



Introduction

COMPETING POWER: LANDSCAPES OF VIOLENCE, MIGRATION AND THE STATE

This book integrates personalised accounts from research participants with a range of contemporary historical and other material to consider power relations amidst ongoing migration, violence, illegality and complicit relationships in Guyana. In accounts that are both 'bottom-up' and macro-oriented, the book considers the contemporary local through violence, agency, disempowerment and loss. This local emerges as and through competing sites of power. The accounts demonstrate the power relations as conflictual in relation to socio-political imaginaries of citizenship and state-making; these are issues of micro and macro dynamics, ranging from persons endeavouring to overturn conditions of structural violence in migration-related activities to external partners including diplomatic agencies seeking to intervene and reorder the local.

The book provides ethnographic details on these differing and at times opposing forms of changes in bids for power. In considering migration dynamics, the accounts also demonstrate the reinstating of boundaries as various kinds of power relations. In effect, it considers limits being imposed (see Strathern 1996). The grounded accounts contribute to larger debates on the state, migration and globalisation. The accounts add to literature on an anthropology of geopolitics and mobility (see, for instance, Rapport and Dawson 1998; Hannerz 1996; Jansen 2009; Salter 2008) vis-à-vis specific power contestations in local sites heavily embedded in an outward migration ethos.

The accounts consider that different actors mediate 'unstable processes' to gain power and negate structural violence (see Leach 1954). Minute bids for power are negotiated against a larger setting as forms of studying up and down through processes (Farmer 2003; Wolf 1972, 1990; Nader 1969). Eric Wolf, in considering a mode of power as useful

to understand how world forces affect those being studied, calls it a 'false romanticism that pretends that "real people doing real things" inhabit self-enclosed and self-sufficient universes' (1990: 587).

Power as differently negotiated in varying relationships is entangled in violence and bids to counter it. Latterly, the state's renewed emphasis on bureaucratic refashioning of people allows for an emergence of explicit power in terms of state super-structures, newly privileged and accompanied by notions of mandating ordered bodies and identifying faulty individuals (see Foucault 1984a, b). However, this is also complicated where the state endeavours to be a voice, along with people, in an effort to publicly co-occupy multiply embedded fields of power relations, co-opting roles of 'on-the-ground' enactments of power and loss.

The accounts, in considering minute processes and larger issues marked by ideas of both static and devalued forms of the local, unveil these landscapes of power where different perspectives come into view, relationally (Hirsch 1995, 2003). Such landscapes are constantly unmade to render visible the dynamics of actors of different status, in bids to compete for power, to limit loss and, where relevant, to evade victimhood. These settings appear through material presencing and physical movements interspersed with fixity, mobility, immobility and violence: settings of 'untidiness' cannot always be reordered (Bender 2001). The landscape, in and out of place, unveils relationships: it moves with the person and 'acts back' (see Tilley 2009).

Vast outward migration continues to mark these processual landscapes of power relations in Guyana as embedded in different kinds of violence. It is distinguished significantly¹ by outward migration of people to the point where it is often stated that more Guyanese live outside the country than in it.² While in Guyana and the Caribbean it has been common over several decades for citizens, among others, to speak of migration as the norm, the fact of such prevalence, in itself, does not set the region apart. The banality of a local that is global is often examined and re-examined to offer varied understandings of change through globalisation issues and to contribute to debates on modernity. Today's geopolitics recognisably can be encountered through the prism of the 'global village' (McLuhan 1964) as evocative of the 'enabled communications' so powerfully envisaged by Nikola Tesla (1915) in the early twentieth century. Scholars and practitioners both engage, if differently so, with the idea of the global as compressed space, evident in the blurring of boundaries between local and global.³ However, in considering how boundaries may be curtailed and redrawn, the book brings to the fore different conceptions of a local: a static devalued local co-resides and is often challenged through the local that is invested

with creative spaces for power and empowerment. This latter revalued local is less contradictory when grounded accounts are considered in which it oscillates in and out of what is deemed static and gains significance against the idea of a devalued status.

Engaging with a mode of limits as a form of re-grounding and obtaining agency for and in the local, the book develops a focus on a recurring theme of external empowerment in Guyana: state actors and citizens seek to extract power and empowerment amidst settings of violence and abuse of official positions. This local occurs and re-emerges as specifically bounded while being a part of extensive global linkages. These are notions of drawing out and in, which follow Marilyn Strathern's (1996) discussion of how limits can be set in relation to networks⁴ and particular forms of ownership.

The book adds to the literature by considering a transnational approach to the state (Sharma and Gupta 2006). It does so by considering its re-territorialisation: the forms of personalised relations show that people and state engage in state-making and citizenship practices in ways that rebound the local through and as part of belonging in the extra-territorial. James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002) discuss changing forms of spatialisation of the state as modes of achieving legitimacy and governance above other systems and power centres. They note the socio-political spaces for drawing in the external and the roles of complicit relations⁵ (see also Sharma and Gupta 2006).

In these varied settings often marked by complicit relationships of illegality and corruption (see Das 2004; Gupta 1995), the state is realised in everyday settings amidst discourses and understandings of its unhelpfulness and isolated presence. Certain changes, as challenges and new experiences of violence, emerge variously as efforts to reinforce workable governance and to allow for differing modes of governance (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Gupta 1995; Mitchell 1991; Jaffe 2013). Further, the state becomes re-presented/'legitimised' through violence and complicity.⁶

The book considers contexts of professed alienation from the state and of externally led understandings of empowerment: people's ability to migrate and globally network is also expressive of efforts to evade structural and other types of violence and to effectively demonstrate their agency. Variously, migrants occupy an automatic status and, in some circumstances, have to mediate this status in engaging with those 'left behind' and the poor conditions being averted. These interactions are often intertwined with understandings and bids for social justice understood in opposition to structural violence.

Johan Galtung's early work on violence goes into the distinction between physical and structural violence, where the latter is 'built

into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances' (1969: 171). Galtung (1969: 183) noted that structural violence may be referred to as social injustice. In highlighting structural violence, Paul Farmer (1996) points to the capacities of bureaucratic conditions and other political problems to deeply affect people's lives (see also Farmer 2003, 2004, 2005; Scheper-Hughes 1992; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004; Galtung 1969; Graeber 2012). Farmer (1996: 263) discusses the daily suffering in Haiti, where he notes stories that 'illustrate some of the mechanisms through which large-scale social forces crystallize into the sharp, hard surfaces of individual suffering. Such suffering is structured by historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces that conspire – whether through routine, ritual, or, as is more commonly the case, these hard surfaces – to constrain agency'. Allen Feldman (1999: 4) notes:

Violence, here, expresses the deep victimage effects of systems of domination and/or the breakdown or leakage of those systems, but it also requires consideration as a process and performance where social actors enact or fashion agency and victimage within spaces of structural contradiction and discontinuity and systemic breakdown.

Other types of violence attached to notions of a distant state and a particular political setting add to disempowerment where people seek empowerment elsewhere in social imaginaries beyond these limitations. In doing so, however, they continue to engage with particular forms of the local.

In re-engaging an overtly devalued local, people also demonstrate, variously, creative ways of dealing with structural and other types of violence amidst new problems that can extend such violence. The varied negotiations of power and disempowerment demonstrate particular people-centred experiences and larger efforts at state-making. A continuing role for complicit acts of illegality amidst notions of a revalued local and externally presented ideas of empowerment offers particular insights of power as enmeshed in violence. This is also where bids against such complicity and violence can rely on how people and state are reimagined in the 'new local'.

Local: Competing Sites and Grounded Accounts

The local has been variously examined in terms of extensive interactions and movement of people, goods, services and multinational corporations. The idea of an extended local co-resides with predictions

of a 'failed state' concept and contentions on whether borders can remain pertinent. This term, thus, has been discussed fluidly in the literature on globalisation and state and has also been pluralised as transformative spaces where anthropologists and others point to lived social imaginaries that are both local and global (see Appadurai 1996). In commencing with the local, the book indicates interconnected settings of power, violence, migration and the state. These settings are considered in terms of lived spaces, extended through wider socio-political concerns.

A body of scholarship has variously considered how people gain agency through migration-related activities (for instance, see Baumann 1995, 1996; Olwig 2007). In seeking social justice, people position the state as the problem, as various case studies show. Further, they locate themselves in external sites as imaginaries that will provide such justice, often, but not exclusively, in the forms of dignity and status as part of or alongside better living conditions. Thus, social justice in this regard encompasses ideas of how conditions and quality of life can change and is presented against structural violence (see, for instance, Fraser 1998; Galtung 1969; Coutin 2001; see also Rawls 1971, 2001). A notion of social justice as one that is, at different times, part of the foreground and background returns to and extends people's experiences in dealing with the state and with their local conditions. An often implicit desire for social justice accompanies their efforts to transform these settings through migration and minute status interactions.

This notion of external empowerment, while prevalent and a dominant idea of interactions, is also differently experienced and scrutinised where social justice can remain an ideal to be realised. Latterly, the notion of social justice is co-opted as a moral project by the state to re-engage people as citizens and as those who can understand the language of global rights and responsibilities. These terms of framing the citizen in relation to rights bring new problems for those too easily convinced of meaningful change and who misread the level of their own power to bid for rights. This is also where the presentation of 'externally led' rights is unsubstantiated in terms of corresponding/co-residing change that alters particular forms of structural violence. The contemporary context of rights bids amidst differential understandings of power is incomplete without close attention to the recent history of socio-economic and political problems, as discussed in Chapter 1, for instance. This is where the turn to outward migration was interconnected with ideas of obtaining social justice.

Migration and Socio-political Settings

Many Guyanese citizens became part of an outward migration movement from the 1970s, amidst tremendous socio-political and economic decline in the country. This wave of ongoing outward migration was preceded by other periods of inward migration, which took place against the history of this former British colony in terms of colonial conquest, British plantation ownership, slavery and indentureship (see, for instance, Dabydeen and Samaroo 1996; Seecharan 1999; Smith 1962; Williams 1991). Guyana is geographically located on the South American mainland, with the distinction of being the only English-speaking country in South America and often 'positioned' as part of the Caribbean.

Variouly, scholars have considered the interface and presencing of the global to show, for instance, that residents in these countries are innovative creators through appropriation of global influences and artefacts and through their openness to identities (see, for instance, Drummond 1980; Miller 1994; Mintz 1996). Conversely, this emphasis on the agency of 'local peoples' can be overshadowed in other descriptors of disenfranchised people, in flight or being dominated by foreign influences, particularly through talk by politicians and in the context of anti-imperialism discourses in the region.

In considering the current-day presencing of the global in Guyana and differing kinds of local in terms of citizens on the move in relation to micro and macro power relations, the book looks at both the recent historical period after the country gained independence and at more contemporary settings. Both of these settings are marked by different types of violence, from structural violence to criminal attacks. More recently, this setting has become enmeshed in political banditry as a type of criminal violence where criminals claimed an ethnic cause amidst accusations of extra-judicial violence. Guyana has six main ethnic groups. Indians are the majority and blacks form the second largest group. Hindus are the largest single religious group in the country at approximately 25 per cent in 2012; Christians of various denominations comprise approximately 63 per cent and Muslims 7 per cent.⁷

The claims and perceptions of the government of the day are presented as the most visible exceptional space where law is used to legitimise unlawful violence (Agamben 1999; see also Kerrigan 2015; Humphrey 2006). Giorgio Agamben's (1999) work on the state of exception brings out how the production of emergency to act outside the law

by governments in the contemporary setting is part of the status quo. As discussed in Chapter 3, violence that was presented as an extra-judicial act, one heavily disputed by the then government of the day, was nevertheless seen by people as distant from their everyday lives. They were more interested in managing and opening creative spaces to evade their inclusion in such bio-political power bids made through violence.

The accounts in the book add to scholarship disturbing the failed state thesis, which projects the state as an inadequate model of containment and empowerment. A growing body of research destabilises this failed state thesis (for examples, see Aretxaga 2003; Chalfin 2006; Gupta 1995; Heyman and Smart 1999). The state has a shifting presence in researchers' foci; it can be deemed absent or present in the movement of people between and within borders and envisaged in terms of practices and discourses of power (see, for instance, Das and Poole 2004; Jansen 2009; Trouillot 2001). This further indicates that the local can be differently positioned in relation to permeable borders. In this book, how the state is realised in the everyday through 'failed state talk' and, in turn, a range of illegal and corrupt practices deemed possible by such talk returns to the anthropological work on the cultural production of the state beyond its objective status as an isolated entity so well critiqued by Timothy Mitchell (1991).

The notion of power emerges in terms conflictual with understandings of socio-political belonging, if in different ways in countries that were former colonies in the Caribbean and Latin America. In bids by people to change their local, a common factor is that of violence at various interpersonal levels alongside migration. In some instances, migration is internal, but more often outward. Such migration can often be perceived to be based on economic factors and is often inseparable from socio-political violence and quests for social justice. Susan Coutin (2001), in a related work on structural violence, shows the need to look beyond economic reasons for the flight of San Salvadorans and Guatemalan citizens from their homelands. Coutin documents how factors inclusive of structural violence and fear informed reasons for journeying to the US. In the Caribbean and Guyana, the problem of plural society, which 'sanctions' disunity of 'opposed' ethnic groups, is often used to explain ongoing political and politicised problems. This legacy of disunity by means of plural society⁸ is often expected to clarify reasons for economic problems, corruption and related issues.

While Guyana was marked by a particular descent into civil inter-ethnic violence in the lead-up to independence and in this sense 'gifted'

with a political trajectory that continues to dominate its politics, it was also seen as fortunate in being able to offer educational leadership and being rich in timber, gold and other mineral resources in its vast rainforest. As if unable to escape a 'pre-determined' path of political ethnic disunity, it rapidly 'lost face' in the wider Caribbean in terms of these advantages. A militarised dictatorship under the first independent leader, Forbes Burnham, and the notion of a people in desperate flight (see Naipaul 1991) would set the tone of reception for Guyanese travelling across the Caribbean, in particular, as people whose bodies had capacities to be mistreated at the regional airports. Simultaneously, many Guyanese were sought for skilled and high-level jobs across the Caribbean and North America.

Overshadowed by the specific socio-political problems and historical legacies of inter-ethnic disunity, the country stood apart as a 'failed state' whose people were unable to benefit from its major natural and mineral resources, often attributed to the failures of a 'plural society' leader to govern well. Trinidad and Tobago, a twin island republic, stood at the boundary of this divide as a state that had succeeded, then buffered by its oil and related conspicuous display of wealth and status. Even more distant was Barbados, whose tourism industry contributed to its bounding off from any developing country persona of conflict and failure (the latter presuppositions of conflict and failure were easy labels for less fortunate neighbours). In more recent times, Barbados has obtained negative publicity for denying entrance to Guyanese and Jamaicans at its borders. In one infamous case, an immigration officer was deemed to have harassed a Jamaican woman on the basis of her nationality.⁹ Today, both Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica are beset with political problems and criminal violence which bear some level of comparison with political issues in Guyana (Jaffe 2013; Kerrigan 2015). This level is suggestive of different dynamics of governance, state and people's forms of locatedness in the nation-state beyond inter-ethnic divides. This is where such divides are much proclaimed to be the problems of 'plural societies'.

The book, in considering Guyana as a case study that contributes to understandings of the problems of belonging in a nation-state amidst continuing migration, corruption and illegality, moves from comparative possibilities of shared histories and contemporary experiences in the Caribbean region to consider the larger interconnected setting. It considers the social imaginaries that are also politically entangled through the efforts of governments and involvement of external bodies. In developing accounts from the ground, it also considers case studies that mark people's journeys in the extended local as part of diasporic

belonging, particularly in relation to settlements in New York and interactions 'back home'.

Power, Problems and Person-Centred Accounts

Interactions in the contemporary Guyanese setting suggest a displacement in the immediate post-colonial history while rendering its continuing consciousness as part of a 'problem local'. This local is projected to be necessarily about political disunity. Efforts to displace this history are bound with outward migration factors and social forms of belonging for 'citizens on the move'. Notions of cosmopolitanism, openness and 'matiness' disturb basic ideas of concentrated plural society problems as the cause of presumed state failure and people's flight.

Briefly, matiness was imagined as an encompassing kinship idea for inter-ethnic groups who had experienced shared conditions of hardship under the colonial masters and on this basis were united into one group (Jayawardena 1963). This device of matiness has been used to proclaim inter-ethnic harmony in on-the-ground interactions and to counter the larger political narrative of disunity. However, at different times, it has at times come under pressure, particularly in terms of more recent migration changes where some have new cause for discontent. On this basis, a key issue returns to how power is perceived, lost, regained and negotiated at different levels in the larger political setting and in minute interactions.

This focus on power draws on different settings marked by inter-ethnic histories and informed by socio-political issues and changes to show that both individuals and state officials are engaged in power negotiations regarding how people wish to be in worlds of their 'own making' and people's perceptions of how the state is enabled and dis-enabled in these worlds. On this basis, the discussion returns to people's inhabiting of social imaginaries and self-constructions of being citizens of the world as forms of being cosmopolitan (Rapport 2012; Wardle 2010). It also returns to bids by the state to retain authority and provide effective governance. Powerful officials emerge in these accounts as agents for and against the state, where it is the idea of the isolated state that represents oppressive power and signals the devalued local. At the same time, this notion of isolated state is repeatedly disturbed as people and state officials 'work together' through differing experiences of violence and devalued conditions to negotiate their lives. In latter-day relations, the state endeavours to show individuals as complicit and part of the problem; this brings out a continuing role

for corruption and associated corruption talk in these changing settings and power relations. As signalled, the presence of the global *as the local* and emphasis on external empowerment soon indexed these power relations to an extent where the state also drew on external notions of rights and empowerment to renew ideas of the nation-state

These settings are fluidly envisaged in terms of how people are also seen to be on the move and efforts by the state to rebound the local and regain authority with citizens, in more recent times. The political period following independence becomes acutely relevant to 'remember' and explain the contemporary problems and change: this is where research participants will point to the period before the economy declined. Officials emerge as both oppressive agents and helpful negotiators, bringing out the spaces for complicity as forms of power against different types of violence in micro and macro contexts. In the mix, ideas of 'big ones' and 'small ones', as different kinds of powerful persons, resurface in ways that engage with contemporary politics of governance and changes in the local. Alongside powerful persons as big ones are also small persons at one level, visible in terms of the devalued local, which is marked by structural violence. Such small persons are considered to be visible without power. However, this construct of small persons warrants scrutiny; those deemed to be disenfranchised and without power constantly endeavour to change their conditions and latterly to bid, if at times unsuccessfully, for power.

Each of the chapters reflects, variedly, on these dynamics with examples of people's experiences at different periods and in relation to different aspects of migration-embedded settings. Ideas of power and rights as externally driven, and to be extracted in the local, have become common in these landscapes marked by illegality and different types of violence. The idea of extensive movement and interactions with an ever-expanding local as one that can be grounded through specific forms of interaction also indicates the relevance of socio-political understandings of the dynamics of competing forms of power. This is where both people and state are enjoined in state-making and governance through varied understandings of empowerment.

The political history is one also marked by International Monetary Fund (IMF)-imposed economic sanctions,¹⁰ illegality and corruption,¹¹ which impel particular experiences of loss and disempowerment. People constantly encountered a devalued local. This was experienced in ailing bureaucratic systems, which appeared to block their efforts to leave the country, and/or in the presencing of returned empowered migrants who achieve automatic status in their ability to depart and return. Thus, these social imaginaries, while rendered through minute

socio-cultural aspects of belonging and changes, are considered in this book in terms of the tension between political issues of governance, violence and corruption and people's bids to contest loss and disempowerment. They endeavour to gain status through their positioned presence as those who are beyond the devalued local as a ready ascribed site of loss and to show deep contestation of such loss. These enjoined settings of a devalued local and efforts to extend and transform it as self-capacities for empowerment are variously discussed in this book in different periods of problems and changes.

In discussing competing forms of power, the book incorporates everyday settings with socio-political and larger dynamics of people on the move and the state. The macro contemporary issues are reflected on by considering minute accounts of people's lives against contemporary changes and historical material. The accounts bring out intersecting forms of belonging through instances of dramatic ongoing change, which is at the same time rendered commonplace in a frame of globalisation as the norm. The book, in the focus on power as relevant to understand both micro experiences and macro change, draws in the commonplace to bring out insights on other major contemporary factors of violence. It develops this focus to consider the ways in which people engage and shift localised loss and disempowerment.

Long-Term Research and Privileging Local Voices

The book is based on long-term ethnographic research in Guyana. This is further supported by research on Guyanese migrants in New York, a main migration destination for Guyanese. The book analyses this ethnographic material to consider the ways in which participants experience their lives amidst ongoing changes. Drawing on different periods of research from the mid 1990s to 2012, the book starts with migration accounts and socio-political and economic conditions. The research includes, to some extent, information being released virtually through various official sites and the media. Some of the material is updated to 2017 to signal certain public changes. The discovery of vast quantities of oil by Exxon-Mobil in 2017 and early 2018 is still yielding new dramatic discoveries of billions of barrels of oil. This adds a new dynamic in the local.

The research uses a case histories method to illustrate accounts from these earlier periods (Mitchell 2006). The accounts are further supported by archival material as well as data from court documents, reports from commissions of inquiry and surveys of emerging social media sites.

Fieldwork was carried out over a sustained period from 1995 to 1999 in villages and the capital city, Georgetown, in Guyana. The accounts consider these changes and developments in settings marked by constant movement and by efforts of people to empower themselves amidst violence and corruption. It does so over a long-term period. Additional material was provided on more recent developments by participants and through research on documents and surveys. I was also present at some of the hearings in 2014 for a commission of inquiry into the death of Walter Rodney;¹² the material from this commission related to the earlier historical period discussed in the book.

The chapters include case histories of people who narrate experiences of an earlier period in detailing their socio-economic conditions and changes. The recent historical period provides context to everyday experiences to show a particular construction of illegality as being of the everyday and as distinct from hard-core criminality. Research on the Guyanese migrant locality in Queens, New York began in response to accounts by Guyanese participants who were involved in global networking and migration bids. Many constantly interacted with their relatives and friends who had left the country. The research on participants in Queens contributed grounded accounts to wider understandings of mobility, illegality and empowerment where people felt forced into illegal flight and/or saw migration – legal or otherwise – as a means of obtaining status and empowerment not present in their homeland. It adds context to the discussions on migration and related factors.

Ongoing research continued with key participants and their networks from 1999 to 2012, so the case studies extend through this long-term approach to fieldwork as part of the 'ethnographic presents', to allow for material to be located within a particular present at any given time in long-term fieldwork (Halstead, Hirsch and Okely 2008; Hastrup 1995). As an anthropology of the contemporary, this work engages collaboratively with processes as they are happening – an 'unfolding event' (see Faubion. 2016).

I have remained in contact with some of the participants and have drawn on various correspondence and visits to update material, for instance on views on the general election in 2015 and experiences of applicants for non-immigrant visas to the US during this period. This is ongoing immersion in an extended field where moments of data recognition occur as processual in and out of fieldsites (see Strathern 1999; also Okely 2008; Hirsch 2008; Schatz 2009). Jan Kubick, discussing the value of an ethnographic approach, considered how ethnographers examined the 'exercise of power within the interstices of official structures, behind the veil of various officialdoms, and in ostensibly

apolitical spaces and domains' (2009: 31). The accounts have also benefited from a new research project to examine new forms of legality in relation to ordering bodies and persons (see accounts in Chapters 7 and 8). In the immersive study of people's lived contexts on a long-term basis, the anthropological approach as a core disciplinary one connects with related studies, where these knowledge transfers return to an epistemic base of understanding events and changes through the views of participants (see Strathern 2006).

The accounts consider the field as extended and one where, as Kirsten Hastrup and Karen Fog Olwig (1997), among others, have noted, the site has shifted beyond the idea of a bounded locale.¹³ This considers the fluidity of people's relations with each other in different aspects of their lives, which are grounded in specific understandings of space and place. Hastrup and Olwig (1997) look at this shift in terms of processual fieldwork, which allows for the 'non-local relations' to be explored within such studies. The book, in exploring a processual field of relations, is grounded in the particularity of research conducted on specific participants in homes in particular villages and city locations over a sustained period. This is through participant observation inclusive of attendance and participation in events, and informal conversations, interviews and other ethnographic methods. It benefits from an ethnographic holistic approach (Hirsch 2001): other issues became relevant beyond the immediate research focus of migration and change, thus allowing for a nuanced study on power relations, violence and complicity. By considering the extended processual spaces of fieldwork, participants were connected in separate locations to larger issues vis-à-vis violence and the state. The unifying themes bring out interconnected and co-residing experiences to consider participants' concerns of everyday living, larger conditions of structural violence and related factors. Increasingly, anthropologists develop their work beyond envisaged theoretical limits. While such development emerges as part of 'new ethnographies' to consider the relevance of relationships and larger socio-political and economic contexts, it follows theoretical shifts. Such shifts, also, may be considered in terms of the historical turn in anthropology, which has offered related critiques (see Hirsch and Stewart 2005).

Case studies of persons variously demonstrate aspects of their lives at different periods. Some of these accounts are detailed while others are deliberately fragmented and rendered anonymous as part of research approaches that offer anonymity to participants while privileging their views of their lives. The partial view is embedded in how lives can be understood in the processes of happening. This is a focus

on processual spaces to bring out participant's voices while anonymising them, and allows for approaches which are attentive to critiques and debates on representations (see Halstead, Hirsch and Okely 2008; Strathern 1991, Faubion 2016; Rabinow et al. 2008, for instance). I have published on ethnographic encounters and related issues on this fieldwork, in peer-reviewed articles and also in book chapters (see, for instance, Halstead 2001, 2006, 2008b). Given the intimacy of details and deep study over a period of years, it becomes important not to provide too much identifying detail in a full-length work, hence this approach of deliberate fragmentation as part of ethnographic attentiveness. Further ethnographic notes consider that given the depth of the study and immersive periods, the research encounters and knowledge construction processes are always joined. However, in the accounts, I endeavour to privilege the voices of the research participants where they themselves are visible and not visible in performative modes. Performativity is an ethnographic mode that allows for mutuality of voices (Sanjek 2015) so this is never an isolated perspective. This further relates to social constructedness of lived encounters. Further, the use of fragmentation and the partiality of lives may be considered as anthropologically set against fixity and ideal wholes (see Strathern 1991; Leach 1954).

While both the issues of ethnicity and religion surface, with ethnicity also part of violent politics (see Chapters 2 and 3, for instance), the accounts do not offer a traditional focus on narrating ethnic identities. This also considers the broader focus on research participants being cosmopolitan, where their ethnic and cultural identities may or may not become relevant depending on context (see Rapport 2012).

The book does draw in the history of ethno-politics, very much so, in the first three chapters. In Chapter 5, in particular, there is some reference to ethno-cultural issues to consider changing forms of belonging in relation to expertness. However, following Daniel Miller's work in Trinidad (1994), and extending Lee Drummond's work on Guyana (1980), for instance, the book focuses more on cosmopolitanism than ethnicity and incorporates ethnicity issues where this becomes relevant to particular issues and accounts. Nigel Rapport's *Anyone* (2012) may be considered in terms of how people appear and reappear in cosmopolitan settings as relevant to different bids for power. As cosmopolitan, people have opportunities to display their skilled capacities beyond their 'encircling' in a particularised static local.

In conducting long-term fieldwork over a decade, I formed long-lasting ties with certain key participants, who met with me over a period of years. I sat in their homes; in some instances I was present

at both celebratory and sad events. I have kept in touch with some of these participants through virtual communication and return visits to their homes. In some instances, if they had left the country or were travelling, I had updates from their relatives and friends. Occasionally, I met with research participants in New York who then asked me to meet with their relatives in Guyana, reversing a trend whereby I would often meet migrant relatives in the Guyanese locations and/or be given details of how to contact them in their host country, usually the US. This book is only a partial account of these encounters given the depth of the research.

The fieldwork on the villages and diasporic settings as well as city locations followed the residents in these areas. While they were often of one main ethnic group, their expressions/performative displays showed movements in and out of ethnicity.

In one instance, I have described a participant as Host A – this is a key participant whose account at the time was heart-rending, and this approach of naming her as Host A was another effort at fragmentation. It became necessary in the specific account rendered both to acknowledge her host status and to endeavour to ‘de-familiarise’ her outside of other accounts. Note that such descriptors also relate to issues of privacy and/or particular problematic roles. This insufficiently accounts for the immersive encounters. The use of the term ‘host’ also conforms with other recent methodological challenges against the term ‘informant’, for instance (Halstead 2014). Another participant, LB, did not want a name, but giving her initials was about preserving her own expressed distance from ‘stuff’, where she was also an observer of happenings around her not dissimilar to the involvement and detachment of people witnessing or hearing of physical violence and seeking to demonstrate active agency against structural violence. Separately, I have described a participant as Passenger B, to denote less familiar space where the encounters were brief. Other long-term participants are named, where there appears to be less need to attend to extensive fragmentation to provide their rich accounts and to indicate their backgrounds.

The style of an opening vignette has been chosen in keeping with contemporary approaches to developing ethnographic research that allows for focus on the participants’ voices. The anthropological example to open ethnographic work, always part of anthropological approaches, is now being made more visible, not least with the publication of the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (JRAI)* special issue, ‘The Power of the Example’ (Bandak and Højer 2015).

Residents such as Fatima¹⁴ (Chapters 1, 4 and 7) emerge as powerful voices to show their transnational presence as externally empowered

persons in the local who can tell of their encounters with early political problems and their bids to migrate. The example of Fatima also shows the context of external empowerment for residents who are in the country, and visible through their external connections. There is also the example of Jean, a villager, who demonstrates her agency and self-empowerment in activities that raise her out of poverty and other bad conditions to become the main breadwinner. Jean's aspirations are related to her 'connections' with an overseas US-based evangelist; the hopes of Ramesh, her husband, are tied to his 'dream' of setting up a small business once he receives overseas remittances from a relative (Chapter 4).

Other examples demonstrate some of the dynamics of local lives within and outside territorial boundaries. Feroze, a successful local businessman, is always in a prepared state to leave the country, even without papers, and has a stated disinterest in extreme local violence; Lata and Raj are in an overly long sponsorship queue to migrate legally to the US and are similarly 'distant' from local politics (Chapters 3 and 7). Returned migrants such as Angela (Chapters 2, 5 and 6), with memories of past oppressive state practices, bridge this gap of distance from the state to show their power as that connected to powerful external passports, as a power imagined to be over and above the state. Those local residents caught between the dynamics of visibility within a devalued local and their self-presencing and networking in external sites become particular kinds of local-global experts as those who privilege their skills over any ascribed loss of status. They do so through the premise that their local is powerful rather than devalued, and this is joined with understandings of what they can offer in external sites in terms of their skills and expertise and as those who are already empowered and needed in the global. This notion of expertness relates to understandings of being modern as people who are competent and knowledgeable in a globally inscribed field of relations (see Trouillot 2003) and, thus, is expressive of agency in terms of what can be achieved through a particular set of actions and possibilities. In this manner, they 'move' between borders through the presentation of their self-capacities as competent people able to effectively compete in global settings. Conversely, some endeavour to attest agency by contesting isolated ideas of empowerment. They do so by denying and/or challenging the overwhelming interest in 'elsewhere sites' as a claiming of power through their deliberate stance of disinterest.

Anand, for instance (Chapter 5), occupies a solo position of 'not needing' to migrate among his friends, who are all applying to migrate through a Canadian skills programme. His position relates to other

interactions where some began to talk of the spaces to 'go and come' as forms of non-desperate travel that allow for agency in the local. This agency, however, draws in the external through people's overt presencing as 'already empowered'. These co-residing and alternative bids for status allow for other challenges by locals, not always successful, and, in particular, as challenges to new big ones as migrants who return with power (see Chapters 2 and 5). This is where their very presence brings out the devalued local and positions residents as those without status.

Yet these interactions do not change the focus on outward migration and global networking as embedded in a different, but very everyday local where political problems and extreme violence, deemed to be extra-judicial, become further distancing spaces (Chapter 3). A misreading of this power, where it is seen as specifically local in relation to rights, comes out where local residents endeavour to publicly challenge corrupt police and others, which emerges as an over-reliance on rights without connections to powerful ones (Chapter 6). This misreading can also over-rely on the idea of automatic rights as a result of changes whereby the system is expected to work for people without complicit arrangements: for instance, intending migrants such as Lata (Chapters 3, 5 and 7) and Host LB (Chapter 7) find it 'enabling' to work within the systems such as those prescribed by migration sponsorship rules. Although the idea of change is accompanied by notions that corruption is at an end and bureaucracy is there to make things work, complicity is still important to convert bad experiences of bureaucracy into enabling spaces – that is, against embedded structural violence (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Corruption at state level references the idea of an unhelpful and isolated state and related political problems. Corruption has been seen to be a major scourge in developing economies, a status that emerges in isolation from modernisation approaches despite the spaces for oppressive rule that followed in many countries under these approaches. Various scholars have examined corruption and efforts against it as part of development initiatives. While some anthropological accounts have indicated unease with the use of the term 'corruption' in cultural contexts of gift-giving and exchange, for instance, research on the state, power and corruption is being increasingly situated in ethnographic accounts that deal with wider contexts and often incorporate historical analysis. Corruption talk takes on a mandate of dis-enabling particular forms of authority: the possibility of impacts on governance is indicated by Jonathan Parry in his work on India (2000: 28). Such accounts add to critiques of the failed state paradigm. In a setting of corruption and illegality as part of everyday practices, people engage

with the state even as they profess their distance, as discussed in this book. While there is much international focus on countries that fall into failed state talk or are seen to suffer from post-colonial governmental mismanagement, high incidences of corruption are not unique to these countries (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Gledhill 1999). However, a general unease and regard for corruption talk as 'cancerous' (Harrison 2004) prevail in countries under sharp focus for development aid and initiatives.¹⁵ In present-day Guyana, corruption and corruption talk occur alongside and within bids for power and acceptance of a soft line of illegality.

The competing forms of power that emerge bring out how people suffer in particular types of local and demonstrate different attitudes to systems that return to how power is understood, differently enacted and experienced. A particular local of problems and structural violence remains amidst changes when separated from arrangements of power as complicit arrangements between officials and persons. Consider, for example, the readiness of Seema (Chapter 6) to bid for rights publicly, seemingly uncaring of repercussions – Seema accosts a policeman on a bus. He is known to her. She harangues him on the basis that he has abused his power even though she is told by others that she might get into trouble. Another woman, Passenger B, actually gets into trouble through her open challenge to a policeman she believed to be corrupt (Chapter 6). Katy, who applies for a birth certificate in order to obtain a passport, decides that she will not engage in these arrangements and ends up waiting for a prolonged period to obtain her necessary documents. However, she feels very satisfied that she has 'withheld' a bribe from those who 'need to do their job' (Chapter 7). This attitude is inexplicable to others who feel that rights remain negotiable processes in the grey zones of complicity. However, it points to a latter-day space for public complaining where 'powerless' and powerful voices emerge in a local that has new spaces for rights and redress imagined in relation to social justice. A layer of complicity is retained in these bids. Further, individuals are brought into the project of governance as those who are morally at fault and those who 'know better' than to act against the law and 'promote' illegality and corruption: they are expected to know better through their larger engagement with the external. These negotiations of power bring people into the project of governance where they are also fashioned or fashion themselves as 'world citizens' and thus those able to belong in this new local.

Here, the state is at work with external partners placing emphasis on universal rights and reform. These new forms of state-making, thus, endeavour to bypass people's experiences of violence, corruption and

the political problems of the past, which resurface not as issues of governing people, but as problems with political opponents. This isolation of the devalued local as political and outside modes of governance returns to a starting point where people also saw the state as isolated. Further details of the chapters are provided below.

Chapters

Chapter 1 considers the historical setting in relation to political problems, violence, corruption and outward migration. It considers case studies on people's experiences in relation to migration bids, migration journeys and select historical material. The recent historical period brings out the context of flight and local devaluation; it also indicates that illegality became the norm whereby many actors sought to obtain status and or become visibly powerful in dealing with the local (as further developed in Chapter 2). The recent history in Guyana brings out different forms of corruption and violence that surrounded the Burnham administration; in the post-1992 era under the other major political party, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), renamed the PPP-Civic, this would be further complicated by other allegations of corruption and extra-judicial violence (see Chapter 3). It considers that this history also provides a background for a range of complicit relations as negotiations of power amidst quests for social justice.

Chapter 1 explores the historical setting that led to extensive outward migration and global networking. It indicates that the dynamics of corruption work both to render the isolation of the state and to show its presence in structural violence. This cannot be separated from perceptions of political problems and the excesses of a then dictatorship government. However, the role of corruption shifts to mundane settings where illegality is splintered into two forms in the breakdown of the economy and the turn to border smuggling for basic food items and, more generally, in bids to depart the country, as further discussed in Chapter 2.

These negotiations and complicit relations emerge, in Chapter 2, through particular and changing understandings of big ones, as terms for powerful persons, as noted above. Developing further accounts of power relations amidst illegality, corruption and experiences of structural violence, Chapter 2 turns to a particular local that was conceived as an unchanging devalued site. This was amidst and as part of efforts to migrate and network globally. The chapter develops understandings of a soft line of illegality that was normalised as an underground Guyanese

economy emerged. This form of illegality blurred with various corrupt transactions facilitated by these particular state officials and their allies. It added to perceptions of a devalued local marked by structural violence and efforts by many to leave the country. The chapter considers that 'big ones' as powerful persons emerged in various ways and brings out that the illegal and varying expressions of violence continue to mark everyday and socio-political settings alongside the emphasis on the external. In such settings, where victims become agents and vice versa, the complicit spaces of different lines of illegality and how these are experienced in the everyday produce the state through both the moral and the legal and their blurred boundaries (see Gupta 1995, 2005; Shah 2010). This relates to Ferguson and Gupta's contention that 'an analysis of the imaginary of the state must include not only explicit discursive representations of the state, but also implicit, unmarked, signifying practices' (2002: 984).

Chapter 3 turns to the 'local others' – big ones and potential big ones and their presencing in the 'problem state' and in settings of criminal violence. The chapter explores an eruption of ethno-political violence as 'bids' to render the local really bad in suspect politics and to reclaim 'absent' citizens. This continues to be considered in terms of external ideas of empowerment and status. The chapter brings out understandings of external empowerment and selected politics that allow some to ignore violence or dissociate themselves from these explicitly violent spaces as particular permeable global-local spaces of being 'present' and 'absent' in the nation-state. The chapter considers that explicit violence occurs alongside the local-global interactions and re-isolates a local outside of people's concerns. In the process, the local emerges as both devalued and revalued where local politics and violence compete for visibility in these status concerns. This is while people engage with and/or are visible through their external opportunities and connections.

The ways in which micro relations occurred around larger socio-political factors as part of changing landscapes of power and movement are discussed in Chapter 4 (see Bender 2001; Hirsch 1995, 2003; see also Dawson and Johnson 2001, for instance). This chapter considers specific case studies on various families: their efforts to deal with local conditions and their varied experiences in relation to the emphasis on outward migration and global networking. The interactions variously mediate and challenge the notion of a static devalued local setting. In the changing power relations, 'small ones' also endeavour to overturn their visibility as powerless, as indicated. The chapter considers that people developed an idea of external empowerment to deal with problems of everyday living and obtain social justice as a concept which

they understood in terms of status and dignity. In considering case studies, this chapter further develops accounts on everyday settings where economic concerns are intertwined with social bids for status.

These efforts are embedded in understandings of an external site outside of explicit political resistance or explicit law-breaking. Case studies variously demonstrate how returnees and/or other locals are visible through poor structural conditions. The examples bring out new settings of loss and bids for status in relation to an idea of a static local landscape, as further discussed in Chapter 5, which considers that migrants become powerfully visible in these dynamics of devaluation and new forms of status. The contestations of a devalued local incorporate accounts on migrants and perceptions of their bigness. This is where a new narrative of migration competes with efforts by some local residents to display competence and enact status in a larger social imaginary. Chapter 5 extends earlier examples to discuss how some participants began to show their sense of value and empowerment despite and as part of the 'external presences'. This related to an increasing emphasis on being experts within understandings of sites beyond the local.

However, a new space to bid for rights, which emerged as part of redefining and revaluing the local, led to misreading of power as considered in Chapter 6. New ideas of rights were related to activities of external agencies as well as to the understandings of newly empowered persons as those with external connections or status. Chapter 6 considers that some local residents misread this setting in terms of power relations, where they bid for rights in isolation from complicity and other status negotiations. Although locally resident Guyanese gained status in various ways to disturb ideas of the devalued local, this shift also led to some misreading of the extent to which power could be displayed against corrupt petty officers in public places. This differed from the ways in which migrants were seen as big ones, as discussed. A particular local remains visible through these negotiated spaces of powerful and powerless persons and brings out relations of governance and understandings of what makes things work. The local setting expanded sideways to include the new public displays of power involving different kinds of big ones and small ones; the latter constantly seek to upset understandings that they were without power. These interactions suggest embedded alternative systems that are structurally difficult to shift in practice, despite new complaint forums and a focus on change. An emerging emphasis on individuals as the problem in varying ways reveals a local that has to be corrected and suggests the spaces for action beyond the local. This chapter considers case studies and accounts that

bring out the different bids for power where a local context of big ones and small ones remains relevant.

Chapter 7 looks at experiences of external empowerment amidst difficulties and the ways in which this idea of empowerment can be inadequately present in new local initiatives to present better service that draw in ideas of universal rights and systems. The chapter considers that the enabling aspect of empowering people through and despite their difficult encounters with systems in migration and global networking activities is poorly presented in bids for governance: these bids draw on a bio-political imaginary focusing on compliance and universal rights rather than on violence and a problem state. The chapter develops further case studies and related examples of migrants and local residents. It extends earlier discussions on how external empowerment, status and loss arise for migrants and their relatives to consider approaches to co-residing difficulties. While the emphasis on reform and order endeavours to force illegality and corruption underground, corrupt practices continue as modes of engagement between state officials and citizens. These further demonstrate that power continues to be joined with ideas of a difficult relationship with the state in these larger settings. The accounts consider that blame shifts to the individual as the problem; there is insufficient acknowledgement of their role in governance and corruption remains a problem. It shows that ideas of empowerment have to consider and/or shift power relations embedded in complicit practices as habits of realising the state.

Chapter 8 further explores the theme of how faulty individuals are presented as a problem. This narrative of complicit blame-sharing and responsibility remains entangled with the new spaces of external empowerment and the co-sharing of power. The space for people to step up to share blame and responsibility shifts the state and/or government of the day from being explicitly blamed for all problems to co-occupying victimhood and bids for external empowerment. This is also where the state is seen to align with external partners to correct the problem as a mode of effective governance. The chapter signals the growing public interventionist approaches by external bodies, including diplomatic agencies, to engage the state and civil society to follow a particular universalistic mode imagined as being outside of the norm of rights and justice in the country. While the state can, in the form of various official outcries, contest that some of the problems exist as experienced by citizens, it can also become aligned with 'external approaches' to frame the problem and to right wrongs. In this setting, morality becomes an index for solutions where violence is seen to be caused by faulty individuals.

The chapter explores how these spaces arise in various case studies on domestic violence and public blame-sharing. It considers that various public reactions against wrong-doings by individuals rely on morality, which is being presented as a continuum between individual and state. These notions of morality allow for the individual to be seen as the problem to connect with complicit corruption practices. This chapter explores how citizens' understandings of the language of external empowerment are being differently co-opted and how violence and problems have to be embedded in actions of people rather than of officials. In this regard, citizens have to take on 'moral responsibility' to make the law work given the histories and contemporary settings and as part of being 'world citizens'. This is a language of universal rights, which becomes hyper-relevant, if oddly so. The chapter explores these sites of public blame-sharing and the idea of moral responsibility to bring out new endeavours for governance which re-bound citizen's understandings of external empowerment in particular ways that are meant to show the state as effective and governance as workable.

In the concluding reflections, the book considers how the field of research and compilation of person-centred accounts brought out competing forms of power. This is where power bids are entangled with experiences and contestations of violence in bids for social justice. Notions of power are further intimately linked with macro factors as forms of socio-political problems and interventions vis-à-vis extensive migration.

Notes

1. This is also similarly being noted of Caribbean islands such as Trinidad and Tobago.
2. A World Bank (2016: v) in its statistic for migration in 2016 noted: 'Close to 93 percent of highly skilled persons born in Guyana lived outside that country, followed by Haiti (75.1 percent), Trinidad and Tobago (68.2 percent) and Barbados (66.2 percent)'.
3. The virtual forms of communication and latterly increasing use of social media, for instance, are a continual redefinition of Jürgen Habermas's traditional public sphere ([1962] 1989).
4. Strathern (1996: 523) notes that in this approach, 'Networks rendered contingent on people's interactions turn out to have a fragile temporality. They do not last forever; on the contrary, the question becomes how they are sustained and made durable. They may seem to depend on continuities of identity (that is, on homogeneity). But heterogeneous networks also have their limits. I shall argue that if we take certain kinds of networks as socially expanded hybrids then we can take hybrids as condensed networks'.

5. Ferguson and Gupta (2002: 995) note: 'Claims of verticality that have historically been monopolized by the state (claims of superior spatial scope, supremacy in a hierarchy of power, and greater generality of interest and moral purpose) are being challenged and undermined by a transnationalized "local" that fuses the grassroots and the global in ways that make a hash of the vertical topography of power on which the legitimation of nation-states has so long depended'.
6. See Abrams ([1977] 1988: 76) for a discussion of the state needing legitimisation.
7. <http://www.statisticsguyana.gov.gy/census.html> (accessed 12 January 2018).
8. This idea of plural society has been destabilised by various scholars. Eric Wolf (1990: 592) cites the work of Anthony Wallace, who argued that 'all societies are, in a radical sense, plural societies . . .' ([1961] 1970: 110).
9. See 'Shanique Myrie Paid by Barbados Government', *Jamaica Observer*, 24 June 2014, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/NEWS/SHANIQUE-MYRIE-PAID-BY-BARBADOS-GOVERNMENT_16996057 (accessed 31 July 2014).
10. See Naomi Klein's (2008) powerful account of related impacts in Latin America and elsewhere.
11. See George Danns (1982) for an early discussion of corruption in Guyana.
12. This commission of inquiry (2014–15) would be given a short time to conclude in 2015 by the new government which came into power following the May 2015 election. Thus, the inquiry was ended prematurely. Repeated calls followed by various bodies for the release of the official report into this inquiry. See letter from the 'For Justice for Walter Rodney Committee' in February 2016 calling for the APNU-AFC government to release the report, available at <http://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2016/02/23/we-call-upon-the-president-to-release-this-report/> (accessed 23 February 2016). The official report has not been assessed for this book. It was made available in March 2018 on the Walter Rodney Foundation site: 'Report: The Commission of Inquiry on the Death of Walter Rodney – February 2016'. <http://www.walterrodneyfoundation.org/report-the-commission-of-inquiry-on-the-death-of-walter-rodney-february-2016/> (accessed 25 May 2018).
13. The book notes anthropological critiques of earlier small-scale studies that were affected by understandings of bounded participants in cultural units. These critiques brought out that the constructs of the isolated village as a cultural unit, minus the presence of political factors, in these instances the colonial presence, never existed (see Hirsch 2001; Stocking 1993).
14. All names are pseudonyms unless otherwise stated.
15. Elizabeth Harrison (2007) notes the burgeoning emphasis on corruption and efforts to stamp it out in 'development talk'. She notes that the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Transparency International (TI) is active in eighty-five countries to work against corruption, and that organisations like the World Bank actively seek to eradicate it. Harrison points to the prominent positioning of corruption in the 2005 report for the Commission of Africa, for instance (see also de Sardan 1999). Steven Pierce (2006) identifies Nigeria as regularly obtaining top place in TI's list of most

corrupt countries. He notes, however: 'The way in which "corruption" has emerged as a category describing governance in northern Nigeria reflects a continuing interplay between the "local knowledge" of indigenous politics and the "local knowledge" of technocratic bureaucracy which are distinct though commonsensical modes of apprehending the world (Geertz 1983)' (2006: 889). Olivier de Sardan (1999) points to the differential prevailing settings where corruption talk prevails amidst different levels and actors' viewpoints (see also Sedlenieks 2004).