk kemudian ditetapkan sebagai Warisan Budaya Takbenda Indonesia, oleh Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. Nah, prosesnya itu kurang lebih selama satu tahun. Jadi kami mengajukan objek-objek tersebut disertai dengan kajian, foto, dan juga video. Lalu objek tersebut disidangkan. Setelah sidangnya selesai, dari beberapa yang diusulkan, nanti kementerian yang akan menentukan dan tim ahlinya akan menentukan berapa yang kemudian ditetapkan sebagai Warisan Budaya Takbenda Indonesia. Nah, setelah sampai di Warisan Budaya Takbenda Indonesia, akan dipilah lagi beberapa objek kebudayaan yang kemudian diajukan kepada UNESCO untuk ditetapkan sebagai Warisan Budaya Takbenda UNESCO."

project was in the early stages of collecting studies, photos, and videos as they were not officially part of Indonesia's cultural heritage yet. While Nabila and I were talking about her day-to-day work, she told me that it was hard to find intangible heritage such as Betawi rites or rituals because, "[...] in our culture, within the Betawi, there are fewer and fewer [Betawi] masters who are alive."[12] This heritage project thus exemplifies the power dynamics at play between the government, masters, and the ones who are uneducated during the recognition process of the Betawi's identity.

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[12] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "[...] di kebudayaan sendiri di Betawi sendiri sudah semakin sedikit maestro yang masih hidup."

The Influence of Urban Displacement

"I'm Betawi, but I'm not from Jakarta. I'm from Depok. I think I'm a victim of the evicted from the past, maybe my ancestors. So, the Betawi in Depok and Jakarta is a bit different. [...] I think I don't have a community to talk about the Betawi in-depth [...] because I am a young person who doesn't [sic] live [sic] among the [Central] Betawi for a long time." – Nabila

The displacement and spatial dispersion of the Betawi caused their community to break apart, which resulted in the rise of smaller local Betawi communities. Some Betawi rites and rituals were still carried out after the evictions, however, they were carried out without the in-depth knowledge passed down by the elders to children and grandchildren. Thus, young people's understanding of the Betawi traditions became minimal in comparison to the elders, which created a gap in generational knowledge and caused knowledge loss as a consequence. The geographical distance also caused a loss of community for some of the Betawi, as this was experienced by Shafira.

> "I don't think I have a Betawi community. [...] My family experienced eviction in Jakarta, but many people from my area were unsatisfied with the relocation decision because there was no compensation process. [...] Since I live in Depok, I have taken a long time to accept the environment there because of the differences between the two cities. Jakarta and Depok have cultures and each one is different. So, I needed time for myself."[13] – Shafira

There were Betawi as well who were partially evicted and had to give up part of their land, which was in some cases not their residential area. This did not necessarily result in displacement, but rather in a loss of land ownership. This happened to Yahya and Opan's paternal grandmother. However, Yahya told me that large families were still pulled apart.

> "The eviction carried out by the metropolitan became [the area] Pondok Indah, which used to be my rice field. [...] [However,] my [residential] area is an area that was not included in the [evicted] area [...] My other siblings, who were affected by the eviction have scattered all over the place, while my family and I still have land for our extended family."[14] – Yahya

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[13] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Saya rasa saya tidak punya komunitas Betawi. [...] Keluarga saya pernah mengalami penggusuran di Jakarta, tapi banyak masyarakat dari tempat tinggal saya itu tidak puas dengan keputusan relokasi karena tidak ada proses ganti rugi di sana. [...] Sejak saya tinggal di Depok, itu memiliki waktu cukup lama untuk menerima lingkungan yang saya tinggali sekarang, kayak karena dari kedua perbedaan dua kota tersebut. Jakarta dan Depok itu memiliki budaya dan lingkungan yang sangat-sangat berbeda masing-masing. Jadi, saya butuh waktu."

[14] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Penggusuran yang dilakukan oleh metropolitan itu menjadi Pondok Indah dan itu dulu sawah saya itu. [...] kawasan saya itu kawasan yang tidak masuk dalam [...] Maya itu kan saudara-saudara saya yang lain itu, yang terdampak gusuran itu kan mencar ke mana-mana, sementara saya dengan keluarga itu masih ada tanah yang untuk keluarga besar."

Even though Shafira, Nabila, and Jak told me they had no Betawi community, I observed that they did have social-cultural relations with Betawi people due to their workplace. Shafira worked at the Betawi Online Gallery store and Jak worked at Museum Betawi. Both worked with other Betawi employees, and both interacted with visitors who were students, tourists, and Betawi people. Jak also mentioned that he sometimes hung out with a few friends who were Betawi, but he did not consider their group a Betawi community. Nabila had social-cultural relations with Betawi people due to her workplace as well. She worked with some government employees and *Lembaga Kebudayaan Betawi* [the Betawi Cultural Association] employees who were Betawi. She also worked with other Betawi people whose practices she studied.

One ritual that disappeared because of the broken-up community cohesion was the process of making food together. When I asked my interlocutors if they or their wives made Betawi foods at home, they answered that they used to, but did not do that anymore because it was too hard. One thing I noticed while hearing my interlocutors' stories and observing them and their surroundings, was that cooking together was considered an important part of rites and events. Since the geographical distance caused a loss of community for some Betawi, the act of cooking together decreased. This led to a decrease in food supply as well, which made it harder to find the right ingredients. This process could be one of the reasons why Betawi people stopped making Betawi food at home.

The process whereby generational knowledge is lost can be defined as a change in the Betawi's symbolic boundaries because the behavior of their newfound local communities changed. As one can read in Nabila's quote at the beginning of this chapter, the *Betawi Pinggir* [Marginal Betawi] community in Depok differed from the *Betawi Tengah* [Central Betawi] community to the point she felt uncomfortable speaking about the Betawi community, as she defined it as the *Betawi Tengah* community. This example illustrates that changes in symbolic boundaries shape the identity of communities tied to a specific field since the identities of the *Betawi Pinggir* community and the *Betawi Tengah* community were considered different, yet they were both Betawi communities. Moreover, they searched for cultural authenticity to create a basis for collective legitimacy, as they both lost generational knowledge due to evictions, which happened for both communities at different times. Thus, various types of generational knowledge got lost. This process of essentializing culture created a change in their symbolic boundaries as well.

The Preservation of Heritage

So, how is the heritage of the Betawi expressed if there is a loss of knowledge, community, and identity? I found that the Betawi expressed their heritage through direct commodification, government-regulated museum-like preservation, the act of doing research, the act of making films and documentaries, practicing rites and rituals, and wearing their formal attire and performance costumes. Moreover, all the interlocutors I worked with had voiced that they wanted to pass on the cultural knowledge they possessed in some way, shape, or form, regardless of their own opinions or personal situations. "I have a moral obligation, as one of [the] Betawi in Jakarta. I have to maintain, to preserve, to expand, [and] to inform about the Betawi", explained Jak.

The heritage of the Betawi can be divided into tangible and intangible heritage. Tangible heritage consists of physical cultural property like formal clothing and costumes, food and drinks, accessories, and architecture. For instance, food dishes like *Kerak Telor* and *Soto Betawi,* together with traditional Betawi houses, traditional Betawi dance costumes, *ondel-ondel* figures, "*jawara Betawi*" [Betawi men] rings, and Betawi *goloks* [machetes] were part of their tangible heritage. Their traditional attire was also part of their tangible heritage. The traditional attire for men was called *busana Sadaria*, which consisted of a plain-colored buttoned shirt, *batik* trousers, a folded *cukin* [sarong] placed over the shoulders, and a black *kopiah* [Malay cap]. The traditional attire for women consisted of a *kebaya kerancang* [blouse] with lace embroidery and a long *batik* sarong as a long skirt.

The category of intangible heritage consists of nonphysical cultural property such as oral stories, traditions, rites, rituals, performing arts, and language. For example, dance performances like *tari topeng Betawi* [Betawi mask dance] and traditional music were part of the Betawi's intangible heritage. During one of our conversations, Nabila mentioned that most people around her primarily spoke Indonesian and no longer *Bahasa Betawi* [the Betawi language]. She explained, "As for the Betawi language, which has a really thick dialect, it is not used much in my own neighborhood anymore."[15] Moreover, Yahya told me, "We in the extended family still use [some] Betawi terms. [...] So, at home I am trying to reintroduce these terms to children aged 15 years and under."[16] Thus, even though their language was part of their intangible heritage, it suffered a loss of everyday speakers.

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[15] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Kalau untuk bahasa Betawi, yang benar-benar kental, itu di lingkungan saya sendiri sudah tidak sudah tidak terlalu dipergunakan."

[16] Kita dalam keluarga batih itu masih tetap menggunakan istilah-istilah. Jadi, saya di rumah masih berupaya mengenalkan kembali tradisi-tradisi ini kepada anak-anak di yang 15 tahun ke bawah.

Rites such as *Tutup Buku*, *Rowahan,* and *Sedekah Bumi* were also part of the Betawi's intangible heritage. During one of the video elicitation interviews, Yahya showed me videos of the *Rowahan* and *Sedekah Bumi* rites. *Rowahan* was held in the month before Ramadan and was known to be a mourning rite. Betawi people went to their family cemetery and prayed from the morning to the afternoon. During the evening, they performed the closing prayers, after which they ate with each other. Moreover, *Tutup Buku* and *Rowahan* were both performed before Ramadan, the first rite was performed to ask for blessings and the second to honor the dead. Furthermore, *Sedekah Bumi* was held every year after the harvest and was known as the "farmers' rite". The Betawi people participated in a procession towards different cemeteries in the north, west, south, and east of where they were. They performed offering rituals at every cemetery in which they buried a goat head. They used buffalo heads in the past, but they became too expensive. Various forms of entertainment were performed in the evening, such as *pencak silat* [martial arts], *tari topeng Betawi* [Betawi mask dance]*, layar tancap Betawi* [Betawi film screening], and *wayang Betawi* [Betawi shadow puppet show].

During one of our conversations, Suryadi mentioned that he and his family followed the Betawi tradition *Haul*. However, he told me that not every Betawi followed this tradition.

> "Haul is a commemoration held one year, two years, three years, or five years after the death of the closest relatives. [...] The number of people invited depends on the family's financial ability. If a family is only capable of inviting their neighbors, they will invite ten or twenty people. But if they have the financial ability, they will invite maybe two hundred or three hundred people."[17] – Suryadi

After the film shooting of Opan's *pencak silat* [martial arts] performance, he and I sat down and ate lunch together. We had traditional Betawi nasi from a restaurant nearby. He told me that he, his friends, and some of his fellow Betawi artists practiced and performed various versions of *pencak silat*.

> "I built a media platform, called Andara TV. There, I tried to introduce Betawi art and collaborate with fellow Betawi artists. [...] So, before college, I was just proud. But when I went to college, I learned more about the Betawi and my thesis also discussed the Betawi. I became even more proud. [...] So, when I recognized that, I had the motivation to introduce the Betawi culture to Indonesian people, even [to people] abroad."[18] – Opan

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[17] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Haul itu adalah peringatan satu tahun, dua tahun, tiga tahun, lima tahun dari kematian orang-orang terdekat. [...] Itu tergantung dari kemampuan keluarga tersebut, jika kemampuannya cukup untuk hanya mengundang tetangga, cuman untuk sepuluh atau dua puluh orang. Tapi jika orang itu orang kaya, dia orang yang memiliki kemampuan, mereka akan mengundang orang, bisa dua ratus, tiga ratus."

[18] English translation from the Indonesian quote: "Saya membangun sebuah media, namanya Andara TV. Di situ, saya mencoba memperkenalkan kesenian Betawi dan bekerja sama kepada teman-teman pelaku seni seniman Betawi. [...] Jadi, di saat saya sebelum

Opan thus studied the Betawi on an academic level, after which he decided to start making films and documentaries about the Betawi. In doing so he captured and conveyed aspects of tangible and intangible heritage to his platform's audience.

The Betawi communities searched for cultural authenticity to create a basis for collective legitimacy after the loss of generational knowledge due to the displacement. They defined their collective identity through the essentialization and objectification of their cultural property, which I divided into tangible and intangible heritage. Thus, the Betawi communities found a common identity by essentializing their culture, which they now consider the culture of the Betawi. However, the majority of these essentialized cultural properties are not lived experiences, rather they are formal and official ways of expressing culture.

kuliah itu saya hanya saya bangga. Tapi ketika saya kuliah, saya mempelajari lagi tentang Betawi dan skripsi saya juga mengangkat tentang Betawi. Saya semakin bangga […] Jadi, ketika saya mengenali itu, saya mempunyai motivasi untuk memperkenalkan budaya Betawi kepada masyarakat Indonesia, bahkan manca dunia."

Ondel-ondel's Agility and Flexibility

I have argued throughout this thesis that urban displacement influenced the identity of the Betawi negatively through the falling apart of community cohesion, resulting in a loss of knowledge, community, and identity. However, the Betawi found a collective identity through the essentialization of their culture. I demonstrated how the direct and indirect commodification of their heritage, the act of doing research regarding the Betawi, the act of making films and documentaries about the Betawi, the practicing of intangible heritage, and the exposure of their tangible heritage are part of how the Betawi expressed their heritage. The identity of the Betawi has been preserved through the remaining expressed heritage, which strengthens the cultural resilience of that community. The Heritage project from the government of Jakarta and UNESCO's 'Creative Youth at Indonesian Heritage Sites' project exemplify that heritage has the capability to adapt to changes through transformations and continuous development. The Betawi's heritage thus has the same kind of sustainability as resilience.

I only had two months of fieldwork, so my research time was limited. I therefore had to exclude some aspects of the Betawi. Since I did not gain access to observe and participate in the everyday lives of my interlocutors, I had to shift my focus to community gatherings such as events and rites. Because of that, I missed everyday processes of the Betawi. I also did not find the opportunity to observe up close how Indonesian Islam incorporated the Betawi and how this is expressed through everyday life. Moreover, I failed to include an in-depth analysis of the topic of gender, gender roles, and their meanings. Thus, more research is needed in order to try and convey the Betawi in its entirety.

The determination and sense of responsibility to share knowledge about the Betawi in some way, shape, or form expressed by my interlocutors became more noticeable throughout my time in the field. This observation, together with observing their way of expressing the Betawi's heritage, changed how I understood the Betawi. Rather than perceiving the Betawi as unbalanced because of the forced evictions, the Betawi are in the midst of the process of finding their collective identity and culture. They experienced on the one hand a loss of identity, while they are on the other hand working towards a new one. If I follow the already made personification of the Betawi as *ondel-ondel*, I conclude that the Betawi have not reached a balance per se. Rather, the Betawi are agile and flexible, which is the translation of *ondel-ondel*.

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