Paradoxes and practices of modernity in a Guyanese mining town

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ABSTRACT

State and market expansion and consolidation are definitive characteristics of the process of modernization. The ways in which modernization occurs is illustrated in artisanal and medium-scale gold mining in Guyana. This work examines the ongoing process of state modernization in Mahdia, a mining town in Guyana's interior rainforest territory. It outlines the making of this mining place, the economic livelihood strategies that keep people coming and going to this place, and ideas of what it means to be somebody in this place. By exposing cultural paradoxes that are emerging through the process of modernization, this work reiterates the idea that modernity can be found in a broad range of times and places, and does not follow one universal trajectory. Thus, the discrete practices and experiences of modernization in places like Mahdia have also been referred to as the unfolding of "alternative modernities."

L'expansion de l'État et la consolidation du marché sont des caractéristiques propres au processus de modernisation. Plusieurs des formes que prend la modernisation sont illustrées dans l'extraction artisanale et à moyenne échelle de l'or en Guyane. Cet ouvrage examine le processus continu de modernisation de l'État dans la ville minière de Mahdia, située à l'intérieur des territoires de forêt tropicale de la Guyane. L'ouvrage décrit la création de ce lieu minier, les stratégies économiques de subsistance qui font de cette localité un centre où les gens viennent et passent ainsi que quelques idées quant à ce que cela peut signifier que « d'être quelqu'un » dans cette ville. En exposant quelques uns des paradoxes culturels qui émergent à travers le processus de modernisation, cet ouvrage réitère l'idée selon laquelle les attentes de la modernité ne coïncident pas toujours avec les différentes réalités locales et de ce fait, les pratiques discrètes et les expériences de modernisation dans des endroits comme Mahdia sont plus fidèlement définies comme le déploiement de "modernités alternatives".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In Guyana, the painter George Simon made my fieldwork possible in practical terms. My "mum," Grace, my driver, Andrew, and the staff at the GGMC Library & Cartography Department, the Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology, and the University of Guyana Library patiently answered my questions and spent hours helping me collect information. Daniel Scott helped me make sense of some of it at the top of Turtle Mountain. I cannot adequately express my gratitude here to the Barrie family, for allowing me to become the "oldest daughter," and giving me a place in their home and in the family. Beyond these individuals, I owe a thank you to all the residents of Mahdia, Campbelltown and Princeville, Micobie, and Kumaka, for letting me stay and helping me learn.

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DEDICATION

During my first visit to Princeville, I spent a sunny afternoon at one family's farm. The women taught me to peel and grate cassava, and we sat on stumps of wood with knives in our hands, preparing a pile of tubers to make cassava bread. Some talked in Patamuna and some in English, and all talked for hours. Before I left that afternoon, I was offered a bowl of *tuma*, or pepperpot, a traditional Amerindian dish. These generous offers were not uncommon throughout my fieldwork. However, this one was different; instead of the chicken, beef, or fish used in most pepperpots, this one had been made with labba (*Agouti paca*), a small rodent, hunted and killed that morning. That day was the first time I tasted the delicacy.

A common saying in Guyana promises visitors that if they drink black creek water and eat labba during their time in the country, they will inevitably return. In various ways, my life has become entwined with some of the people who live in Guyana's interior, and I hope to continue to share what they have taught me about these places in the rainforest. The work presented in this thesis only scratches at the surface of the stories there are to tell. I dedicate this work to Grandma and Grandpa Barrie, for passionately and patiently telling me most of the ones I know.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Amerindian: term commonly used to refer to an indigenous person in Guyana. While this term is the subject of ongoing controversy (with protests from some groups for its replacement in state laws with the term "indigenous peoples"), I have chosen to use it throughout this thesis because of its common use by Amerindians and non-Amerindians in my field-sites, and in the existing anthropology of Guyana.

APA: Amerindian Peoples Association

Artisanal mining: synonymous in this thesis with **small-scale mining**.

Backdam: physical work-ground where mining takes place, including mining camps, pits, and river **dredge landings**.

***Baïr*:** cook in a mining camp

Buck: pejorative term used to refer to someone of Amerindian descent.

Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*): staple in Amerindian diets. In its bitter form, the tuber must be processed to remove prussic acid (hydrocyanic acid). Sweet cassava only contains prussic acid in its outer skin, and simply requires boiling before being eaten.

Cassava bread: flat, round cake made from dried **cassava**. Served fresh, the bread is soft and flexible, but preserves well, and is often eaten when hardened (water is sometimes poured on it to soften it).

CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency

Coastlander: term commonly used to refer to people living on or who come from the coast; in Guyana, coastlanders represent the majority of the country's population, concentrated at (or below) sea level by the Atlantic Ocean.

Dredge: the machinery and extraction process used in **small-** and **medium-scale mining** operations in Guyana (also one of the least expensive methods of mining used around the globe). This equipment is used in both open-pit mines and on waterways.

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency (Government of Guyana)

Hinterland: term used to refer to Guyana's interior territory

General Manager: responsible for on-site management of **medium-scale dredge** operations; acts as liaison between the crew and the dredge-owner, but makes decisions based on the best interests of the owner, who is usually not on-site.

GGMC: Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (Government of Guyana)

Jet Man: responsible for holding and directing a high-pressure hose that jets away (erodes) land or river bottoms.

Landing: area on riverbank that has been "urbanized" by shops, restaurants, bars, and houses to serve a nearby **backdam**.

MAA: Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (Government of Guyana)

Marack Man: responsible for operating the engine for the gravel pump that brings the **slurry** (up) to the **sluice box**.

Medium-scale mining: a team of between four and twelve people (usually men) working an open-pit mine, using a **dredge**.

Mercury (also Quicksilver): used extensively in **small-** and **medium-scale** gold mining in Guyana. Mercury particles form mercury-gold amalgam and help increase gold recovery rates, but the use of mercury also causes ecological devastation.

Pit Foreman: responsible for ensuring mining pit is being run properly, including proper use of machinery and associated infrastructure (such as the strength of walls containing **tailings**).

Pit Man: labourers in a **medium-scale** mining crew, responsible for tasks such as moving rocks and branches out of the way for the **jet man** and **marack man**.

Pork-Knockers: itinerant miners panning for alluvial gold and diamonds in Guyana's interior. The origins of the term are widely debated, though it seems to stem from the fact that salted pork was a staple in the diets of men living in the interior without ready access to perishable foods.

PPP: People's Progressive Party, current ruling party of the Government of Guyana, led by President Bharrat Jagdeo.

Slurry: water and gravel mixture carried to sluice box in dredge operations.

Sluice box: box tipped at an angle (resembling a playground slide) that receives **slurry** and catches heavy particles, such as gold.

Small-scale mining: refers in this thesis to **pork-knockers**, or individual or small teams of people who operate rudimentary **dredge** engines. **Artisanal** and

small-scale mining (often referred to as ASM) does not have a clear definition, because many of the people involved it in are working casually or informally.

Tailings pond: pit or container into which **slurry** (minus gold, referred to as **tailings**) is ponded after it flows down the **sluice box** to allow sedimentation of solid particles from water.

***Tuma* (sometimes *Toma*, often Pepperpot):** a traditional Amerindian dish now considered one of Guyana's national dishes and common throughout the Caribbean. Amerindian pepperpot involves boiled meat and fish with cassareep and hot peppers. **Cassava bread** is broken and dipped into it, and often used to scoop up the meat or fish. The pot is usually not emptied; more meat is continually added and re-boiled.

"Working the gold": synonymous with mining at **small-** and **medium-scales**.

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature/World Wildlife Fund

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a short ethnography of the current unfolding of modernity in Guyana; it is also an analysis of the cultural paradoxes intrinsic to this process. State and market expansion and consolidation are definitive characteristics of the process of modernization. In what follows, I illustrate these processes as they are now being enacted and understood in Guyana through involvement in, and the associated culture(s) of, artisanal and medium-scale gold mining.

Guyana Overview

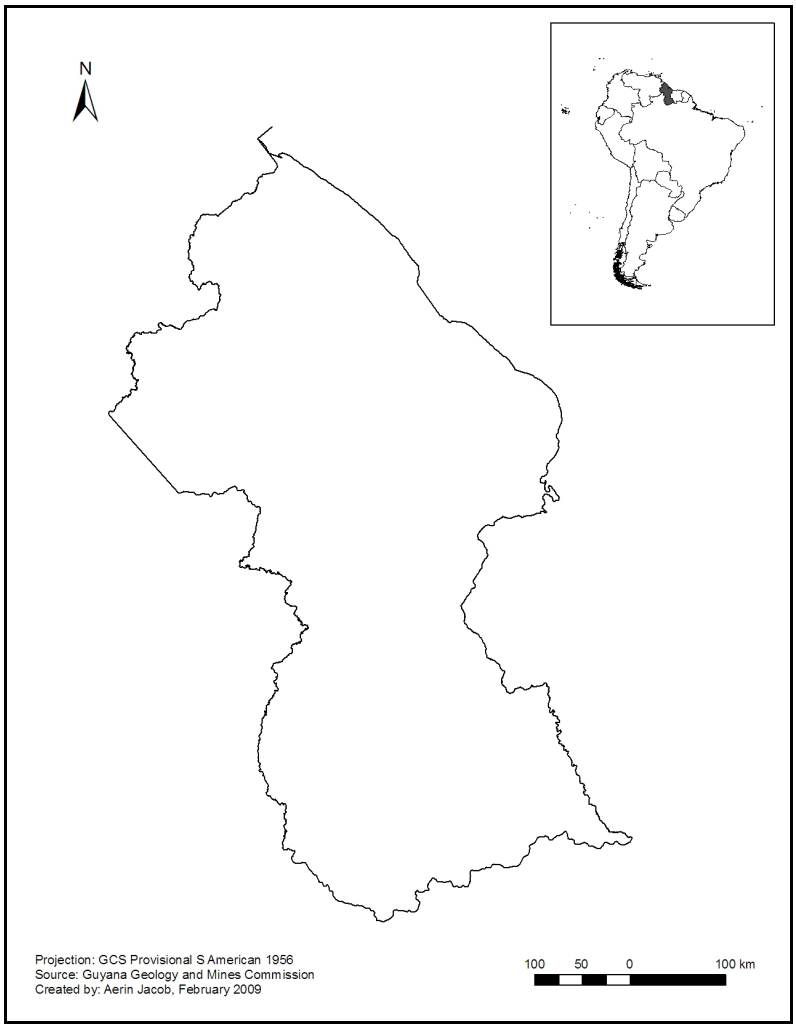
Guyana is the only Anglophone country on the South American continent, gaining independence from Britain in 1966. Sharing its borders with Venezuela, Brazil, and Suriname, Guyana is comparable in size to the island of Great Britain, with a population of approximately 750,000[1] (Figure 1.1). Most of this population is concentrated along a strip of cultivated coast two to eight miles wide, and shielded from the Atlantic Ocean by a seawall built during Dutch occupation in the eighteenth century. The capital city, Georgetown, is situated roughly in the middle of this coastal strip, at the mouth of the Demerara River. Coastlanders, the name given to people who live on or who hail from coastal communities, are historically of African, Indian, Chinese, and Western European descent, settled in Guyana through processes of colonization, either as colonizers or indentured slaves. This coastal territory is today regionally, politically, and culturally associated with the Creole Caribbean.

The vast interior, which constitutes the majority of the country's territory, is encompassed by the mineral-rich Guiana Shield and fertile northwest Amazon watershed, and contains one of the largest tracts of standing rainforest left in the world. This hinterland, a common term for the interior, is the historical

[1] Guyana is often proclaimed as the only country in the world that has more of its citizens living overseas than within its national borders. Toronto and Brooklyn are home to the largest populations of Guyanese citizens in the world's cities.

homeland to the nine Amerindian "tribes"[2] included within Guyana's borders, and the contemporary home to some coastlanders, Brazilians, Venezuelans, and Caribbean "islanders," who immigrate to the area primarily because of opportunities offered by extractive industry. Guyana's "identity divided" (Drummond 1980: 368) is a result of an enduring geopolitical fracture between the coast and hinterland.

Figure 1.1 Guyana National Context



[2] I use this term in quotations to demonstrate awareness of its outdated use in anthropological discourse; however, its use is commonplace in Guyana today.

The Mining Town

I situate this ethnography in Mahdia, a gold- and diamond-mining town in Guyana's interior territory in the historical territory of Patamuna Amerindians, and approximately two hundred kilometres from Georgetown. While most of what I describe in this thesis takes place in Mahdia, these descriptions are connected to larger sociopolitical processes that are metaphorically shrinking the distance between the coast and interior. I explain the intellectual imperatives for a description of these processes here.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Modernity a Viable Project?

In his *Territories of Difference* (2008), Arturo Escobar asks if what social theorists call modernity is still a viable project in places like the Colombian Pacific. Or, he wonders, "Do the events happening there suggest that the project of modernity, whatever it means, has to be abandoned once and for all?" (5). Escobar's question brings to mind Theodor Adorno's assertion that modernity is not a chronological condition, but rather a qualitative one (Grady 1999: 269). By definition, modernity cannot be "finished," and the concept and its accepted conditions therefore create cultural paradoxes as they endure in what is often referred to as a "postmodern" era. Contrary to Escobar's uncertainty about modernity's place in (or application to) Colombia, and following Adorno's assertions, I posit that the "project of modernity" does have a specific meaning in nearby Guyana. Before exploring this meaning, however, I ask: what *is* modernity?

The origins of the era and idea of modernity can be traced to the seventeenth century, distilled in the historical transformations in Europe that brought the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, and taking clear

form at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Escobar 2008) with the Industrial Revolution. Anthony Giddens defines modernity, "a shorthand term for modern society or industrial civilization," according to a tripartite program of normative cultural, economic, and political characteristics:

> [It] is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society – more technically, a complex of institutions – which unlike any preceding culture lives in the future rather than the past (1998: 94).

Modernity constructs order through the imposition of these three components and their corollaries. Giddens' definition in part explains the ongoing internal territorialization of a nation-state through extraction and regulation of gold, and associated re-workings of social orders in and around a mining community.

Expectations of Modernity and Alternatives

Giddens' definition, however, emphasizes only some possible outcomes of modernity, without explaining the actual process of modernization, and thus his explanation is limiting when applied to a state in which modernization is occurring now. In his ethnography (1999) of mineworkers on Zambia's copperbelt, Ferguson demonstrates that modernization does not happen according to the strictly linear expectations of classical theory; it does not occur automatically, or without contradiction or friction.

The term "alternative modernities" (Gaonkar 2001), which emerged in response to works like Ferguson's, is a somewhat tautological confirmation of the fact that modernity is best understood through its protean and relativistic nature. Thus, the practices and experiences of modernization are shaped by the discrete realities of different places. The paradoxes that I elucidate as part of an ongoing process of

modernization in Guyana emerge from contradiction, discontinuity, and friction among individuals and cultural groups and their histories. In this ethnography, I deliberately draw on the term "alternative modernity" to underline the now obvious point that modernity is "not one, but many" (2001: 23), and explain a particular version modernity as it is unfolding now.

Structure of the Ethnography

These processes and paradoxes of state modernization are all illustrated by the history of and daily rhythms and discourses in Mahdia. The section *Men and Things* first explains the making of this place in the rainforest, focusing on the expansion of governmentality in colonial and national contexts; this section emphasizes historical interactions between Amerindians living in the interior, and the explorers and colonial officials appointed to map and regulate the same territory. *Men and Things* reiterates E. P. Thompson's postulation that "anthropology is, above all, the discipline of context," (1972: 43), and changes brought by modernization must be understood in historical context.

Mobility focuses on the livelihood strategies currently employed by people in Mahdia in an effort to gain upward economic mobility, emphasizing what has been termed "creative adaptation," or at least adjustment to, processes of state modernization. I outline three overlapping strategies, all couched within the concept of a moral economy, and protest from citizens that the state has not historically supported their needs.

Imagination identifies three primary categories of being and belonging in Mahdia: Amerindian, miner, and Guyanese. This section draws upon descriptions from preceding ethnographic sections to illustrate that individuals embody several identities at once. I conclude that this expression is inherent to the process of state modernization, and is in part a means of coping with the complexities of the process.

Central Purpose

The overarching purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the anthropology of Guyana. I draw on, link, and in some ways amalgamate some existing ethnographies of the country, which have tended to be divided into one of two geographic and "cultural" categories: 1) coastal, Creole Caribbean, or 2) indigenous Amazonia. Description of various lives being lived in Guyana's interior necessarily extends this work beyond the "culture and social organization" motif that dominates historical Amerindian studies in Guyana on the one hand, and the political economy-centered studies of extractive industries (particularly in Latin America) on the other. I use individual and shared narratives to link this historical division in anthropology, and to link the history, *Mobility*, and *Imagination* sections of this thesis. Narrative is therefore the primary tool used to explore and uncover processes and paradoxical effects of modernization in Mahdia, Guyana.

METHODOLOGY AND LOGISTICS

Any research on gold mining in Guyana requires research both in the interior of the country, at the geological source of the precious metal, and on the coast, where the nation's administrators are stationed. Modernity unfolds from the capital on the coast, Georgetown, into the rainforest. This spread is reflected in my fieldwork methods; I started on the coast and worked my way into the interior, following the gradual advance of increasing state presence and market integration. I conducted this fieldwork in Guyana from June through August 2008, dividing these three months into two basic periods: 1) preparatory, archival, and follow-up research in Georgetown, which acted as temporal book-ends for 2) six weeks participant observation in the interior, or "bush,"[3] in the town of Mahdia, and contiguous Amerindian reserves (land titles) and mining camps.

Pre-Fieldwork Logistics

The difficulties of arranging the details this research plan via electronic communication were described by one scholar as a "complicated case of modernity vs. post-colonial identities. Guyana remains a 'face-to-face' society, and really only works best with direct human contact" (letter to author, March 24, 2008). Thus, I depended heavily on people who have ongoing research projects in Guyana to help me coordinate my project. A lecturer with the Amerindian Research Unit at the University of Guyana helped arrange the logistics of my fieldwork time, acting as an intermediary during the four-month

[3] Anything south of Guyana's coastal plains tend to be referred to by coastlanders (both on the coast and living in the interior for varying periods of time) as "bush." It is generally a pejorative term, used to indicate an "uncivilized" condition, with all the anthropological weight this term carries. "Bush" is also used as an adjective by coastlanders and Amerindians to describe things – usually animals and plants – of the rainforest; "bush cow," for example, is a local or common name for Brazilian Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*). Similarly, "bush fish" often refers to haimara (*Hoplias macrophthalmus*). I often learned the local names for species of birds without having prior awareness of its Linnaean parallel; "bush policeman" is the only name I know for a bird that calls loudly in the same manner a police car siren wails.

process of permit application (needed from both the Environmental Protection Agency and Ministry of Amerindian Affairs) prior to my arrival in Guyana, and also conducting surveys on my behalf to determine possible field-sites.

On 26 January 2008, eleven people were killed in a "rampage"[4] in Guyana's East Coast Demerara town of Lusignan; another twelve people were killed on 17 February in a "wild shooting spree"[5] in Bartica, a city on the left bank of the Essequibo River. Several police officers were killed in each of the shootings. The Government of Guyana (GoG) immediately initiated an intensive search for the man deemed responsible for both shootings, referred to as "Fine Man" – an escaped convict (fled jail in 2003) who was said to have committed the mass killings in retaliation for a wrong-doing his sister had endured by an agency of the state. The GoG offered $30M GY (approximately $180,000 CAD) for information leading to his arrest, and involved the Joint Services (the national army) in a national search effort. These crimes forced the Canadian Government to declare "Avoid All Travel" to Guyana, in place of the more typical, "Exercise High Degree of Caution."[6] Following the second shooting, I was advised to relocate my fieldwork to Suriname, French Guiana, or Bolivia. However, by June 2008, when I was set to begin fieldwork, the travel advisory had returned to its more stable classification, despite the fact that "Fine Man" had not yet been caught.

[4] This is the headline of the top story reported in the Guyana Chronicle Online on 27 January 2008. This article is available online: http://www.guyanachronicle.com/ARCHIVES/archive%2027-01-08.html#Anchor----------1977

[5] This is the headline of the top story reported less than one month later in the Guyana Chronicle Online, on 18 February 2008. This article is available online: http://www.guyanachronicle.com/ARCHIVES/archive%2018-02-08.html#Anchor----------57138

[6] These travel reports and warning categories are set by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, and updated constantly according to current events. The travel report for Guyana is available online: http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/report_rapport-eng.asp?id=116000#1

The Coast

I provide this background to contextualize the atmosphere of Georgetown (and to different degrees the interior) during my fieldwork period, and to explain the rationale behind some of the methods I consequently employed. Three days after I arrived in Georgetown, an abandoned hide-out for "Fine Man" and his gang was discovered by Joint Services in the jungle near my proposed field-site in the interior. The whereabouts of the criminal were still unknown. Many people warned me that tensions were already high throughout the country, that crimes had increased in frequency as a result, and that it was unsafe for me to be there. This atmosphere of tension and fear was reflected in media reports, and was the prevailing topic of discussion wherever I went.

I spent an initial two weeks in Georgetown finalizing permits from the two aforementioned agencies. With the most recent news reports, I also began to devise a second research project in a place considered more secure,[7] as I weighed the potential danger of proceeding with the plan I had already arranged. Nonetheless, I used this time to begin archival research, collecting formal documents and data, and conducting interviews, all according to my original project.

Archival Research

Archives are available from a variety of sources in Guyana. I relied on the National Archives, the National Library, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, the Department of Lands and Surveys, the Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology, the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation, Conservation International, and the World Wildlife Fund. The library and Amerindian Research Unit at the University of Guyana both hold large

[7] I began to plan a project that would be based at the Iwokrama Forest research reserve in the centre of the country.

collections of potential material, but were inaccessible during my short fieldwork season. The retrieval of archival information was difficult because much of the information available was not explicitly known to me, and archives tend to be kept in locked rooms not directly accessible to the public. Similarly, many of the oldest archives exist in various states of disrepair, and are often illegible. The archives upon which I was forced to rely are therefore relatively recent.

Interviews

In Georgetown, I conducted thirteen formal and semi-structured interviews in combination with a variety of informal interviews. The individuals with whom I spoke represent one of four categories: 1) state agencies (Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Guyana Geology & Mines Commission, the Guyana Gold Board, Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology[8]); 2) non-governmental institutions sponsoring and/or conducting programs in the interior in past and present (including the Amerindian Peoples Association, Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples, World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, Canadian International Development Agency); 3) research institutions (Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation, University of Guyana); and 4) urban locals (specifically sporadic miners with history of, and/or plans to return to, mining in the interior; and coastland residents who do not venture past the mouth of the Essequibo river). I planned another two weeks at the end of my time in the interior to interview those individuals I was unable to contact during the first period in Georgetown.

Meeting my Family

I was also able to establish a relationship with a family who agreed to let me live with them during their summer holidays in their hometown in the interior (and

[8] There were attempts made to connect with the Environmental Protection Agency, but this was never realized because I was informed it constituted "conflict of interest."

who spend the rest of the year living "in town"[9]). An Amerindian family of nine, the father and two sons stayed in town all summer to work, while the mother, Paula, and her five youngest children shared their house with me.[10] At their evaluation during our initial meetings in Georgetown, and in consultation with several researchers in the capital, I proceeded with my original fieldwork plan. The only event we encountered related to "Fine Man" and his crimes was a Joint Services road-block between Georgetown and Mahdia, at which point all people on the minibus had to disembark, report our names to Joint Services officers, then promptly re-board the bus and continue along the dirt road further inland.

The Interior

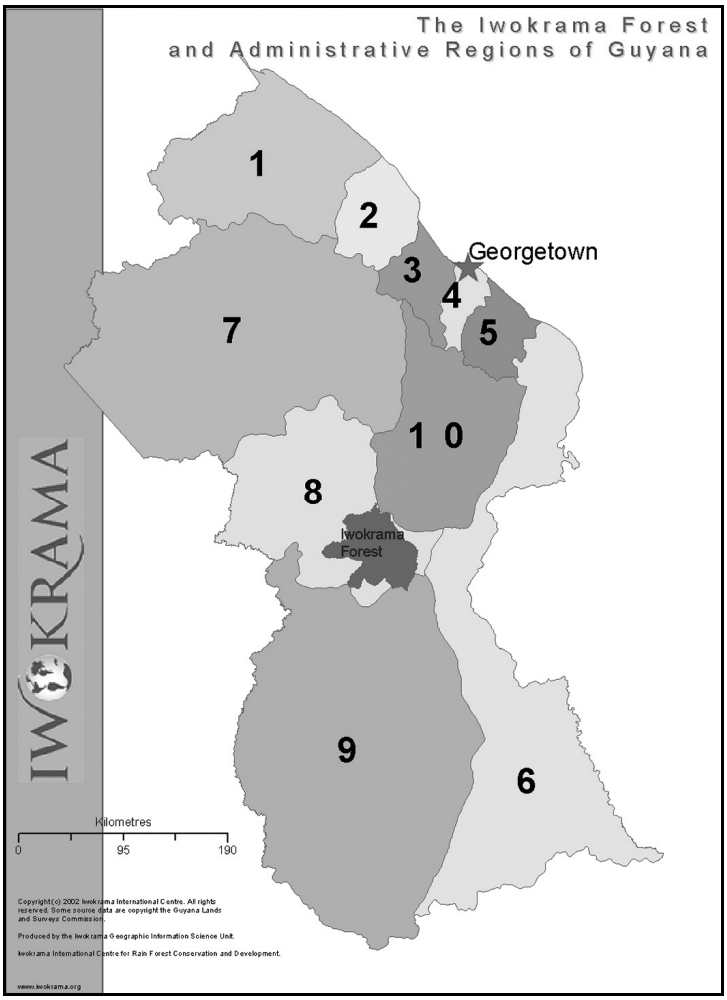
Guyana is administratively divided into Regions 1 through 10 **(**Figure 2.1**)**. Regions 1, 7, and 8 are the sites of most intensive gold mining in the country today. Gold deposits in Region 1 and some parts of Region 7 require some hard-rock mining techniques, while the geomorphology of Region 8, Potaro-Siparuni,[11] also allows alluvial dredge mining at artisanal, medium-, and large-scales.

Figure 2.1 Guyana: Regional Context, Administrative Regions

[9] Georgetown is Guyana's largest city, with a population estimated at 177,900 according to the most recent census conducted in 2002. In the interior, Georgetown is referred to simply as "town."

[10] Paula is a Patamuna woman. Along with her two youngest children, Monica (eight years old) and Sean (eleven years old), and/or her oldest daughter, Melissa (seventeen years old), Paula accompanied me during the majority of my field research time, including on work in and around Mahdia.

[11] Region 8, Potaro-Siparuni, is so named because it is bordered by the Potaro and Siparuni Rivers, both of which are tributaries of the Essequibo River. The Essequibo is the third largest river in South America, after the Amazon and Orinoco.



Digital data courtesy the Iwokrama International Centre GIS

Mahdia is Region 8's Regional Administrative Centre, and the sub-regional capital for one of the two sub-regions that encompass Region 8. Despite its political significance, Mahdia is first understood as a mining town. Its bars, shops, restaurants, and hotels provide necessary supplies and entertainment for miners working legitimized claims and illegal dredges in the surrounding areas.[12] Situated near the eastern edge of what is recognized as historical Patamuna Amerindian territory, Mahdia is contiguous with the

[12] The vast majority of mining occurring near Mahdia is for gold, but there is some diamond mining as well. As Terence Roopnaraine (1996) points out in his ethnography of the "culture" of mining in Guyana, diamond mining and gold mining demand different techniques, attracting very different people and associated lifestyles. This was reiterated to me in interviews throughout my fieldwork. I concentrate solely on gold mining.

Campbelltown/Princeville[13] Amerindian land title, and many residents draw no distinction between the town and the title. The family with whom I lived joked that their house was in Mahdia and their toilet in Campbelltown. Mahdia was an ideal study area because of my focus on mining, and because it is centrally located for access to other Amerindian (largely Patamuna) settlements, including the Micobie land title, town of El Paso (formerly Tumatumari), and new mining camp at Kumaka Landing near Omai.[14] These constituted sub-field-sites[15] along the Essequibo and Potaro Rivers (Figure 2.2).

Participant Observation?

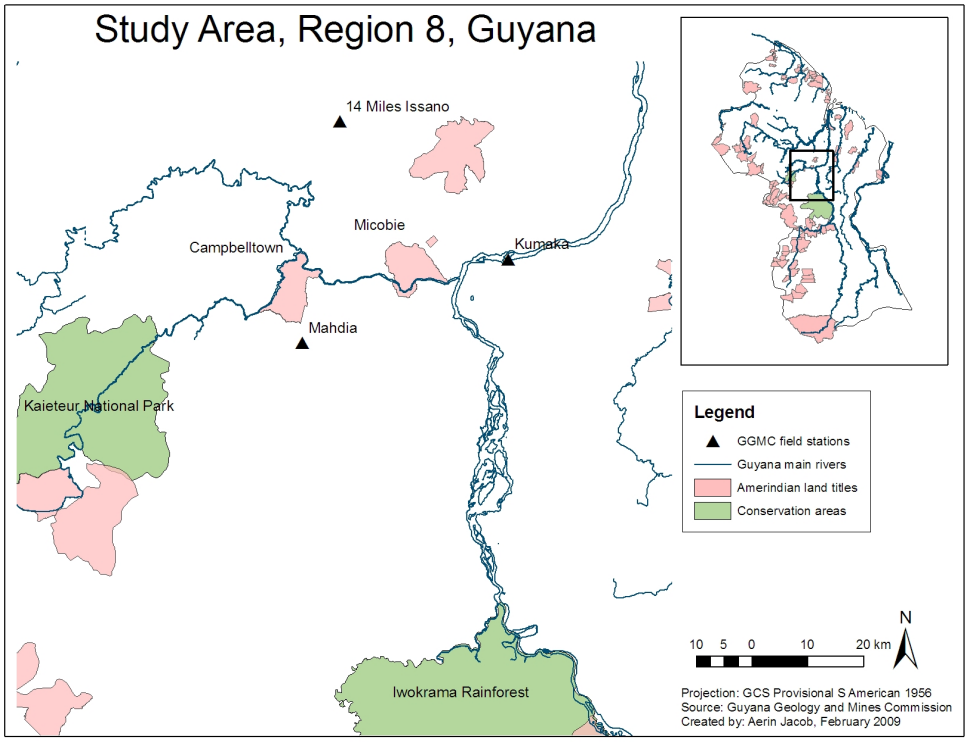
Anthropologists' primary field method is participant observation (Ellen 1964: 74), or simultaneous immersion in and "objective" scrutiny of a place and social group(s). Pierre Bourdieu has noted, however, the "inherent difficult of such a […doubling of consciousness]," asking, "how can one be both subject and object, the one who acts and the one who, as it were, watches himself acting?" (2002: 281). His work, and the writings of others, demonstrates the necessary ways in which anthropologists must question, and to some degree criticize, the relative subjectivity of our position and methods (Halstead et al. 2008). Bernard (2002: 327) resolves these doubts by making a pragmatic distinction between participant observation and two related fieldwork roles: 1) complete participant and 2) complete observer. I fulfilled each of these roles at various points.

[13] Campbelltown and Princeville constitute separate settlements, situated within the same 26-square-mile land title. Campbelltown is often considered part of Mahdia, where Princeville is a scattered settlement seven miles (eleven kilometres) away. The population of Campbelltown is 630 people, and Princeville 130, for a total of 760. The entire title is often referred to as Campbelltown.

[14] Omai is the site of what was once South America's largest open-pit gold mine. In 1995, the tailings pond at this mine cracked, releasing three million cubic metres of cyanide into the Essequibo River.

[15] I refer to them as sub-field-sites because I was only able to make day trips from Mahdia to these places, with plans to travel more frequently or for longer periods barred by high water levels on the rivers in the wet season (making crossing impossible), and a persistent shortage (and consequent very high price) of gasoline in Mahdia. I applied for and received permits to work in these places, originally hoping to spend equal amounts of time in Campbelltown, Princeville, and Micobie.

Figure 2.2 Guyana: Study Area



Source: GGMC Cartographic Division and personal data collection

The permits protocol established by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs implies that research akin to my fieldwork is conducted frequently on land titles and in non-titled Amerindian communities in the interior. However, I was the first anthropologist to spend time in the aforementioned locales since the protocol has been established.[16] As a consequence, I was initially fulfilling Bernard's complete observer role, rather than participating in activities and rhythms of daily life.

Mining towns tend to be dominated by social issues such as abusive productive conditions, sex work, domestic violence, high rates of STI transmission, and

[16] The protocol has been in existence for less than a decade. It involved an application to the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs to conduct research in specific Amerindian communities. I was then asked to write letters to each of the village captains, or *Toushaus*, requesting permission to work in these places. I arrived in Mahdia and Campbelltown/Princeville one day after the quarterly village meeting, at which I was told my imminent presence was discussed. I would plan future research schedules with attendance at these meetings in mind.

substance abuse (Werthemann 2003). These social dynamics presented two problems for me, particularly with respect to achieving some balance of participation and observation. First, while it often seems more logical to conduct household surveys prior to conducting interviews, (to determine key population characteristics and preliminary data to later pursue in longer, one-on-one interviews), my interviews preceded household surveys because they provided one means of establishing fundamental relationships of trust.

Closely related to these issues of trust, gender held significant consequences for my role as a participant observer. Guyanese society is one in which discussions of (hetero)sexuality are more open and more frequent than is normative in middle-class North American society (Gearing 1995: 191). While the mining industry in Guyana, and in most places around the world, is an industry restricted to male labourers (apart from occasional females working as *baïrs* at mining camps), mining towns are the places to which these male miners migrate after several days, weeks, or even months in the backdam. Sex in Mahdia is an omnipresent topic of conversation, and sexual activity is nearly an expectation for (and from) males in from "working gold." With a male to female ratio of approximately thirty to one (30: 1) in Mahdia, my presence specifically as a female researcher was never inconspicuous. Participation in some domains of life in my fieldwork site was strengthened because I am a female, particularly inclusion in activities seen as reserved *for* females. However, gender roles and expectations[17] made participation in other domains physically impossible (such as working in the mine pits), or simply too dangerous, even before engaging in the ontological questions Bourdieu brings forth.

Nonetheless, living with an Amerindian family allowed me to become a kind of participating observer (though Bourdieu would continue to argue the impossibility of this), evidenced through activities such as working on the

[17] Other characteristics, including ethnicity and marital status, compounded the obstacles posed by gender.

maternal grandparents' farm and teaching classes at the local middle school. At points, my participation also outweighed observation – specifically during a period of caring for my family's children in the absence of their mother. Combinations of participating and observing as a constant part of this fieldwork was compounded by specific, scheduled techniques: household surveys, interviews (including life histories), and participatory mapping projects.

Interviews

Over six weeks, I conducted thirty-nine structured and semi-structured individual and group interviews. These were complemented by follow-up interviews, in four cases in pursuit of the collection of life histories. My interviews consisted of series of open-ended questions and followed an interview guide that was modified according to fieldwork realities. I interviewed regional political representatives and administrators, employees of state agencies, police-men and guards, village council members, land title residents, residents of Mahdia, gold buyers, religious leaders, shop-owners and bar-owners, school-teachers, and dredge-owners. I also interviewed small- and medium-scale miners;[18] I denote these people as a separate category here because they inevitably also fit in one or more of the former categories. All the people I interviewed were of Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, Amerindian, Caribbean "islander," Venezuelan, and Brazilian descent. Though the majority of people I interviewed spoke English and/or Spanish, I relied on a translator to communicate with those who spoke only Patamuna. Interviews lasted between fifteen minutes and two hours. I used a digital voice recorder for approximately half the interviews, often refraining from its use because of discomfort from subjects.

I relied on a variety of informal interviews to complement more formal exchanges, to obtain a cross-section of actors' perspectives on questions of

[18] I interviewed less than five people who had been or still were employed by large-scale mining companies.

historical landscape, cultural, and political change. The actors mentioned here represent the major categories of people that make these mining places in the rainforest, and help describe characteristics of a mining town that finds certain parallels around the globe. However, these interviews do not encompass all actors present in such places, and provide only a snapshot of the ephemeral and flexible structure of the social relations and networks that tend to construct them.

Life Histories

I draw specific attention here to the collection of life histories as a method of "capturing" ethnohistory, one which allows for the identification of common trends, social processes, and shared experiences through comparison of multiple accounts. As Cruikshank (1990) points out, what constitutes an "adequate" account of a life is not a question with one specific answer. Discrete life histories all tend to be gathered through multiple, long, open-ended interviews, and depend on personal recollection of shared, or parallel, events. I gathered four life histories during the course of my fieldwork. This method was supported by the fact that many of the people with whom I spoke and on whom I focus come from oral traditions.

Mapping

Research on territoriality and resource-access and resource–rights requires mapping (Aswani and Lauer 2006; Vaccaro and Norman 2008). I used a GPS unit to mark the locations of every standing structure in Mahdia, Campbelltown/Princeville, Micobie, and El Paso. I was unable to use the GPS at Kumaka Landing, and only created rough sketch maps. I worked in partnership with residents of Mahdia and Campbelltown/Princeville (specifically adolescent female school-children), who drew their own maps of the same areas that we walked, and who also provided me with alternative, personal narratives and histories of these places, or cognitive maps. By comparing this data with maps of

formal land-use from state agencies, I was able to illuminate connections between, for example, land-rights and land-use, location of houses and commercial establishments in relation to mine pits and camps, and indications of daily time allocation in terms of recreation areas for youth and adolescents.

Household Surveys

I conducted household surveys in Campbelltown both half-way through and near the end of the six week research period in the interior, collecting data for each house on half the land title.[19] These surveys consisted of less than ten questions combined, and were conducted in tandem with the aforementioned mapping projects. The purpose of the surveys was to obtain quantitative data about household member numbers, and individual and family involvement in "traditional" Amerindian subsistence activities, such as hunting, fishing, slash-and-burn farming, and mining. I did not ask more questions related to socio-economic data because my limited questions were already viewed with some caution and treated with reluctance.[20]

Concluding Statements: Limitations

There were several challenges involved carrying out intensive fieldwork within a limited time period and in a cross-cultural setting, some of which I have discussed in terms of the classic notion and practice of participant observation. Further challenges are tied to working in a rural, isolated community with minimal infrastructure; throughout my time in Mahdia, I had limited means of communicating with and garnering support from external advisors or researchers familiar with the area. Still more challenges can be linked directly to the methodological approach I used, and relate to my inability to plan far into the

[19] Families often live in close proximity to each other, with houses clustered together, and separated from other families. Kinship is formally passed through patrilineal lines now (though this is not historical tradition), and households organized according to patriarchy.
[20] I was often asked if I was conducting a government census.

future without prior knowledge of, and relationships with, the places and people in Guyana that form the basis of this work. In spite of these limitations, however, this approach provided a vital means of collecting the information that propels this thesis.

MEN AND THINGS: THE MAKING OF NATION AND PLACE

Part One: Colonialism

Exploration and Colonial Rivalry: El Dorado and the Cultural Imaginary

Though this thesis focuses primarily on the history of Guyana from the early twentieth century onwards, beginning with the introduction of large-scale mining in the interior by British mining interests, a number of older narratives have had a profound effect on the political, economic, and sociocultural history of the nation. The myth and metaphor of *El Dorado,* dating to the period of the Spanish conquest of the Americas, is one such important narrative.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Spanish explorer Vincente Yañez Pinzón, fresh from the discovery of the mouth of the Amazon, travelled along the north coast of South America to the Orinoco River. Along the route, he heard the story of a large salt-water lake "which was supposed to be located in the interior near Manoa del Dorado, filled with treasures of gold" (Menezes 1977: 1); the lake was ruled by a monarch, *el hombre dorado*, whose oiled body was covered in glittering gold dust. Thousands of Spanish conquistadors perished in the quest to find this *El Dorado*, which, according to various accounts, was understood to be a buried city, an adorned Amerindian king, or, "in reality only an Indian memory" (Daly 1974: 25; Schama 1995: 310).

Rumours of the discovery of vast stores of gold by the Spanish, combined with English fears of being outdone by their European rival, prompted Queen Elizabeth to dispatch to the New World one of her favourite courtiers, Sir Walter Raleigh, in 1595 (Menezes 1977; Schama 1995). Raleigh spent twenty-three years searching the northern South American rainforest. His first expedition led to his 1595 publication of *The Discoverie of the large, rich and beautifull Empire of Guianna, with a relation of the great and golden citie of Manoa (which the Spaniards call El Dorado)*, though neither this expedition, nor subsequent voyages, led to the discovery of any such thing. There is evidence to suggest that the story of *El Dorado* was planted by the Spanish to keep Raleigh

busy while they exploited the truly rich areas of the New World, such as Peru (Swan 1957: 5). He paid a high price for these misled adventures, including imprisonment and, eventually, his own execution (Schama 1995: 318). Nonetheless, the *El Dorado* Raleigh was so intent on finding remains an historical epithet, ingrained in the collective imaginary of Guyana's population. The explorer left twin legacies across the Atlantic Ocean: an enduring obsession with the idea that Guyana is a country whose "face…hath not been torn" and which "hath more quantity of gold, by manifold, than the best parts of the Indies, or Peru" (148) and all of South America; and second, the conviction that England could - and should - hold a tropical empire (Burnett 2000: 17).

The British did not formally hold this colony, however, until the nineteenth century, and were preceded by two continental European colonizing powers. The waning of Spanish power in the early seventeenth century enforced for their rivals, the Dutch, formal recognition of settlements in the "Three Rivers" (Essequibo, Berbice, and Demerara) region. In 1789, the Essequibo and Demerara settlements were united administratively; these two, with Berbice, were occupied by the British from 1796 to 1802, handed back to Holland in 1802, and after being recaptured by Britain in 1803, were permanently ceded to the British in 1814. In 1831, the separate colonies of Demerara/Essequibo and Berbice were united to form the colony of British Guiana, with the colonial capital at Georgetown on the Demerara River (Higman 1999: 591). The lines marking British Guiana's territorial boundary (and now contemporary Guyana's) were consolidated in an 1899 Arbitration Tribunal in Paris. However, these lines are still variously drawn according to the provenance of the map in question, whether of Guyanese origin, or borne of the cartographic imaginations of neighbouring countries, reflective of conflicts over the possession of natural resources (De Barros 2002: 3).

Guyana's emergence as a formalized territory was and continues to be dominated by extractive economic activities. The politics of Dutch and British colonies

depended primarily on the plantation economy along the Atlantic coast. These plantations grew mostly sugar, with some also producing cocoa and cotton; and although timbering and trade went on with Carib and Arawak Amerindians, plantations defined both the livelihoods and lifestyles in the colonies, also resulting in "the death of growing numbers of Africans imported to dike, drain, and clear" (Burnett 2000: 18; Higman 1999: 589). Guyana was only one part of a wider geographic expanse extending from the southern United States, through the Caribbean, into northeast Brazil that was dominated by plantation economy. These plantations supplied metropolitan markets overseas with commodities that could not be produced in adequate volume in Europe to satisfy new and growing market demands there (Mintz 1985; Silverman 1987). The development of plantation economy across Latin America and the Caribbean was an original attempt at capitalism in the New World (by its Old World colonizers), and the initial onset of mass production, commodification, and rationalization that are part of capitalist nation-building, and, larger, of the social project of modernity.

This development was not universally accepted. The Berbice slave rebellion of 1763 and the Dutch reprisals that followed it gave some indication of the hardship of the life that drove thousands of slaves to escape into Guyana's interior rainforest. These escapees into the "bush" established the first non-Amerindian villages in the hinterland, cementing a specific vision of the interior in the minds of European settlers:

> The bush came to embody…a free, vengeful, miscenegating population bent on blood, invisible, atavistic…[Coupled]…with rumours of cannibalism by the mobile and well-armed population of exotic Amerindians (whose curare-tipped arrows were a macabre metropolitan fascination) makes it easy to understand why the European population stayed in the open spaces they cleared along the littoral and why, significantly, they adopted as the seal of the colony a ship headed for open water (Burnett 2000: 19).

Such visions of the "bush," and the historical reluctance of the majority of coastlanders to venture into it, remain ingrained in Guyana's coastland citizens

today. These imagined ideas of place therefore reiterate social and geographical divides between Guyana's "two faces" (Drummond 1974: 9).

In spite of this reluctance, however, the elusive *El Dorado* continues to propel forays into the interior for people driven by need and desire for fortune. Since Guyana's foundation, gold mining has been central to its development, and is seen as one of few viable productive practices within the "wild" and "untamed" interior. The golden arrowhead on the country's national flag is representative of both the historical allure of, and enduring dependence on, mineral wealth. Quests for the precious metal are the principal force shaping patterns of settlement and resource-use in greater Amazonia, and, along with plantations, a definitive Amazonian activity (Cleary 1990; Godfrey 1990). Hegemonic extractive industries have therefore influenced the wide set of social institutions that characterized patterns of development in the Dutch colonies, then British Guiana, and, today, in post-independence Guyana.

Production of an Intelligible Wilderness: Mining in Mahdia and the Making of Place

In the nineteenth century, the Royal Geographical Society of Britain commissioned several explorers to survey the interior territory of the colony. These scientific surveys served the purpose of making "nature intelligible" (Braun 2000), consolidating and enforcing the boundaries of Britain's only South American territorial stronghold. Territorial sovereignty defines people's identities (Sivaramakrishnan 1998) and "forms the basis on which states claim authority over people and the resources within those boundaries" (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 385). Though explorer Robert Schomburgk circum-ambulated the boundaries of the colony in 1843 to document available resources, what lay beneath the surface of this sometimes treacherous and densely-vegetated landscape would soon become equally important to the degree of power and time the colonial authority invested in the sparsely populated interior. Geological

exploration of British Guiana began in 1868 by the British government, and led to the formation of the Geological Survey of British Guiana. An extensive mapping campaign followed the reorganization of the Survey in 1957, lasting until 1961, with the object of reporting on the profitability of further mineral search by "modern prospecting techniques" (McConnell et al. 1964: 115). The Geological Survey was formed in conjunction with mining companies prospecting for bauxite, diamonds, and gold in the rainforest; the mapping campaign coincided with the demise of these mining companies in the early stages of decolonization.

I sat on Brother Gavin's front steps in Campbelltown while he told me about his own experiences with these mining companies. He swung back and forth in his hammock above me and surveyed the other houses around him, all on a land title that has in many ways been subsumed by the cultural dynamics of Mahdia. A sixty-year-old Amerindian man, born to Arawak and Carib parents, and married to a Patamuna woman, Gavin has become one of the longest-living residents of Campbelltown, and of Mahdia.

"I came here with the company," Brother Gavin started, explaining why he moved to this area more than half a century ago, in 1952. "They had a big company…I work with them for five years – two-and-a-half years at Mahdia and two-and-a-half years at Pomeroon." His reason for moving to this area from the north is one I heard repeated frequently: "working for B.G," the colonial-era mining giant, British Guiana Consolidated Goldfields Limited.

B. G. began surveying and extracting gold in the area around Mahdia in 1937, drawing labourers from Guyana's Atlantic Coast, from the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, and from other areas in the interior, including the Pakaraima Mountains and the Northwest District. Succeeding the Minnehaha Development Company as the dominant company working the Potaro/Mahdia goldfield, B.G. was one of four companies working in the colony following World War I,

producing an average of 9,000 ounces of gold per year for Britain for sale to European and Oriental markets. The company formally ceased operations in 1958 (Sacre-Coeur Minerals 2006), the result of diminishing mineral returns and the onset of British Guiana's decolonization; by this point, company-men and British geologists were already expressing doubts about the viability of future extraction.

B.G. was primarily responsible for the making of Mahdia as a place – and a particular kind of place: a twentieth-century mining town in the rainforest (Raffles 1999). When Brother Gavin arrived, this place used to be "all bush," with a single dirt track running through the middle of town. "Everything belong to the company," he told me. "The old buildings and everything, the cottage houses, the hospital, all belong to the company, but then the company close. Then the government start to build. First they build big, new houses, secondary and a primary school…" When I asked him what he did when the company closed, he laughed and shrugged. "I keep mining. I keep mining for eight years – on my own, on my own. I form a crew of four, five, six men. I form a crew and we do some prospecting, mostly rivers – Potaro, place like that."

Brother Gavin and his crew were some of many men searching for wealth beneath the ground in British Guiana; and the inclusion of these subsurface deposits in colonial territory demanded a new kind of regulatory attention from the governing authority. As Braun (2000) emphasizes, the development of the science of geology in nineteenth century Canada led to the "[production of] vertical territory," adding a new dimension to understandings and expansion of governmentality beyond the strictly horizontal goal of *A mari usque ad mare*, "from sea to sea." Drawing on Foucault's writings on governmentality, Braun emphasizes that the "problem of population and its improvement" in modern political rationality has brought states directly into contact with their territories – more precisely, the specific *qualities* of this territory (7), including geological resources. In the late colonial period, the state of British Guiana was brought

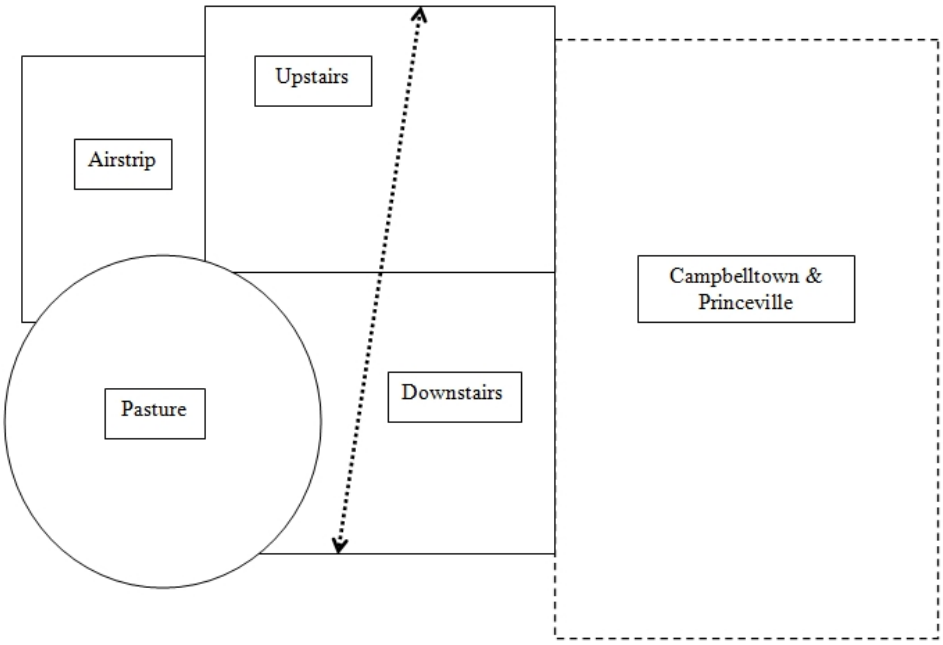
directly into contact with the Potaro/Mahdia goldfield through the presence and activities of B.G. and the crown's desire to supply overseas markets with large quantities of gold. The "nature" of Potaro/Mahdia was therefore made intelligible through the frameworks and institutions offered by the science of geology (4) – frameworks which enabled the extractive activities of a crown company to serve the economic interests of a colonial authority.

The nature of Mahdia was made intelligible to Miss Polly through her husband, who brought her there because he was also offered a job with B.G. After his death, she began to spend most days sitting on the second-floor porch of her house in central Mahdia, watching the people pass and waving in reply to their shouts of "good afternoon." Miss Polly and her husband came to Guyana in 1942 from St. Lucia; they arrived via plantation boat, and moved immediately to the interior, to Tumatumari, where he had been posted to a job for B.G. When the company collapsed in the 1950s, they moved on to Mahdia, where her husband bought his own land dredge. She opened a store, selling supplies for miners to take out to the backdam; the store, which her son now owns (though "he only sell rum"), takes up the ground floor of her house. Last year, Miss Polly became the longest-living resident of Mahdia, having arrived a decade before Brother Gavin. Her description of the changes to Mahdia sounded much like his: the area used to be "all bush," and though some of the original structures still stand, like her own house, the town has more shops, more people, and more land.

Mistah Alloo is Miss Polly's cousin, and shares a similar story of migration to Mahdia. He arrived in Mahdia two years prior to Miss Polly, in 1962, from St. Lucia. He was twenty-one and wanted to join his older brothers in the backdam. They were already working for B.G. and invited him to come make money with them, though "it was mostly diamond around that time." By the time he arrived, the company had already shut down, and Mistah Alloo took a job as a *baïr* for a crew of medium-scale miners. His family in St. Lucia had owned a bake-shop, and taking over the role of cook in the mining camps was, for Mistah Alloo, an

easy transition. Later, when Mistah Alloo owned his own dredge, he made sure he paid everyone on the crew equal salaries, resentful from his own experiences of being paid less as a *baïr*. Mistah Alloo eventually found economic success as a dredge-owner, earning enough money to buy large portions of land around Mahdia, including most of what is now called "Downstairs," and "Pasture" (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Cognitive Map of Mahdia



Source: Field-notes. Dotted line with arrows indicates Avenue of the Republic.

Mistah Alloo's store stands at what is today the "Downstairs" end of Avenue of the Republic – in fact the only road in Mahdia. Built by B.G. for ready access to and from nearby pits and landings, the road was not maintained when the company collapsed. Mistah Alloo salvaged it himself to access his pastures. The townspeople called it "the shortcut," and then later Kanaruk Road (indicating where it led), before it officially became Avenue of the Republic.

"Mahdia not change that much, you know," he told me, in contrast to Miss Polly and Brother Gavin. Beyond the road, he argued that the town has not increased in size, but the buildings are "bigger and fancier now," and that the atmosphere of the place is highly individualistic, as each person tries to get richer than anyone else. "There used to be more cooperation here. Everybody get along with everybody. Not like now." The community cohesion that defined Mahdia when he arrived has, in his eyes, disappeared. Mistah Alloo has now sold most of his land in the town, keeping only his shop at the far end of the road.

B.G.'s tenure did not last long enough for Mistah Alloo to experience its benefits directly, but its connection to the colonial government led to the creation of Mahdia, where he, Brother Gavin, and Miss Polly have now spent most of their lives. Governmentality is defined in one way as the acquisition and maintenance of "security, territory, and population" (Foucault 2007). B.G. represented a form of governmentality through mineral exploration and by capturing a monopoly on a reliable and growing market demand. And as Miss Polly and Mistah Alloo's stories of emigration to Mahdia suggest, the subjects created by this notion of governmentality were primarily miners and miners' families, all of various cultural backgrounds, all brought *to* the resource-rich territory to work the gold and thus secure the area for the colony. After the company ceased operations, however, the culture of mining and quest for gold endured. While the town has inevitably changed in the four decades since its formation, its endurance as a mining centre reiterates Andrew Walsh's (2009) assertion that once a (mining) place is made, it does not go away, and its inhabitants continue to employ creative means of remaking, reinventing, or, in this case, reinforcing what a given place is about.[21] New and re-emerging forms of modern governmentality in relation to resource extraction are part of the historical and contemporary making and meaning of Mahdia.

[21]Andrew Walsh made this point in his closing address at the Mining Across Generations: Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Conference at CRASSH, Cambridge University, on 17 January 2009.

Colonial Regulation and Influence: Amerindians

As colonial exploration and subsequent governmental approaches to mining demonstrates, British considerations of mineral wealth in their South American territory often gave little regard to Amerindians, despite the fact that the minerals were – are – located underneath historical Amerindian territory. Colonial officials viewed Amerindians as representative of various possibilities throughout respective administrative reigns: before Emancipation, they were allies to be "gratified and propitiated with presents; after Emancipation, simple people to be protected" (Menezes 1977: 257). It has been suggested that because of the "remoteness of the Indians from urban society and their reluctance for urban contact [and] the paucity of their numbers, British native policy was neither as vigorous nor controversial as it was in Africa, Australia, or New Zealand" (Menezes 1977: 17). Indeed, by the 1860s, "gold metal had become more interesting and lucrative than brown people" (257).

Approaches to gold and to Amerindians (as formalized conceptual, separated, and somewhat arbitrary categories) have been and continue to be cast in different political pots. However, there is obvious overlap between the natural resource and these cultural groups when viewed through the historical lens of expanding governmentality. A five-stage narrative demonstrates the ways in which this overlap occurred, and the ways in which the aims and form of governmentality, as an apparatus of the state by which people are rendered "citizens" (Foucault 1995), was extended to include Amerindians in British Guiana. The following ethnographic contextualization also reiterates Whitehead's (2002) assertion that that the Amerindian – from his perspective, specifically Patamuna – experience of modernity in Guyana has been largely in terms of this ongoing spread of governmentality (176), beginning in the British colonial period.

Stage One: "Contamination" and "Extinction"

In the early period of their survey explorations and mapping of Guiana's interior, William Hilhouse and Robert Schomburgk, of the Royal Geographical Society, made a clear distinction between the "pure Indians" of the interior, and "sluttish Indians" of the coast (Burnett 2002: 15). The Amerindians of the interior were considered uncontaminated by colonial influence and settlements, whereas those living closer to the coast were corrupted by the vices (mostly rum) of plantation life (Burnett 2002: 15; Menezes 1977). This portrayal of indigenous people as constantly in danger of moral corruption formed a critical element in the collective representation of Amerindians by Europeans as fragile, childlike, and in need of protection for fear of extinction (Burnett 2002). And while European civilizing forces were seen as the cause of this seemingly inevitable crisis of cultural extinction, they were also seen as the remedy; only "civilization" could save Guiana's Amerindians from disappearing (Menezes 1979).

Stage Two: Labour

Civilization referred specifically to "British" civilization, and meant settled plantation life on the colony's Atlantic coast. By the 1840s, when labour shortage in Guiana's coastal plantations became acute (and when proposals had been made to import labour from India, or encourage settlement of free blacks from the United States in the colony), Amerindians offered a "docile" and readily accessible labour force, "available for the easy work of a few missionaries, who at the same time would be part of a philanthropic project to save the Amerindian from slavery, moral decay, and possible extermination" (Burnett 2002: 16; Despres 1967).

Stage Three: Defense of Territory and Endurance of Colonial Economy

Colonial authorities also realized the vital role Amerindians could play in defending colonial boundaries during ongoing disputes with Brazil and Venezuela over where the boundary lines should be drawn – disputes often

centering on gold deposits; thus, Amerindians could aid in maintaining colonial possession of the interior. The loyalty of "migratory" Amerindians and territorial possession were made effectively synonymous (Burnett 2002: 23). Amerindians in the interior were armed to maintain colonial territory and defend against external aggression; they also controlled slave population runaways from the coast, and thus maintained the plantation economy of the colony (Despres 1967: 43). Amerindians were given the heavy symbolic and unasked for burden of ensuring the durability of the plantation economy, and thus, of the tropical colony itself; in the words of explorer William Hilhouse, "It is morally certain that [Indian] neutrality…would ensure the instantaneous ruin of the colony" (Roth 1934: 32).

Stage Four: Forced Settlement and Increased Missionary Activity

In positing the potential for cultivation of lands in the interior for profit, Hilhouse also pointed out that the only problem was that the land was already inhabited by Amerindians and "we cannot exterminate them" (Burnett 2002: 24). He articulated a gnomic synopsis of colonial logic in then stating the alternative: "extend the benefit of colonization to the Indians, in return for occupation of their lands" (Burnett 2002: 24). This meant establishing areas of land in the interior for settlement through both the spread of farming and the spread of religion, thereby saving souls while also contributing to the productivity of the colony (Menezes 1977). Amerindians of Guiana therefore represented potential defenders of territory, consumers of territorial goods, and cash-crop agriculturalists, which were – not coincidentally – the dominant colonial needs.

Stage Five: Protection and Reservations

The first attempt at a coherent piece of legislation focusing exclusively on Amerindians was in the 1902 Aboriginal Peoples Protection Ordinance. The Ordinance provided for the establishment of ten reservations around the territory

and for the appointment of an official Protector of Indians (Despres 1967: 44; James 2003: 2), and was repealed in 1910 by the Aboriginal Indian Ordinance. Both Ordinances were developed on the premise of protecting Amerindians from European corruption and, by extension, extinction. According to British Colonial official P.S. Perberdy, "the whole object of protection is to keep the protected group away from temptation and outside bad influences and from exploitation until the Authorities are satisfied that sufficient advancement has been made to warrant protection unnecessary" (Perberdy 1948: 38). Reservations were supposedly "safe zones" for indigenous people. In 1951, the 1910 Ordinance was replaced by the Amerindian Ordinance 1951, imposing a "pseudo-democratic" system of governance on Amerindian communities, and encouraging these communities to elect their own captains, who in turn were to "carry out such instructions as may be issued to him by the Commissioner or District Commissioner and to "maintain law and order in his area" (James 2003: 3). Reservations introduced two new ways of life to Amerindians: forced settlement for people generally considered "semi-nomadic" (Despres 1967: 42), and the introduction of self-government, or fledgling notions of autonomy, to Guyana's indigenous peoples. The latter concept has been overshadowed in post-independence periods by policies of integration and assimilation.

Colonial constructions of Amerindian identity and "needs" did not often accurately reflect the reality of Amerindian life-ways in the interior. Further, explorers and colonial figures were heavily dependent upon Amerindians for survival in this vast hinterland (Henfrey 1964), and while this fact is often stated in exploration records and in literature on the subject, it is often only in passing. Such references, however, establish that Amerindians were responsible for supplying local or indigenous knowledge of geography, geology, and ecology to early explorers and officials, which allowed for initial forays, later settlement, and any extraction of resources in the interior. Thus, while some indigenous peoples have experienced modernity through subjectification by the spread of

governmentality, they have also acted as the agents – willing and forced – of this expansion.

"So this is the Way the Amerindians Used to Live, Long Ago": Grandma and Grandpa Barrie

Grandma and Grandpa Barrie are both agents and targets of this governmental change. Three weeks after I had arrived in Mahdia, Grandpa Barrie stood on the front steps of his house, donning his Roots Canada t-shirt as always, and asked me what I wanted to know, what stories I wanted to hear again. It was late afternoon. He stood while his wife, Grandma Barrie, sat on the bench beside me, having returned from their farm with a *warishi* full of fresh cassava bread. Grandma and Grandpa Barrie moved with their children, including Paula, to Mahdia in the 1970s. They came from Paramakatoi, or PK, because they could not walk up and down the mountain anymore to get to the farm they kept there. PK is a Patamuna village high in the Pakaraima Mountains near Guyana's border with Brazil – so high apples grow there, I was often told. The land around Mahdia, so close to the Potaro and Essequibo Rivers, is flat and densely populated in comparison to the scaling heights and relative isolation of PK.

Grandpa Barrie was born in PK. His grandfather came from Patamuna territory in what is now Brazil. His grandmother was born in Paramakatoi, or PK, and so were his own parents. He met his wife when she moved to PK later in life, and they married in 1956. Grandma Barrie's biography, on the other hand, is one of constant movement, as she was born on a farm near Kamarung, and taken to Tumatumari before she moved to PK. Neither of them knows exactly how old they are, but they remember when Amerindians used to wear "only cloths," and they remember when the missionaries came to PK. In 1949, following World War II, evangelical missionaries arrived and "told Amerindians to change everything," Grandpa Barrie told me. Missionaries brought two major changes to

Amerindian (primarily Patamuna) lifeways in this place: they made tradition sinful, and they forced formal European education on an oral society.

"Everything we do was sin," Grandpa Barrie explained, like making *casiri* and *paiwari*, drinks made from fermented or charred cassava, even though "nobody drink to excess." Then Grandma Willie tapped her head and announced, "I got nothing in my head, no education in my head," referring to formal education; though she was told to take English classes by missionaries in PK, she stopped after two years (Grandpa Barrie took six years of classes). They both told me that not all the changes brought by the missionaries were bad: "They brought bags of clothing instead of just cloth."

I spent many days on Grandma and Grandpa's front porch or in the kitchen at night, eating *tuma* and cassava bread. They called me *ulee-chung*, the "little girl" who wanted to know about Amerindians. They reminded me throughout my time with them that, prior to the missionaries, before the British, it was "hard, hard living…long ago, was hard." But in many ways, it seems to be even harder now. Whenever we talked about gold mining, Grandma and Grandpa Barrie reiterated that mining is now ruining "traditional Amerindian heritage," as miners "see big land on map and choose it, but they don't know we're living here, and they don't care," a change from the days when they washed down the gold themselves in the creek. Grandma Barrie pointed to the Mahdia Creek and told me she used to be able to collect dinner down there, because haimara was plentiful. However, the mercury that is used in mining, and that funnels into the water, makes the fish unsafe to eat. "I fed up with chicken," Grandma Barrie admitted one afternoon. Her youngest son agreed, as he walked into the house after bathing, cleaning the mud from the backdam off his skin.

These disparate parts of Grandma and Grandpa's life in Campbelltown are joined in modernity. Through the stories they told me each day, Grandma and Grandpa Barrie repeatedly articulated a central paradox of political and cultural

change, which was also enforced in their daily actions. This paradox is a product of the process of governmental modernization; it is based on the idea that the traditions of the past or the possibilities of the future are always more desirable than opportunities offered in this place by the present, despite the fact that the past and the future offer antithetical realities and take place in completely different settings.

Part Two: Independence and Modernization

Creating a Nation, Creating a Market

Grandma and Grandpa Barrie have been observers of, and participants in, the process of modernization since they moved to Campbelltown in the early 1970s, when Guyana was still "Guyana Emergent" (Manley 1979). As colonial governance depended primarily on dominating arable land to expand plantation territory, and on opportunistic extractive industry such as mining and logging, the transition to a post-colonial government resulted in a new state which relied on scarce administrative resources to stay afloat. Guyana's independence signalled the beginning of a twenty-year period of isolationist economic policies – including periods of intensive nationalization – accompanied by centralized political decision-making processes often regarded as despotic (Colchester 1999). This regime, called Cooperative Socialism by leader Forbes Burnham, proposed an autarkic approach to economic development that stressed the exploitation of local labour and natural resources (Colchester 1999).

After a twenty year tenure, Guyana's Cooperative Socialism left the country floating in massive arrears. A combination of restricted colonial development, transitional phases of economic isolation and integration, and an increasingly fluid global market, resulted in the country's total dependence on international economic structures (Smith 1991). International pressure led to the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes (Colchester 1999; MacKay 2004) sponsored

and implemented by the World Bank and IMF, which stressed the economic potential of export-driven extractive industries. In Guyana's case, the refocus to an economy based on raw material export demanded extraction of bauxite and diamonds, trade of exotic flora and fauna, and led to the re-intensification of plantation agriculture, logging, and gold mining.

This renewed intensification of extractive industry is today combined, antithetically, with burgeoning rainforest conservation initiatives that are the enactment of "ecological governmentality" or environmentality (Agrawal 2005; Darier 1996), and the re-working of capitalist modernity in an era of unprecedented globalization (Zimmerer 2000). These conservation initiatives, including the creation of protected areas, research centres, legislation, and affiliations, are also efforts by the Government of Guyana to appease the international partners upon whom it has been economically dependent and with whom it hopes to continue be connected through a variety of arenas. The realities of these initiatives are only now beginning to manifest themselves in legal and ecological domains, and offer plentiful material for discussion of the spread of new, alternative forms of governmentality in the ongoing process of modernization. However, the day-to-day realities of my field-site lend themselves to a specific focus on extractive industry, as gold mining and the social relations and networks it creates invite ever-increasing governmental and market involvement that depend on drastic modification, rather than conservation of, this rainforest landscape.

National Policy: Mining

The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) is supposed to regulate things like the use of mercury that Grandma and Grandpa Barrie complained about so often. The Commission was formed in 1979, as the successor to the Geological Survey of British Guiana. It is now the ministry of the state responsible for "unlocking the mineral and petroleum wealth of Guyana," a

ministry whose extensive roles include: "to act as a development change agent…to act as a national repository of information…to regulate on behalf of the government all activities in the mineral sector" (GGMC 2009). This ministry is also responsible for promoting national economic growth through mineral extraction technically legislated by the 1989 Mining Act, but for which there is currently not enough infrastructural or personnel support to provide proper surveillance in the interior, leading to much illegal mining activity[22] in areas around Mahdia.

The GGMC headquarters are located in Georgetown. As part of a much larger repertoire, the Commission oversees and grants applications for four scales of operation: small-scale claims span 1500 by 800 feet (457 by 243 metres), or one mile (1.6 kilometre) of navigable river; medium-scale prospecting and mining permits apply to land between fifty to 1200 acres (0.20 to 4.9 square kilometres) each; prospecting licenses apply to parcels of land that range between 500 to 12,800 acres (two to 51.8 square kilometres) each. Reconnaissance surveys over large areas are also possible, with the eventual objective of applying for a prospecting license for favourable, mineral-rich ground selected on the basis of results from the reconnaissance aerial and field surveys. The latter two scales of operation generally apply to large-scale mining operations. Large-scale operations in Guyana usually involve hard rock mining, rather than the extraction of placer deposits, and also tend to be funded by foreign investment, and, in general, are carefully controlled, guarded, and supported.[23]

Small- and medium-scale mining is legally restricted to Guyanese citizens, though these open-pit and river dredge operations often involve *garimpeiros* from Brazil. Small-scale operations usually involve teams of two to four people,

[22] Illegal mining activity here refers to mining taking place on land for which a license or permit has not been granted according to Section 14(1)(a)(ii) of the Mining Act, or in a manner that violates the Environmental Management Agreement each miner must sign with the GGMC.
[23] Large-scale operations are also more difficult to gain access to as an independent researcher. Though large-scale mining was not the specific topic of my research, attempts to gain access to two sites during my fieldwork were unsuccessful.

with shared investments in rudimentary engines and basic equipment, like hoses, and operate on one or two acres of land or kilometres of waterway at one time. Dredges used in medium-scale operations are owned by an absentee owner, who employs a General Manager and pit foreman to work in the backdam and ensure smooth running of the process and security of the production (Roopnaraine 1996: 116). Medium-scale operations require four other categories of crew members: marack man,[24] jet man, pit man, and *baïr*.

Land dredges were imported from Brazil in the 1970s, and require a constant source of water to function; river dredging occurs on moving waterways. The process by which land and river dredging occurs is similar, with each ideally consisting of two engines. The first powers a high-pressure hose or cutter used to jet away the land or river bottom.[25] On land, the water forms a slurry with loosened gravel. The second engine in both land and water operations is a gravel pump, used to suck up the slurry or loosened river bottom; a pit man oversees this process to ensure no large stones, tree roots, or other large debris block up or damage the hose. The slurry emerges from the other end of this hose onto a sluice box, which resembles a playground slide, and where heavier particles (such as gold) are caught; the rest of the load[26] is released into a tailings pond or moving waterway. On river dredges, the sluice box takes up a large part of the available room on what is essentially a floating barge; on land, the sluice box is usually positioned at the edge of an open pit. When the sluice is washed down, mercury is mixed with gold to make an amalgam; excess mercury is usually

[24] This is the phonetic spelling for the name given to the person who operates one of two dredge engines; I was unable to find written sources that made use of the term.

[25] On river dredges, a person who fills the role of "diver" is often attached underwater to the end of this hose, in order to direct its aim and remove necessary large debris. This job is quite dangerous, as the possibility of river bank cave-ins is high. Members of dredge teams tend to be paid according to an established hierarchy, and in relation to the amount of gold left in the sluice box in a wash-down. The GM makes the most money, and the diver tends to make the least. However, missile dredges have replaced the need for human divers in many operations, and also made extraction more efficient.

[26] One of the consequences of river dredging is the death of many animals, as they are sucked up the pump along with tree roots, rocks, minerals, vegetation, and so forth, and are almost always killed in the process. Some of these animals, including turtles, can provide a source of fresh food for miners on the river dredges.

squeezed out and saved to minimize expenses, though a large quantity of it is often released into waterways. "Burning the gold" is the final step in the extraction process: the amalgam is placed under a crucible or any convenient vessel, and set over heat or flame. The mercury boils off in a puff of vapour, revealing bright yellow gold ready for storage, pricing, and sale. The whole process is repeated until all gold has been recovered.

As part of obtaining a mining claim and a permit to operate, all miners must sign an Environmental Management Agreement with the GGMC to ensure that environmental impacts of dredge operations will be minimized. This agreement establishes provisions for activities such as exploration disturbance, deforestation, and settling/filling ponds (Veiga 1998: 6). Despite these agreements, small- and medium-scale mining are understood to be the most ecologically destructive forms of extraction (particularly in comparison to large-scale operations) because of the rate and intensity of the extraction, the difficulty of surveying the areas of land on which they occur, the ever-fluctuating numbers of people included in these sometimes illicit operations, and the oft-outdated or defective equipment used. Both forms require entrepreneurial motivation, intensely competitive temperaments, and enduring patience from people who must suffer through the boom-and-bust cycles of gold rushes, and for whom there exist no social or economic safety nets if the work proves to be all bust. The draw of a big boom, however, and the current high price of gold,[27] continues to draw people into the interior at a rate that cannot be maintained, equalled, or regulated by the GGMC. The allure of gold is also rumoured to draw GGMC officers into allowing illegal mining activity to endure, or into buying and selling the precious metal themselves – actions which are strictly against the Commission's protocol.

The GGMC in Georgetown and Mahdia

[27] Gold was worth close to $1,000 CAD per ounce during my fieldwork, reflecting an almost record-high for the first time in thirty years (taking inflation rates into account).

I spent every afternoon at the GGMC headquarters in Georgetown for two weeks. Most afternoons, there was a solid line-up of men at the cash register, wearing heavy rubber boots, waiting to pay for new permits, applying for licenses, waiting to renew old permits, or buy mandated equipment, like retorts.[28] Most of these men are miners on small dredge teams, and come to town only briefly to follow official protocol and pick up any needed supplies before returning to backdams in the interior.

In the interior, these same men are regulated by GGMC field officers. Miners travel the eight hours from Georgetown to Mahdia in large supply trucks, in overloaded cruisers, or, more frequently, by public minibus along a bumpy gravel highway. Three-quarters of the way to Mahdia, at Mango Landing, the vehicles must cross the Essequibo River. During the rainy season, when the river levels can increase by up to six metres, the pontoon cannot cross, barring travel from Mango Landing further southwards. Gasoline is trucked into the interior by this route, and while I conducted fieldwork, all of Mahdia but the GGMC Mining Station ran out of gasoline. The Station is also the only house in town in which there is a twenty-four-hour-a-day supply of electricity, with constant access to cable television and the internet through a satellite dish. The rest of town must wait until current comes on at 6pm every night, and only some can afford to pay for it. National government support through employment allows for a livelihood assurance unknown to the majority of its citizens. This presence of the national government in Mahdia implies the spread of governmentality, and its constituent factors – including relative ideas of security. Ongoing modernization by the state, however, explains why only one field officer is appointed to this area, and furthermore, why feelings of security are not yet engrained in the constantly-fluctuating population.

[28] Retorts are glass "bowls" used in the separation of gold from rock using mercury. The instruments were mandated for use in 1993, and are technically supposed to prevent toxic fumes from escaping into the atmosphere during the burning-off process. Retorts are only used in small-scale mining, and despite the mandate, tend to be used more often as an extra cooking pot.

Chase Keene was appointed as the primary field officer for this mining district in 2007, and thus began living at the GGMC Mining Station house for most of the year. His routine in Mahdia carried the same rhythm each day I saw him. He woke at 6am, and climbed on the quad or cruiser provided to him by the Commission to ride out to the backdam and check whether miners were acting in accordance with the Mining Act and with GGMC regulations. He rode through town in either vehicle wearing his brown GGMC uniform and the same boots most miners wear; when he appeared, however, other cruisers and pedestrians moved out his way (albeit sometimes reluctantly). A large and imposing coastlander, Keene was nevertheless younger than many of the men in the town. He moved to Mahdia to do his job, but certainly not to make friends, telling me once that he made a point of never smiling in Mahdia in public. "Nobody would listen to me if I smiled," he said with certainty, and explained that GGMC officers used to be allowed to carry guns, and while they are not anymore, most miners still do not know this; Chase did not do anything to quell fears of his imagined weapon. In the next instant, he repeatedly stressed how much he would rather be home on the coast, with his friends, where he is always more relaxed, where there is already an established order to things, rather than where he carried the burden of trying to enforce a kind of order himself.

Chase's job description included close monitoring of all scales of mining, though he spent more time investigating smaller ventures. Throughout my time in Mahdia, he visited the closest large-scale operation once, and unless I was able to gain special permission from the Environmental Protection Agency, I was not allowed to go with him.[29] Chase's day-to-day investigation depended on straightforward protocol. If miners break the rules, by, for example, "shitting in

[29] By contrast, in order to visit the small-and medium-scale operations, I simply showed up in the backdam and asked if I could go down into the pits, or clamber aboard a river dredge. It is highly probable that proposals by a young, white female to visit the backdam were so unusual that I was allowed to visit these sites for lack of a certain alternative response.

the water,"[30] he could fine them and/or give them a cease-to-work form, which forces miners to pack up their equipment and stop the dredge motors from running. If the men continue to mine in spite of such warnings, GGMC protocol stipulates time in court and a "big, big fine."

During the summer of 2008, the tailings pond at a local backdam overflowed during one of the many storms of the rainy season, and seeped into a pond that was a popular swimming hole. Chase visited this backdam repeatedly and warned the men there to do something about it, but he never prevented them from working. While he spoke of strictly enforcing regulations, he was also aware of the repercussions of preventing people from doing what they did to make money and to survive. These were people he came to know well because of his job. The nature of Chase's job, compounded by the fact that he shared an off-duty social space with miners, ensured that he was well aware of the potentially debilitating effects his enforcement of regulations could have on miners around Mahdia. Thus, though the state modernization process appears to be "finished" in terms of the making of laws and policies, this process is in reality ongoing, as evidenced by a lack of infrastructure and personnel required to properly enforce state regulations, and, more importantly, to achieve (national) governmentality, including livelihood security for the population, in interior regions.

National Policy: Amerindian Land Titles

While Chase Keen was responsible for monitoring "thousands of acres" of land and associated land-use on state lands around Mahdia, he was not responsible for regulating any mining activity occurring on contiguous Amerindian land titles, including Campbelltown/Princeville. Land titles are self-governed entities, on which mining activity happens at the discretion of the village council, or local

[30] "Shitting in the water" refers to releasing tailings – including mercury- or cyanide-laden effluent – directly into freshwater rivers, instead of a properly-secured tailings pond.

indigenous government, though the size and boundaries of land titles are determined by the state.

The Amerindian Lands Commission (ALC) was established in 1966 with a mandate to determine areas of Amerindian residency at the territory's national independence, and to submit recommendations to the new government regarding rights of tenure to be given to Amerindian communities, including the nature of the rights to be conferred. Its report, presented in 1969, stated that indigenous peoples in Guyana claimed 43,000 square miles (111,370 square kilometres) of land across the nation-state. Many of these claims were rejected by the ALC as "excessive and beyond the ability of residents to develop and administer" (James 2003: 3). The ALC recommended that 128 communities receive communal freehold title to 24,000 square miles (62,160 square kilometres) of land collectively, including mineral rights to a depth of fifty feet. However, the ALC did not visit all areas of Guyana occupied by Amerindians and did not account for a number of communities in its final report. In 1976, the Amerindian Act replaced the Indian Ordinance of 1951, and was the first attempt to implement the recommendations of the ALC by the inclusion section 20A(1), which transferred land titles to the Amerindian communities listed and described in the schedule to the Act (the original list put forward by the ALC in 1969). Today, approximately 77 of 120 indigenous communities have legal titles to portions of what are referred to as "ancestral lands" and lands which they currently occupy and use, though a common protest (reiterated in my own comparison between personal and cognitive maps and state-produced maps) is that the description of land titles on paper is not consistent with descriptions on the ground.

Conflict over land title laws tends to arise from two major sources. First, areas of land obtained in title are often seen to bear little relation to common land-use practices of the communities, including the fact that many Amerindian communities have not been historically sedentary (Despres 1967: 42; James 2003: 3). Second, the conditions to being granted title are plentiful. Titles do not

include rivers and river banks up to 66 feet inland, minerals or rights to mine, or state-owned buildings. Similarly, titles may be revoked or boundaries modified if in the public interest,[31] and the state may resume occupation of lands up to ten miles (16 kilometres) from an international order in the interest of defense, public safety, or public order (James 2003: 4; Mining Act 1998; Wilson and Parker 2007). The most conspicuous disputes related to land titles are focused on the ecologically destructive effects of mining. These disputes are not always cases of foreign intrusion, but are complex in that many of the people mining on titles are Amerindians – and residents of the titles – themselves. I address the potential cultural logic behind this in the later *Imagination* section.

The Campbelltown/Princeville Village Council

Thirteen Community Development Officers (CDOs) are currently employed by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MAA) to liaise between the capital and land titles around the country, and to "look after the governance aspect, work along with the village council…education, health matters, welfare projects, things like that."[32] Community Development Officers monitor the interior, working closely with communities to determine the needs of the people in these places, and reporting this information to the MAA in Georgetown. One CDO told me, "We get first-hand information from people because…it doesn't always pay off when you try to deal by remote control." He also emphasized that, "We only recommend at the Ministry, but they [the village] take the final approval."

Land titles are self-governed by a village council. The Campbelltown/Princeville village council meets monthly, and is composed of seven people, including a *Toushau*, or Captain, Vice-Captain, Treasurer, and Junior and Senior

[31] This term is not defined, but is ubiquitous in government property rights policy beyond Guyana, and including in Canada.
[32] The role of CDOs was explained to me at the MAA in Georgetown by the Principal Regional Development Officer.

Councillors; the council includes both men and women,[33] with each councillor holding a minimum three-year tenure. This form of local government is responsible for things like helping families solve household problems, and helping people on the land title find work or complete jobs. Village public meetings are held quarterly, with the entire population of the land title invited. Decisions regarding application from outsiders to live on the title, from researchers (like myself) to conduct fieldwork on the title, and about how to use finance grants,[34] are examples of topics of discussion at these meetings. Everything is spoken in both Patamuna and English. Further, decisions are not made without unanimous support from the residents present at the meetings (though it is the prerogative of each resident to attend), and some meetings can last for up to twenty-four hours. The activities of the village council thus demonstrate the "markedly egalitarian ethos that defines Amerindian social organization" (Forte 1996: 16).

Given this structure of indigenous governance, land titles represent areas of established governmentality in the hinterland. The interaction between modern and traditional means of governing, and between state and indigenous systems, as well as the result of this interaction, can also be conceived of as an "alternative" form of modernity (de Sousa Santos 2002: 313; Gaonkar 2001), in the sense that an increasingly stable source of authority or power does not emanate from a single source for Amerindians (or, in many ways, for anyone). However, ongoing debates about the effects of state power on Amerindian land titles and the role of the state and its partners in determining or undermining

[33] Grandma Barrie was the *Toushau* of Campbelltown/Princeville in the 1970's, during "Burnham-time" (Forbes Burnham's leadership period from 1964 to 1985). During the latter part of this period, many produce items were in short supply or rationed; Grandma Barrie won a national award for teaching the larger community to make cassava bread in place of other kinds of food.

[34] Village councils can apply for grants (worth $1M GY, or $5,500 CAD) from the government to initiate community-based business ventures. In the past on the Campbelltown/Princeville land title, one grant paid for the construction of a market, where title residents can sell farm produce, wares, and crafts. Another grant was used to purchase a boat motor that is still used for teams of people to catch fish – food that is shared in the community. A grant is currently funding the start-up fees for a furniture-making business.

specifically indigenous ways of life and land-use and –access rights are part of a larger process of state modernization currently emanating from Georgetown. I discuss in more detail ideas of identity and what constitutes traditional culture under the relativistic conditions of modernity in ensuing sections of this thesis. Here, I return to the capital to illustrate the modernization process as it more neatly fits Giddens' "expectations" (Fergson 1999; Giddens 1998).

Carifesta X: Imagined Nationalism

When I arrived in Guyana, preparations were well underway in the capital for Carifesta X, the tenth annual Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts, set to take place two months later, in August 2008. The spectacle is a "three-week exposition of art in all its forms…[showing] the similarities and differences of the people of the Caribbean" (Carifesta 2007) with visual and performance arts, culinary workshops, literature readings, and "traditional" craftsmanship, all displayed in venues around the country at the end of the summer. Carifesta X was supposed to draw large crowds from the Caribbean islands, as well as European and North American tourists. The amount of energy that had been devoted to preparations was conspicuous throughout the city of approximately 250,000 people, with billboards on every street-corner, advertisements on every radio, and constant commercials on the television. Construction crews worked long hours in the intense heat of early June sunshine, before the rains started for the season. The smell of tar permeated the air as road crews worked double-time to fill in ever-present potholes as mini-buses drove on, honking, and with music blasting.

The festival was originally set to take place in Barbados, but economic infeasibility gave Guyana the first opportunity it had been offered to host the event in over thirty years. This was marred by the early 2008 shooting of twenty-three people by the gunman known as "Fine Man" along Guyana's Atlantic Coast. Efforts to ensure Carifesta was a land-slide success in a secure setting

were magnified following these violent crimes. The Government was adamant that the "shooting rampages" do nothing to scare away potential spectators, though this was wishful thinking, at best, given travel warnings issued by foreign governments about travel to Guyana, and the atmosphere of obvious caution and tension that still permeated the capital six months later. Nevertheless, the motto of Carifesta X hung everywhere:

One Caribbean, One Purpose – Our Culture, Our Life

This motto was created by the Government of Guyana as part of its Carifesta marketing campaign. While this slogan refers to the Caribbean region as a whole, its potential application to Guyana alone is startling. Tourist advertisements for potential visitors to Guyana often capitalize on the cultural diversity of this "Land of Six Peoples" as a selling point. Anthropological literature of coastal Guyana has primarily focused on the ways in which historical relations between different ethnic, religious, political, and social groups are played out in present-day interactions and performances (Despres 1967; Drummond 1980; Williams 1991) Similarly, the Carifesta website posits the point of the festival as "for and about the people…reaffirming its understanding of the value and power of our collective cultures" (Carifesta 2007). However, as the above motto suggests, the underlying point of the festival from the perspective of the Guyanese state was more about a demonstration of unified peoples, rather than about a proud re-assertion of the pluralism (not limited to the cultural) inherent to the region and, specifically, the country.

One afternoon, while we waited to be allowed through a construction zone, my driver shook his head at yet another billboard. For the tenth time in two days, he denounced all the money being spent on these Carifesta rehabilitation projects as a waste; he thought the government was still cutting corners, doing just enough to last until Carifesta was finished, but that the same problems, the same grime, the same disorder, would creep over the capital again come September.

“Dem boy don’ use ‘nuff tar so da holes jus’ get bigga bigga next time rain come,” he explained to me. “Why dey don’ use nuff now and make it be more permanent?” I did not have an answer for him. That night, a bomb was discovered underneath the stage of the national theatre; its discovery ignited citizens’ views on government spending for this festival, and specifically the consequent lack of social support programs seen by many as more important than a “big lime.” Days later, an independent television channel was blocked from broadcast after editorial remarks from a reporter about Carifesta incensed some government representatives.

The intention of Carifesta X as I interpreted it within the Guyanese context was an opportunity for the state to disseminate a reified vision of a unified national community to a wider public. The state’s capacity to organize and host such an event became an opportunity defend national sovereignty and firmly demonstrate state consolidation. However, with acts of violent and threatening resistance to this false – or at least exaggerated – image of unity, the success of the Government of Guyana’s intended meaning and of the validity of Carifesta’s supposed “one purpose,” as suggested by the festival’s motto, remained ambiguous.

I was present at one of President Bharrat Jagdeo’s final visits to inspect Carifesta preparation at the exhibition grounds. He walked the expansive grounds slowly and deliberately, pointing to garbage on the ground, and testing the stability of building structures, followed by a fleet of other government officials. He expressed concern with the event being organized according to schedule and plan. After he finished his tour, he addressed the crowd of works and volunteers who had slowly gathered near him; in his speech, he emphasized the importance of presenting a “clean Guyana” to a wider community of spectators. These spectators, it was implied, were also judges of the unfolding of a normative modernity – something that does not really exist.

Current State-Making Challenges

The disparate pieces of Guyana's history and contemporary politics addressed in this section demonstrate two major themes in the ongoing expansion of governmentality. First, the process can be divisive in the sense that different cultural and social groups are afforded unequal rights and opportunities, which have been reiterated through processes of modernization. Second, and paradoxically, the expansion of governmental authority has the effect of incorporating relatively isolated places into a broader national political consciousness, and thereby also unifying sometimes-divided peoples through ideas of what they do and do not want from the authority that governs them – including that authority at all. I discuss different strategies for gaining upward economic mobility in the following section. I conclude here, however, with the statement, "As our histories change, so do our worlds," (Klein 1997: 6). The ongoing process of modernization in Guyana will continue to change the "world" of this particular South American country, and the particular places and people that constitute it.

MOBILITY AND THE POLITICS OF POSSIBILITY IN THE RAINFOREST

Mobility in Modernity

Anthropological conceptions of the term "mobility" vary considerably, though it has been a central trope in studies of migrant labour and flexible citizenship since the end of the twentieth century (Dumett 1998; Ong 1999; Osella and Osella 2000). Mobility relates to the circulation of people, things, and ideas that effect change in areas and on populations because of the nature and very fact of their circulation. The term also emphasizes human agency, and varying capacities for people (as individuals or as groups) to achieve a different quotidian reality that more closely matches Utopian idea(s) of the future – however near or far away.

Mobility is key to understanding modernity, because, despite the possibility that modernity might never actually exist anywhere, ideals of modernity are continually appealed to in people's shifting relations of power, economic endeavours, and identity-crafting (Escobar 2008). These ideals produce fragmentation and contradiction in local practice; and such forms of discontinuity are, paradoxically, based on specific historical trajectories (Latour 2003; Tsing 2005). As relations of power and identity-crafting form the foundations of the other two ethnographic sections of this thesis, I situate a discussion of mobility in modernity on economic endeavours, placing particular emphasis on the ways in which they help illustrate paradoxes of modernity as it leads people to and from Mahdia.

Mobility in the Anthropology of Mining

A focus on mobility in the anthropology of mining has been primarily directed at the South Pacific, sub-Saharan Africa, and South America. Works in this field

tend to examine facets of political, economic, and social mobility, though they may not be directly identified or labelled as such. I delimit some major streams here, though it is almost impossible to disentangle one from the other in ethnographic context. One stream explores opportunities for upward mobility in relation to regional migrations to places for employment in mines, often shedding light on historical and/or ethnic positionality as it is re-contextualized and reshaped in mines and mining camps (Crush and James 1995; Dumett 1998; Shilaro 2008; Tshitereke 2006). This is particularly evident in the South African context, as the migrant labour system in the mining industry is one of the major legacies of the apartheid era, and a principal development problem for a post-apartheid, democratic government (Crush and James 1995: 14) Another stream focuses on the role of spiritual and religious symbolism and imagery in shaping the historical consciousness and indigenous or local interpretations of the physical act of mining (Comaroff and Comaroff 1987; Kirsch 2006; Taussig 1980). A common angle in these works is specifically the ways in which "evil" takes (new) form and is understood in relation to mining. This is linked to a third stream of political economy studies that relate the industry to social and political movements, often for land-use and –access rights and assertions of discrete cultural identity, and borne of unfair working conditions, oppressive corporations, and/or the expansion of governmental sovereignty (Godoy 1985; Hyndman 1994; MacMillan 1995; McPherson 2003; Nash 1979; O'Faircheallaigh 2006).

It is only within the last decade that the anthropology of mining, and its common focus – directly or indirectly – on mobility, has begun to question the often-monolithic characteristics of state, corporate, and community forms of agency (Ballard and Banks 2003). The last emphasis has resulted in increasing attention towards the processes of and people involved in artisanal mining as illustrations of incredibly flexible and constantly changing ideas of agency, belonging, and engagement in relation to overarching political and economic structures, as well as to ecological change (Heemskerk 2002; Hilson and Banchirigah 2009;

Rodriguez Larreta 2002). These works underline what David Cleary (1990) points out in his ethnography of the gold rush in the Brazilian Amazon: the only certainty in mining is a constant *uncertainty* about what the future will bring – and where.

"Punish the Poor People:" Ideas of a Moral Economy as the Basis for Economic Mobility

This sense of uncertainty is amplified in the mining sector in Guyana, but during my limited fieldwork period, appeared to pervade the discourse of daily life across the country. As is the case with most post-colonial nation-states at the periphery of global orders, Guyana's current social, political, and territorial morphology is a condition of its specific past. In the previous section, I demonstrated that the ongoing expansion of governmentality as one part of modernity is both exposing fractures in, and serving to unify, the population of this South American state. One form of solidarity has emerged as a response to perceived problems with the current government and the inequalities its programs foster among citizens. The collective consciousness thus seems imbued with a sense of poverty – poverty in the sense of insufficiency, and of the deficiency of political and social systems that are supposed to support the population; these systems extend to the economic realm but do not constitute it (Sen 2006: 36). Unification among citizens is driven by hopes for a "moral economy" among both urban-dwellers and people living in the interior.[35]

Structurally, "the economy" does not exist, but is something that generalized social groups and relations, notably kinship groups and relations *do*" (Booth 1994: 653), and thus the idea of a moral economy has more to do with social relations and actions than with economic exchanges. In his discussion of "the crowd" in eighteenth century England, E. P. Thompson draws on the idea of a

[35] UNICEF reports a GNI (Gross National Income) per capita of $1300US (2007); similarly, Guyana ranks 97th out of 177 countries in the UNDP 2007/08 Human Development Report.

"moral economy" to outline "a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor" (1971: 79). Acting on the idea of "the economy" as an ever-changing conglomerate of social relations, Scott later places less emphasis on consumers' participation in markets, and more on values and mores (Edelman 2005: 332). He defines moral economy in the following reference to major peasant rebellions[36] in Southeast Asia:

> If we understand the indignation and rage which prompted them to risk everything, we can grasp what I have chosen to call their moral economy: their notion of economic justice and their working definition of exploitation – their view of which claims on their product were tolerable and which intolerable. Insofar as their moral economy is representative of peasants elsewhere, and I believe I can show that it is, we may move toward a fuller appreciation of the normative roots of peasant politics (1976: 4).

A song that became popular in the Caribbean during the summer I conducted fieldwork illustrates the perspective of many Guyanese citizens about the current economic and political straits of the country, their ideas of what is right, and just, and fair, and their quiet daily revolts against what is *not*. The song was written by a group of men from Jamaica, singing about their home island nation. However, when the song played in taxis, minibuses, bars, markets, stores, and in houses throughout Guyana, "Jamaica" was frequently replaced with a loud shout in unison of "Guyana":

> Mi deh ya a town one day
> A par with a white man weh come all the way from Norway
> And him turn to mi and say
> How comes [Guyana] full of so much screwface
> Same time mi lift mi head to the sky
> And a tear drop fall from mi eye

[36] I draw on this literature in this section with recognition of the political implications of the term "peasant" (see Tsing 2003 for a more detailed discussion). I invoke the term stressing the characteristics of settlement in rural areas and some dependence on agriculture for subsistence. However, because Guyana has such a small population, it is relatively "rural" even in urban contexts, and thus I place a discussion of the moral economy of peasants in the entire national frame.

Mi say my youth come we go out for a drive
Mek mi show you why mi cry

(chorus)
Look pon di gully side
Do you see anything fi smile bout
Look at that hungry child
Do you see anything fi smile bout
Look at the school weh deh youth dem go fi get dem education
Do you see anything fi smile bout
Look at the conditions of our police stations
Do you see anything fi smile bout

Same time the bredda say
How can a nation believe in this way
And the next thing him say
How can the government play so many games
Same time mi heart fall to the ground
Cause dis much war where dat comes from
Certain place they are worse than slum
Youth man come

The current ruling government, the one seen as playing so many "games," is the People's Progressive Party, or, colloquially, "Punish the Poor People." What it means to be "poor" in Guyana should be considered economic *and* ontological concepts that are relative across the country's geopolitical continuum (and beyond its national borders), but it is safe to say that poverty commonly includes a sense of exasperation from citizens of various economic backgrounds and positions who do not understand why typical incomes and opportunities do not correlate with the prices of goods needed for individuals and families to survive, or specifically, why rice and sugar cost so much in a country in which they are grown and produced.[37]

Many of the evenings I spent in Georgetown, I was invited to watch television with Grace, the woman who lived next door to me. Long retired from a secure middle-class job as superintendent of schools, she still lived in the house her mother had owned, and unable to survive on small pension cheques from the

[37] The salary for a lecturer at UG, an upper-middle to upper-class class position, is approximately $185,000 GY/yr ($1,100 CAD). However, one bottle of shampoo or one tin of milk powder cost approximately $1,000 GY each, or $5 CAD.

government, she was dependent on offerings of food and assistance from members of her church.[38] We watched the nightly news at 6 p.m., and each time the anchorman reported a crime, a problem of bureaucratic inefficiency or governmental oversight, or of economic inflation, she shrugged her shoulders and sighed. "Dat is Guyana," she told me. Other times she asked me why it had to be that way. Grace invited me into her kitchen whenever friends from her church stopped to visit her. I spent one afternoon with her and an old friend visiting his home country from Brooklyn. They talked with fondness for an hour about "Burnhamtime," when it was safe to leave the house unlocked while you went to the shops, and, earlier, when the British "took care" of everyone.

"How dey run da country now?" Grace asked me and her friend with more vigour than usual at the end of that afternoon. It was a rhetorical question; she went on to tell us that "dem boy all used to wash bikes or some such ting." She was referring to a government minister who spent his early adult life fixing bicycles at the corner cinema. She saw the man as wholly unqualified to be making decisions that affected how much she could afford to eat each day.

This attitude was not restricted to coastlanders. One hot afternoon shortly after arriving in Mahdia, I stopped in a shop to buy a bottle of water. In the cool, dark shade of the awning, the shopkeeper asked if I was a new teacher moved to town. I told him I was there to study gold mining. He stopped cleaning shelves, then emitted a sigh, and moved to stand against the wire mesh that separated him and his goods from customers like me. "So many minerals in Guyana," he said, "but the government…" his voice trailed off and he simply moved his index finger in circles at his temple, indicating crazy, confused. Another man reiterated the same thoughts later on, saying Guyana has "too much resources for our own good."

[38] Poverty and religious zeal appear highly correlated in contemporary Guyana, though distribution and pervasiveness of religion has been driven by other historical factors.

In my interactions with people in Georgetown, Mahdia, and some towns in between, I was constantly met with comments, jokes, or diatribes about the lack of economic opportunity for Guyanese people. This was emphasized particularly through questions, often rhetorical, about the dissonance between Guyana's diversity and abundance of natural resources and the conspicuous poverty of its population, all springing from shared social ideas of what is fair and what is acceptable – and what is unjust. The people presented in this thesis experience differing degrees of economic poverty, which is nevertheless commonly understood as an effect of political misdirection on the part of the national government, and often framed as insinuations of government corruption. This talk of a moral economy (as defined by Thompson above) is in many ways fuelled by the paradoxes created by processes and experiences of modernization, and which are epitomized by individuals living in Mahdia.

Paradoxes of Modernity in Mahdia

Economic mobility serves to explain the livelihood strategies that keep people coming to and leaving places like Mahdia, how this movement is physically achieved and economically rationalized, and how it relates to and is propelled or quelled by larger social networks, including what I have described as a discourse of moral economy in the national context. These livelihood strategies spring from three paradoxes that are part of the expansion and consolidation of state and market in Guyana's interior territory.

Paradox One

Mining towns (boomtowns) appear at the geological sources of mineral wealth, and thus the people who migrate to them are living and working at the centre of the industry. However, these people also become far removed from political centres, and hence marginalized from decisions made about access to, and

regulation of, these minerals. This is not a paradox of modernity that is restricted to Guyana, but finds parallels around the world.

Paradox Two

Mahdia is situated on land "traditionally occupied by Akawaio and Patamona people" (Forte 1996). Amerindians living in this area, particularly residents of the Campbelltown/Princeville land title, have come to depend on gold mining for livelihood as heavily as they resist some of its environmentally destructive effects. This is understood as a cause and effect of modernization, without due regard to a pre-colonial history that includes Amerindians mining for gold.

Paradox Three

Patamuna elders complain that the youth are "losing their culture" (not being able to speak Patamuna and not knowing how to make cassava bread are oft-cited examples of this), while youth complain that their parents and grandparents refuse to teach them what they want to learn and know. This contradiction is based on the intersection between lived knowledge and social imaginings of cultural history.

Three Categories of Mobility in Mahdia

These paradoxes fuel the various strategies people use to achieve upward mobility in Guyana. I use mobility here specifically to refer to the constellation of economic rationalities that a social actor uses in pursuit of something "better," however that is differentially defined. I outline three facets or strategies of upward economic mobility, or livelihood strategies, that that keep people coming to and going from Mahdia: nomadic-opportunistic migration, urban-rural migration, and the realization and convergence of "traditional-modern" assemblages in local practice. Each strategy depends upon mining to greater and

lesser degrees, and involves migration cycles, though the tempo at which these cycles move and change is highly variable. I highlight each strategy with a life history of an actor who embodies this lifestyle and economic aspiration, and/or quantitative data. However, people necessarily use more than one strategy; thus, the distinctions between each category are blurry at best, and the most economically successful embody at least two of three categories.

Urban-Rural

A successful life "working the gold" is based on being where the gold is – and getting there first. As coastlanders constitute a significant majority of the population involved in the mining industry in Guyana's interior, "working the gold" involves constant urban-rural migration – leaving the city, rather than coming to it. This apparently anomalous movement runs contrary to trends in modernization as it has been experienced elsewhere, and, by extension, assumptions of a particular trajectory for the process of modernization; it has thus been termed "circular migration" or "going home" (Ferguson 1999: 82). In Guyana, the phrase "circular migration" is an apt means of describing the livelihood strategy employed by people well aware of the fact that gold mining and its corollary activities can lead the way out of poverty, but can also lead the way back into dire straits. I must note, however, that "going home" does not apply in this context, as Guyana's interior is viewed by many of the coastlanders who migrate there as an uncivilized "bush," and certainly not like home. The individuals mentioned in this category (and who are also described as employing a nomadic-opportunistic livelihood strategy) often migrate from cities to the rainforest, most commonly from Guyana's capital or smaller cities such as Bartica or Linden, from Brazil's São Paolo or Manaus, or from Venezuela or the Caribbean islands. These people move from political centres to peripheries in order to gain economic advantage, and therefore become central figures in these rural settings, illustrating the first paradox of modernity described above.

Urban-rural migration also includes governmental regulatory agents who follow behind, steadily and slowly. Chase Keene, the GGMC agent responsible for monitoring mining activity around Mahdia, whom I presented in the preceding section, is an example of both urban-rural migration and of the movement of regulatory attention from the capital into Guyana's interior. By Guyanese standards, Chase made a very high salary. He was able to benefit from the stability and support provided by a government job, including electric current, vehicles, his own cook at the house in Mahdia, and more generally, a high degree of authority at a relatively young age. When I arrived in Mahdia, he also boasted about the fact that he had never caught malaria; in an area in which people stop counting how many times they suffer from the disease,[39] this was viewed by some as further evidence that Chase was a city boy who did not have the authority gained by credibility and time in the interior, where many miners spend a significant portion of their lives, despite their original home-base.[40] Nonetheless, an established role of authority enabled planning for the future, as Chase planned to return to school to obtain his Master's degree in natural resource management, and later return to GGMC to a "higher role" to make changes, "especially in management." His upward economic mobility was fostered by the salary, benefits, and clear opportunities for internal advancement offered by his role with a state agency and placement in the interior territory. However, he was already "[suffering]" through time working in the interior as part of climbing an established – and relatively fruitful – economic and status ladder exclusive to employment with a state agency.

The GGMC Mining Station, where Chase lived with his cook, a man who had also moved from Georgetown, stands at the "Upstairs" end of Avenue of the Republic in Mahdia. From the GGMC house, during the moment of my

[39] The stagnant water sitting in tailings ponds in mining areas creates fertile breeding grounds for the mosquitoes that transmit malaria (type III and IV).
[40] Chase caught malaria one week after I interviewed him, and did not return to Mahdia for a month, as he was receiving treatment in Georgetown.

fieldwork,[41] appeared two clothing stores selling *Ipanema* slippers and women's bathing suits from Brazil. Next door, Pepe Moreno blared from the speakers at the *Mixture Brasileira Restaurant and Bar*. Attached to the restaurant, hiding in the back of the building, was the office of two young men from Guayana, Venezuela, who made a living as gold and diamond buyers with a certificate they obtained from the Guyana Gold Board. The smell of beef cooking at the Brazilian restaurant intermingled with the chicken curry and roti sold at the snackette next door, run by an Indo-Guyanese woman from Georgetown.

Mistah Alloo's shop today stands at the "Downstairs" end of Avenue of the Republic, the opposite end from the GGMC house, before the town disappears into grazing pasture. In 2008, seven houses up the road from Mistah Alloo's shop, was a mining supply store run by a young man who came to Mahdia from Georgetown only months before I arrived. He expressed boredom with the atmosphere in Mahdia, where he felt it was "too quiet" and needed "more sport." Next door to the supply store was Miss Linda's store. Miss Linda, an Indo-Guyanese woman, moved from Bartica to Mahdia with her husband and daughter in 1992. Akin to most shops in Mahdia, her store sold everything from plantains to toothbrushes, always against a backdrop of never-ending cans of Milo, powdered milk, instant coffee, sardines, corned beef, and sausages. The supplies she had in stock were announced on a chalk-board outside, alongside a red arrow that pointed to the urinal, or *banheiro* in Portuguese. When asked why she moved, Miss Linda answered by rubbing her thumb and forefinger together, demonstrating the money that people know can be made in mining towns.

Of the fifty stores in Mahdia in July 2008, thirty-seven were run by people who had migrated from urban settings within and beyond Guyana's borders. This mining town in the interior thus demonstrates the kind of flexible citizenship that is possible in rural, isolated areas created by labour migration (1999). It further

[41] I say "moment" to emphasize the ephemeral nature of the specific businesses that occupy these structures; the majority of businesses that existed during my fieldwork are not certain to endure today. This does not apply to the GGMC house, or to Mistah Alloo's shop.

reinforces the fact one assumption of modernity, or of the process of modernization, is inaccurate in assuming the increased migration of people from rural to urban contexts (Ferguson 1999). Mining towns epitomize the frontiers of expanding free-market capitalism and expansion of state authority; thus, while Mahdia is approximately two hundred kilometres from Georgetown, it is also a central place where urban-dwellers can find relative prosperity.

Nomadic-Opportunistic

"Nomadic-opportunistic" is the descriptive category I give to a livelihood strategy employed by people using a similar rationale, who move from place to place based on economic opportunities that arise because of resource booms – like gold rushes – in Guyana's interior. This category can include miners[42] and individuals who find informal jobs in helping to create the infrastructure, services, and supply the goods that support ephemeral resource-booms; this latter category includes, but is not limited to, shop-keepers, restaurant- and bar-workers, hoteliers, mechanics, spiritual leaders, school-teachers, sex-workers, drug-dealers, arms-dealers, and gold- and diamond-buyers (thereby demonstrating significant overlap between this livelihood strategy and that which I label "urban-rural"). Practicing a diversity of economic practices as a survival strategy, and, as way of making more money than only one economic practice might allow, means that individuals often embody a variety of these roles simultaneously – or are rumoured to do so.

Nomadic-opportunistic describes a livelihood strategy that frequently results in permanent settlement in boomtowns, with people staying long after stores of the resource have disappeared. Mahdia's history and emergence as a place is based on this opportunistic migration and settlement. However, I focus here on nomadic-opportunistic as a strategy that also propels *continual* movement

[42] Global market prices of gold are a significant factor driving livelihood strategies founded upon nomadic-opportunistic hopes for upward economic mobility.

without permanent settlement. I illustrate this through the life history of an individual whose livelihood strategy brought – and likely brings – him to Mahdia again and again because of the construction demand in a mining town, though he has no direct affiliation with mining now, and when I met him, he had never actually seen a dredge in operation.

I only knew him as Painterman. I was introduced to many people in Guyana's interior by occupation, appearance, or labelled ethnic identity, rather than formal or legal name. Painterman and Red Man were hired to paint the house where I stayed in Princeville.[43] The house was a set of two apartments, built in the typical fashion on stilts above the ground. The first time I arrived in Princeville, only the ceiling had been painted. There was a bare bed in one room, and a stove in the kitchen. With Paula, her two daughters, and her youngest son accompanying me, we strung hammocks across the roof beams so all of us had room to sleep. At dusk, with the two youngest children already asleep inside, Painterman, Red Man, Paula, her eldest daughter, Melissa, and I sat on the stone steps outside and swatted away sand flies while the sun set over the conga palms beyond the sandy clearing. With nothing but the far-off hum of a generator pervading the silence, we told riddles into the night.

"Painter, what you doing here?" Paula asked him after we ran out of jokes to share. He found this job through Peter Raj, the man everyone in Mahdia referred to simply as "Peter," and one of the wealthiest men in town. Peter owned the town's biggest food shop, the hotel, the pool, the auto-parts shop, and was responsible for supplying electric current to the town. Painterman showed up in Mahdia after someone in Trinidad had told him he should try mining. When he arrived, however, he met Peter, who offered him a job building houses. Peter

[43] While Campbelltown and Princeville are part of the same land title, the dirt track that separates them was too far to walk with the children who accompanied me, and is too severely rutted for a cruiser to travel along twice in one day; thus, we stayed overnight. Princeville is composed of a store, a health clinic, and a primary school all concentrated in a white sand clearing, though the name of the area more generally refers to a scattering of family farm plots close to the Potaro River. Princeville is in some ways more representative of "traditional" Amerindian lifestyles than Campbelltown because it further away, and has not been subsumed by the town of Mahdia.

also found him this job in Princeville. Painterman did not know how long he would stay, but was certain he would find more work in Mahdia – probably from Peter – when he was finished. He mentioned a wife and child in Trinidad, and time spent in Grenada, but said living there was "fas', fas', and hard," and did not clarify whether they were places to which he wanted to return.

He brought out his books of CDs and told us about spinning records in Mahdia and in town whenever Peter threw a party. That was the only thing the thirty-three-year-old man said he missed about Mahdia. He liked the quiet in Princeville in comparison to Georgetown, where life is also "too fas'," but wished he could listen to some music while he painted. I asked him if he would rather be in Mahdia. He told me refused to go out liming when he was there, because "in Mahdia, once ya slip, ya don' stop slidin…The Devil prowled 'round and landed in Mahdia. It's where the Devil lives." He preferred to stay in Princeville, drinking only bush tea, and juggling a soccer ball when he stopped working.

The first time we went to Princeville, we stayed for only one night. Painterman woke in the morning before the sun, and though Paula offered him some of the bakes and coffee we had for breakfast, he refused to eat our food, or to take a break from the work to eat it, though he kept up a constant stream of conversation from his stoop on the ladder above us. He made it clear he did not want to depend on us for assistance or supplies. He liked fancy clothes and was conscious of specific brand names, owned two cell phones, and had a gold chain around his neck and a gold cap on his tooth – all signs of some material wealth in Guyana.[44] But he was living by his mantra: look after yourself and only yourself. He did not trust anyone. This seemed to be what a life of moving around had taught him. He was unusual in this regard, as the upward mobility of actors who practice nomadic-opportunistic economic strategies tends to depend

[44] Herman (2003) has referred to this display of material wealth as a misleading indication of accumulated wealth, citing many people as "gilded paupers"

on their creation and manipulation of social networks, knowing who to contact for leads to further economic opportunities, and who to bring with you along the way. Painterman was reluctant to admit his participation in any social network, espousing instead the value of – and need to – "go it alone." He did appear to keep to himself. He had, however, made his way into the social network of one person who mattered: Peter Raj. Peter accepted Painterman as a good, steady worker, and thus continually hired him to complete various tasks, and, further, passed his knowledge of Painterman's abilities to his own contacts, allowing Painterman to tap into a vast network of employment opportunities.

We left after that one night. We did not come back for a month. When we returned, he was still living in the house. Red Man was gone, and most of the apartment was painted, with the standard bright pinks and blues and yellows. With his work obviously slowing down, I told him we were hiking out to a backdam the next day, to see a land dredge. His curiosity overwhelmed him, and he came with us, telling stories as we walked.

Painterman was born in Georgetown, and came from "the mouth of the Demerera." He grew up near Linden, and from there, moved to St. Lucia, Barbados, and finally, Trinidad, working in a bakery, building houses, and painting houses. His wife still lives in Trinidad, though he returned to Guyana in 2003, working in Georgetown before he moved to Mahdia. Apart from his four-year-old in Trinidad, he also has a six-year-old son, who lives with his girlfriend, her mother, and her step-father in a small town west of the highway between Georgetown and Linden, in the space where urban, coastal Guyana meets the edges of the agricultural frontier, at the gateway to the interior. Painterman said he did not ever go home, did not have a home in any one place, and simply lived in the moment where he was.

I saw him in Mahdia at irregular periods later in my fieldwork. He stopped in to visit Paula whenever he came into the town, to pick up supplies or do a quick job

for Peter or one of Peter's friends. The last weekend of my time in the mining town was Pork-Knocker's Day. The main street was crowded in the evening with people dancing, gaffing, and gambling. Painterman stood beside the music speakers, away from the crowd; he was waiting for a live performance to end before he took over and spun records for the rest of the night, as Peter had hired him to do. He refused to smile in public in case he was taken as easy, as gullible, as a participant in community life of the town he claimed to hate so much – but to which he kept returning at odd intervals because "there's always nuff thing to keep ya busy" in a mining town.

Two days before I left fieldwork, I ran into him again at Stabroek Market, in Georgetown. He was on his way to catch a bus to Lethem, where he had been asked to spin records for a show, and where he said Peter had found him work in a kitchen or doing some more painting or "fixin' up." He joked I would never know how to find him when I came back to Guyana, but that he would certainly be "here or there." I only knew him as Painterman. However, he could as easily have been Bakerman or Musicman according to the diversity of skills he had developed as a means of climbing socioeconomic hierarchies, including physically moving to wherever he heard of a chance to climb higher – to centres of possibility.

"Traditional-Modern"

Modernity is manifested in one way through peoples' individual and collective struggles to gain upward economic mobility in what is still being realized as a democratic, free-market nation-state. In the process, "a new self-consciousness" is appearing in the population. This is demonstrated in one way by the division of ideas into the categories of traditional versus modern (Osella and Osella 2000: 248), which is manifested as a particular strategy of upward economic mobility. As two of the three paradoxes outlined earlier relate to Amerindians and ideas of "traditional culture," I illustrate here how these paradoxes form the basis of

strategies of upward economic mobility specifically for Amerindians living in and near Mahdia, emphasizing worries in discourse about culture loss that in practice are not definitive.

Amerindians have engaged in artisanal gold mining for centuries (Forte 1999), and thus resource extraction at this scale should technically figure as an indigenous "tradition." "Working the gold," using a pick-axe and shovel, followed by "washing it down" with a manual battell suits the "highly individualistic traditional lifestyle" (1999: 61) of Amerindians:

> Gold (or diamond) mining has other advantages. It can easily be combined with other subsistence activities: once the cassava crop has been planted, the whole family will happily go off to a "backdam" or mining ground…the back-breaking work generally garners almost immediate returns, since gold is easily traded for food and other commodities, even in the most remote backdams. Additionally, some Amerindians…are nomadic, and the peripatetic nature of gold work at the rudimentary level dovetails well with their own innate dislike of staying too long in one place (62).

Throughout fieldwork, I encountered one Amerindian couple who operated a land dredge together, mining for the precious metal between fishing and farming for subsistence on the Micobie land title. Apart from them, however, the majority of gold mining at even the smallest of scales did not tend to include females, or "the whole family," but rather crews consisting entirely of men.

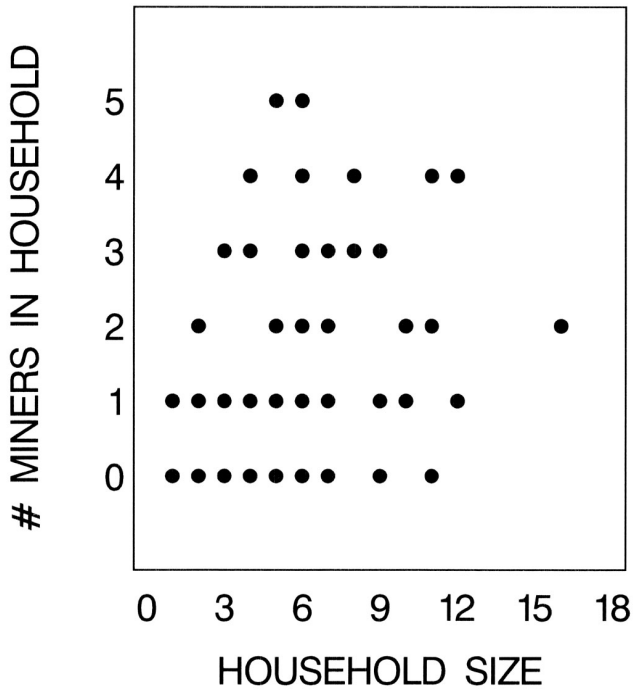
However, Forte's insistence on continuing diversity of productive practices is an accurate one. Engaging in a diversity of economic practices is a well-documented peasant[45] strategy of risk avoidance; it is predicated upon the rationale that a livelihood strategy that involves a multiplicity of economic practices ensures survival even if one fails or is annulled (usually by the state) (Scott 1976). In three-quarters of the house-holds (where sample size (n) = 76)

[45] Forte (1996) emphasizes that while much of the population of Guyana lives on inadequate incomes, Amerindians tend to live on even less. Part of lower household consumption expenditures for Amerindians compared to Indo-Guyanese or Afro-Guyanese people relates to productive practices, such as subsistence farming; however, limited access to health care and education also play significant roles in determining poverty rates.

on the Campbelltown land title, at least one person "works the gold" (Figure 4.1).

There is implication from daily dialogue with Amerindians and non-Amerindians that mining overshadows other traditional Amerindian activities, including hunting, fishing, and farming, and that mining is making Amerindians "lose their traditional heritage," or their "culture." While changes to these activities are conspicuous, and restrictions on their frequent practice can in many ways be blamed on mining, their endurance is made obvious in both quantitative data obtained in household surveys (see Appendices A and B), and in my frequent experiences of simply being offered (and observing the consumption of) labba (*Agouti paca*) or haimara (*Hoplias macrophthalmus*) *tuma* with cassava bread on land titles.

Figure 4.1 Numbers of Miners in Campbelltown Households versus Household Size



Hunting, an historically male activity, is disrupted by mining because the deforestation upon which it is predicated erases appropriate environments for the megafauna (such as Brazilian tapirs, or "bush-cow") inhabited by animals traditionally hunted; the noise of the machines chases surviving populations away, making hunting that does occur more difficult than in the past. However, approximately forty percent of the same households still hunt, using both modern rifles and traditional curare-tipped bow-and-arrows (Appendix B).

Fishing is historically a family-based activity. Today, mercury run-off from mining has "muddied the creeks" and resulted in bioaccumulation of mercury in keystone species, like Haimara (*Hoplias macrophthalmus*), decreasing population sizes of the fish, and motivating NGOs such as CIDA and WWF to work in the interior on programs emphasizing the dangers of consuming haimara and other edible species. Grandma Barrie, Paula's mother, told me often that Mahdia Creek used to be full of hamaira, "right down there…But creek get muddy here. Haimara used to be right here. No fish now. Mining make no fish…And I fed up with chicken." Despite increasing difficulty of catching the animals using weirs and poison, and despite warnings not to depend on the fish as a dietary staple, close to forty percent of Campbelltown households continue to fish (Appendix B).

The same number of households also practices swidden farming for subsistence. Sweet and bitter cassava are staple crops, as cassava bread and various drinks have been historical staples in Amerindian diets (though cassava bread, at $500 GY ($2.50 CAD), now costs more in Campbelltown than a $200 GY ($1 CAD) loaf of white bread trucked in from the coast). Like fishing, farming has been a family-based activity, with males usually responsible for cutting trees and burning land, and females responsible for growing and cultivation. Grandpa Barrie complained that the Campbelltown title was getting "smaller and smaller" for farming, as the diversion of waterways and introduction of new chemicals into ground-water has made soils dry, preventing the usual guarantee of

bountiful crops, and prompting some to move to land further away, because here, "mangoes grow mebbe every five years."

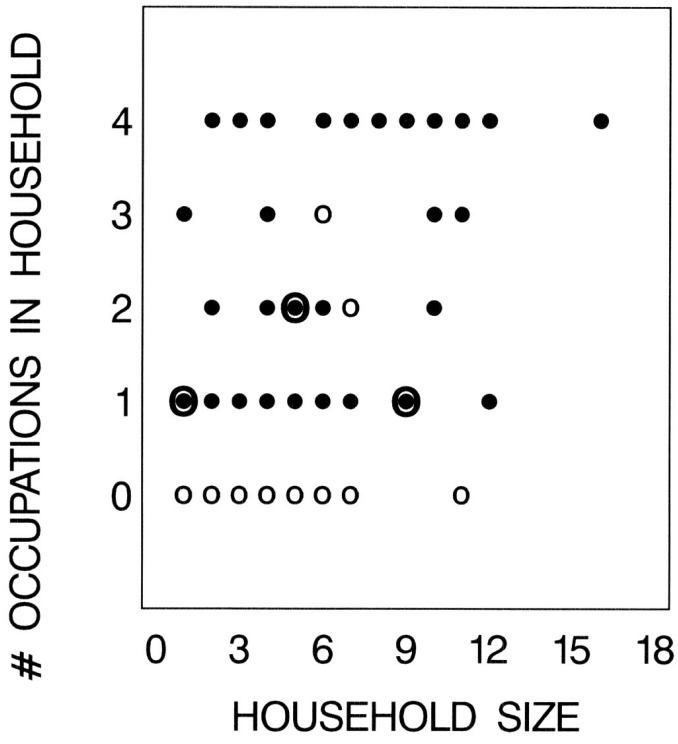
It is significant to note that the same households in which at least one person engages in mining tend to be the same households that continue to hunt, fish, and farm, exemplifying the endurance of mining as an Amerindian "tradition" and, simultaneously, an historical tradition of pursuing a diversity of productive practices for guaranteed year-round sustenance, and thus, survival (Figure 4.2). Survival is certainly a livelihood strategy, but not one explicitly geared towards upward economic mobility in modernity. How, then, does the theme "traditional-modern" figure into a discussion of aspirations for wealthier futures? The key seems to lie in the *future*, and, as part of larger expectations of modernity (or of alternative modernities), the hopes placed upon Amerindian youth by elders, and vice versa. These expectations are based on seemingly incommensurable ideas of what constitutes "tradition" in Amerindian culture, and on the role tradition should play in contemporary economic endeavours and modernizing values.

The intensification of mining activity as a result of the increasing expansion of a free-market economy has meant younger generations of Amerindians are increasingly drawn into the backdam without also learning what it has historically meant to be Amerindian (in some cases, to specifically be Patamuna) according to their elders. During a conversation I had with a village councillor, Paula, and Paula's seventeen-year-old daughter, Melissa, the village councillor complained that children do not even know how to speak Patamuna anymore. Paula nodded vigourously. Melissa became frustrated and asked, "Mommy, why you don't ever teach us, then?" Paula informed her daughter that she was allergic to teaching Patamuna. The conversation ended there.

"Traditional-modern" as a livelihood strategy is in this context based on increasing involvement in the mining industry by adolescents, their parents, and their grandparents on Amerindian land titles, combined with the endurance of the

other activities also seen as defining traditional Amerindian ways of life (or "culture"). While there is constant complaint about intensive involvement in mining outweighing other subsistence practices, a combination of both allows many families to survive as state and market expand across Guyana, pulling discrete communities firmly into their grasp(s). This particular livelihood strategy demonstrates the sometimes uncomfortable coexistence of national modernization values and what is falsely presented as the opposite of these values: indigeneity. While the relationships fostered by these values are sometimes full of friction, the continuation and intensification of tradition in modernity demonstrated by mining emphasizes the paradoxes that have become part of a specifically indigenous experience of state modernization in Guyana.

Figure 4.2 Numbers of Occupations in Campbelltown Households versus Household Size



Where overlapping circles (◎) represents multiple instances of the same number of occupations in households of the same size.

Economic Expectations of Modernity

Anthony Giddens' definition of modernity includes "a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy" (1998: 94). The fact that this complex is expanding across Guyana demonstrates a similarity in institutional arrangement to that of other countries undergoing the process of modernization, and is thus "evidence" that modernization is occurring in Guyana today. However, the specific ways that this is manifested in Mahdia underline the point that this complex is not yet consolidated at the national level, and, more broadly, that economic modernization does not occur along a universal trajectory – rather, there are many "alternatives" (Gaonkar 2001: 18), or versions of it. I have outlined some of the strategies used by social actors living within Guyana's national boundaries to gain upward economic mobility as they are swept into this national modernization process. These strategies overlap, are sometimes contradictory, or are amalgamated. But they are all based on a moral economy, and a consequent drive to find economic success within a national sociopolitical structure that is often perceived as oppressive. Furthermore, these strategies all take people to Mahdia, into the rainforest, chasing gold and its promises. In the following *Imagination* section, I describe the plurality of identities that people express after going to and being part of this place.

IMAGINATION AND THE PLURALITY OF IDENTITIES

"The way they behavin' is basically a negation of what it means to be indigenous," the woman behind the desk told me. I was sitting in the headquarters of an NGO that advocates for Amerindian rights in Guyana by attempting to increase the capacities of Amerindian communities to "deal with issues affecting them," such as incursions on land titles from extractive industry. The woman with whom I was speaking, Helen, has dedicated her life to the work of this organization. Her comment was made in reference to Amerindian ministers of cabinet in Guyana's current ruling party – two Arawak and Akawaio women whose political stances had not at that point demonstrated to Helen a commitment to leave behind a "legacy of a rights-based approach to Amerindians" in Guyana. She did not elaborate on her point, but her words run directly parallel to contemporary anthropological discourse, in which human rights are central to theorizing about social and/or ethnic identity, and, further, form the foundation of normative conceptualizations of justice and equality at the global level (Niezen 2003a). In this section, I explore the central question underlying Helen's initial (and politically loaded) comment: what *does* it mean to be indigenous in Guyana?

Identity is, very generally, "people's source of meaning and experience" (Castells 1997: 6). It defines belonging to communities of "deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1983: 7), and thereby also involves the drawing of boundaries, or the selective incorporation of some elements and the inevitable exclusion or marginalization of others. Identity is a kind of articulation of *difference* (Escobar 2008: 203; Munasinghe 2001; Niezen 2003b), and particularly within the paradigm of post-structuralism, is framed as contingent upon shifting relations, discourses, and means of exercising power (Foucault 1991). This point reiterates that sources of identity are not always synonymous with carriers of identity; and it is the latter upon whom I focus.

Because it is an explicit problematic of social life, based on the knowledge of a self – an autonomous, free-willed individual – contemporary ideas about identity are anchored in modernity. Anthropological debates endure about whether identity is a modern Western construct that is absent in many other cultures, or whether there can be forms of belonging without identity *per se*. Castells (1997) makes a pointed distinction between social identities and social roles, where roles are defined by norms structured by institutions and organizations of society. He further postulates that social identities are stronger sources of meaning than roles (for example, to be a mother, a neighbour, or a miner) because of the processes of self-construction and individuation that they involve. Thus, where identities organize meaning, roles organize function (Castells 1997: 10).

The supremacy Castells affords identities over social roles is unhelpful in the context of Guyana. To be a miner is certainly defined by norms that are structured by institutions and organizations of society – in this case, the poverty and lack of economic opportunity for many citizens of Guyana that is the result of current global market forces and weak governmental and territorial consolidation. However, to be a miner is also a source of meaning and experience, built on specific narratives of history, geography, biology, and "from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations" (Castells 1997: 15). To be indigenous (or to be Amerindian), and to be a miner, are therefore both examples of identities. One social actor may embody both concurrently, sometimes causing stress, confusion, and contradiction in both self-representation and social action. At the same time, however, the possession of a plurality of identities may give rise to forms of expressions that can provide liberation or emancipation from reigning socio-political structures (Escobar 1995). Thus, in order to answer questions of a particular type of indigeneity (Amerindian, and, often more specifically, Patamuna), I must first ask, what does it mean to be indigenous *and* to be a miner *in* Guyana today? And how do these identities overlap?

Ideas of national identity vary according to the local places in which people are situated, and the history of the ways in which governmentality has been and is made manifest in these places. Identities are also resources of knowledge for social change, particularly by oppressed groups. Helen's NGO is a response to a shared perception that injustices have been committed against Amerindians in the colonial and post-colonial state, including loss of land-use and –access rights. A striking dichotomy emerged through fieldwork observations and interviews between Helen's NGO, which fights for greater emphasis and enforcement of human rights for Guyana's indigenous peoples, and Amerindians in my field-site, who stated that Amerindians are treated better than other ethnic groups by the state, and who further expressed the desire to be understood as "real, real Guyanese." This dichotomy prompts yet another set of questions. Which identity is given priority over others today, as Castells says is inevitable? Do Amerindians in Guyana (or at least around Mahdia) view themselves as oppressed, and if so, by whom? And furthermore, what does it mean to be Guyanese, to be part of what Benedict Anderson (1983) refers to as the "imagined community" of the state?

Being Amerindian

Understanding what it means to *be* someone is one of the most challenging - as well as the most nuanced – goals of participant observation fieldwork. Recognizing just a few of the multiple and complicated facets of identity requires long-term observation of activity and discursive analysis, which still does not fully elucidate identity – particularly because identity, like culture, is fluid and ever-changing. The majority of my writing on "Being Amerindian" examines cultural practices and syncretised cosmologies as revealed through activities in which I participated, and narratives I was told. I begin here, however, with a discussion I had with Paula after a month-and-a-half of

fieldwork, in which I decided to directly ask her the question that had driven my research plan: What does it mean to be Patamuna?

Being Carib, Being Patamuna

It took five minutes to walk from Paula's house in Mahdia to her parents' house in Campbelltown when I took the the shortcut by the auto-parts yard, into the creek gully and up beside *Toushau*'s house. The longer way led all the way along the Avenue of the Republic, through Mahdia's "Upstairs," past all the shops and bars. On the way back from her parents' house one night, Paula and I walked the long way, stopping along the way to buy bread and cheese for the next morning's breakfast.

A teacher from the middle school joined us as we walked that night. She had been hired a month ago, moved to Mahdia from the coast, and told Paula she was planning on teaching a unit the next day on Amerindian traditions. Paula only nodded when she heard this, despite the teacher's enthusiastic, hopeful tone. The teacher continued talking about this unit for several minutes, then asked Paula if it was true that Caribs, "not ones here," but further into the bush, "eat other people." Paula giggled and said, "Well, that is our tradition, you know." When the woman left, she made the sound of "sucking teeth,"[46] a common signal of disapproval, and often disdain.

In his 1883 *Among the Indians of Guiana*, Im Thurn presents a phylogeny of indigenous peoples in Guyana, positioning Patamuna peoples as a sub-tribe[47] of the Caribs of northern South America and the Caribbean. Alternate versions of the name include *Karinya, Gabili,* and *Kapon* (Balkaran 2002; Forte 1999; Forte

[46] Rickford focuses on this sound in his study of African gestures in "New World guise," and explains it is more commonly referred to as "suck-teeth," ""stchoops-teeth," or "chups-teeth" in Guyana, and indicates general disapproval. It sometimes also has "crude sexual connotations" (1999: 166).
[47] According to Im Thurn, the Patamuna are in fact a sub-tribe of the Ackawaio (Akawaio), and thus a sub-sub-tribe of the Caribs.

1996). *Galibi* was originally corrupted by the Spanish to "cannibal," as cannibalism is said to have been a feature of war rituals of the Caribs (Balkaran 2002: 59). The "True Caribs" are said to have eventually "died out" or "disappeared," with the seven sub-tribes surviving today, including the Ackawaio (or Akawaio). A prominent Arawak artist in the country told one version of many creation stories of "True Caribs," explaining the fierceness often associated with these people:

> A man goes out hunting one day, and when he comes home, his wife is not home. This is unusual, so he goes looking for her, and spots her in the forest, from far away, and sees her having sex with a man he has never seen before. In a rage, the husband gets his bow-and-arrow, and when his wife returns, he tells her he is going out hunting again. He goes into the forest and, rather than seeking more game, kills the man who was with his wife. He comes home and tells his wife he saw what she was doing, and announces that he killed the man. His wife is confused, and says she was never with anyone. She and the husband go together into the forest, back to the exact spot where the husband killed the man. There is no sign of the man, only a dead serpent on the ground. They return to the house and the husband is not sure of what to say. In the spot on the ground where the snake laid dead, plants and leaves slowly take over, and the soil there proves fertile. In time, an unusual plant sprouts, and its seeds are the Carib people.

Grandpa Barrie's version of the history of Amerindian tribal warfare explained how these fierce Caribs were in fact later killed out by his people, the Patamuna:

> Long ago, the Caribs warring all the time, killing people from other tribes. Kill, kill, kill. They tried to go up to PK and other places to kill more. But bird was calling to the Patamuna to warn them. When they [the Caribs] made it up to PK, the Patamuna ready for them. A bird ["bush policeman"], he calling, warning the Patamuna. When Caribs arrived, they only kill one man. Maybe they not so hungry. They cut off his arm and barbecued him to eat. Then Patamuna followed Caribs home, followed by Wapishiana, and the two tribes attacked and killed all Caribs. Patamuna used to bury people in tunnels in the earth. Near Kato you can still see the skeletons.

When the teacher walked away from me and Paula on the road that night in Mahdia, Paula started to giggle. "They ask me all kind of silly thing," she said. She then told me a story about a woman who used to live next door to her and her husband when they first moved to Mahdia. The woman liked Paula's

husband, and would not leave him alone. Paula spoke to her several times, asking her to stop. But the woman kept coming to visit, and kept trying to get her husband alone. One day, Paula had enough, and marched next door to the woman's house. "Leave my husband!" she warned the woman. The woman responded with laughter. Paula stood with her hands on her hips in the doorway. "I'm a Carib, you know!" she declared to the woman. "When we get angry, we eat…" She did not finish the sentence, but smiled and walked back to her own house. She laughed while telling me the story, saying she never heard from the woman again.

Given Paula's obvious reluctance to be characterized as a Carib by the teacher, and her simultaneous invocation of popular notions of what it means to be a descendant of the Caribs, I asked her what she would teach to school-children if she had to explain what it means to be Amerindian, or to be Patamuna. She said someone asked her once if Amerindians wear thongs and lacy bras. I did not see how this was an answer to my question. But she turned to me and smiled: "And I say to him, 'In our tradition, we don't wear *anything*.'" My question about being Patamuna elicited Paula's use of entrenched stereotypes about Amerindian identity (particularly undertones of what is often understood as a cavalier attitude towards sexuality, as well as associations with Amerindians historically wearing loincloths), despite Paula's daily demonstrations of a commitment to understanding and sharing the history – through kinship and cosmological narratives – of her people.

While knowledge of cultural history is not necessarily synonymous with identity, ideas of identity as delimited by historical traditions were underlined in an argument Paula had with her eldest daughter the day after her conversation with the teacher. During the argument with Melissa over the fact that the seventeen-year-old had not washed the dishes as she had been told to do, Paula expressed anger that her daughter had not completed such a simple task when she "got no cassava for bake, no cassava to grate!" While Paula used what is best termed

sarcasm in talking to others, like me, and like the teacher, about Carib – and Patamuna – ways of life, this was contrasted with a conspicuous concern in personal, more private conversations (or arguments) and practices of daily life with the endurance of "traditions," and her daughter's reluctance to participate in activities. Melissa demonstrating an understanding of, and willing participation in, the preparation of the starchy tuber to make cassava bread would, it seemed, implicitly serve to reify her as a real Patamuna woman, and thus Paula's success as a mother in the context of "teaching" identity.

Cosmology and Identity

Paula attends the services of two different Protestant denominations, Wesleyan and Full Gospel. Her parents, Grandma and Grandpa Barrie, were converted to the Wesleyan church by missionaries who arrived in PK in the later stages of the British colonial period, and Paula grew up attending Wesleyan services regularly. She began attending Full Gospel meetings in Mahdia because of the social opportunities it afforded, including excuses to dance without drinking. She attended services at both at least twice per week throughout the summer in Mahdia, though she never made clear her reasons for splitting time between the two churches. Though Paula and her parents are enmeshed within particularly Patamuna understandings of the world, the stories Paula told during our travels between Mahdia, Micobie, and Kumaka also demonstrated her own association with a newer, syncretic set of beliefs.

Creation Stories and Spirits

Paula's father-in-law used his motorboat to transport me, Paula, and her three youngest children between his home at Kumaka, on the Potaro River, to the Micobie land title. The boat had a hole in it, and the motor was not very strong; with the water level five metres higher than usual, we moved very slowly, staying to the sides of the river so as not to be swept into the currents in the

middle, and trying to avoid running the boat over the tops of trees covered by the water. We ate sour oranges and green mangoes with pepper in the boat under the sun, taking turns scooping water out of the boat. When we finished our oranges, and I moved to throw the peels into the water, Paula shrieked and stopped me. "You'll bring the Water Mama!" When I asked Paula to explain what this meant, she began with another story – a creation story.

In several Amerindian cultures, *Makunaima* is regarded as the Great Creator, a "kind of philosopher." *Makunaima* had two brothers, *Pia* and *Injigilung*,[48] one a hunter and the other a farmer, and they were, according to Grandpa Barrie, "like the father, son, and holy ghost, a kind of three-in-one." These brothers lived at the base of Mount Roraima. Pointing in the direction of the mountain, Paula explained the brothers had a "big, big tree, with lots of fruit and food and water." During a period of famine, people asked them to cut it down to give people food to survive, and the three brothers did. When the tree fell, water "went pouring everywhere," creating all of Guyana's rivers, and wherever the fruit from the tree landed, new fruit trees grew, creating what are now referred to as "nature farms," or naturally-occurring food stocks, and saving people from starvation. This creation story in many ways also explains Guyana's wealth of natural resources. The different spirits that continue to reside in different places in Guyana's interior, and the roles they play according to the Patamuna, may also be interpreted in conjunction with this creation story as illustrating an "eco-cosmology" (Århem 1996) of Amerindians, or understandings of human-nature relatedness as an integrated totality.

Mediation or communication with these spirits has historically occurred via a *peaiaman*. A *peaiaman* is a figure akin to a shaman, priest, or medicine-man in Patamuna; Ackawaios refer to this role as *piatson*, Arawaks *semecihi*, and Warraus *wisidaá* (Balkaran 2002: 132). Several weeks before I arrived at my

[48] *Injigilung* is the phonetic spelling for this name. While *Makunaima* and *Pia* appear in Balkaran's *Dictionary* (2002), *Injigilung* appears to be absent from written sources on this subject.

field-site, the last *peaiaman* in Region 8 (and father of the Vice-Captain of Micobie) died. While it is customary for sons to follow fathers in taking the role, Vice-Captain expressed reluctance to become a *peaiaman* because of the amount of energy it takes, as it involves a series of rituals and a forty-day food fast. While he said this, he walked Melissa and I around the "trash house" he and his wife and children shared, showing us the plants used by *peaiamen*, *beenas*, to ensure specific fortunes, both "good" and "evil."[49]

"Amerindian knowledge is disappearing," Vice Captain said as he showed us the *beenas* he knew and sometimes used. Melissa asked him if she could take some home, gingerly digging up the plants and carrying them with roots wrapped in plastic all the way back to Mahdia, planting them outside the family's house. While we were in Micobie, she continually asked her mother if she could learn to be a *peaiaman* (or *woman*), and then suggested someone create a centre, or a school, for Amerindians to go to and train to be *peaiamen*, so that the "disappearing" Traditional Ecological Knowledge (or TEK) could be retained and transmitted to younger generations with associated historical mythology. Vice Captain, Melissa, and at different times, Melissa's grandparents, Grandma and Grandpa Barrie, expressed very different forms of interest in what I carefully refer to as TEK – Vice Captain and the elders with its loss, Melissa with constructing and imagining ways to "save it" for her generation.

Cultural and biological diversity are inextricably linked (Hardin and Remis 2008). As mining degrades the rainforest landscapes in Guyana, a discourse of "loss" of Amerindian "culture" or "heritage" or "traditions" has been introduced to Amerindian communities in Guyana's interior primarily by government ministries and by NGOs such as CIDA and WWF. These organizations are part of an expansion of modern governmentality to these communities, working to curb the damaging effects of gold mining on humans and larger rainforest ecosystems, respectively. As I pointed out in the *Mobility* section, "culture loss"

[49] *Beenas* are used to bring success in hunting or fishing, for example.

has been associated in the discourse specifically with decreasing (capacity for) engagement in productive practice, and with changing notions of what is best referred to as TEK. The Village Council Treasurer of Campbelltown/Princeville worked as a night guard at the nearest backdam, about a twenty minute walk from Mahdia. On the several afternoons I spent with him in the backdam, he expressed distaste for the destructive tendencies of the very mining in which he was implicated.

"People here don' care," he told me the first afternoon I visited. "They seen rainforest before." Like Grandpa Barrie, the Treasurer was born in PK, and also like Grandpa Barrie, the Treasurer was particularly vocal about the ways in which mining was "spoiling," or at least "changing" Amerindian ways of life:

> Mining activities…it has bring to de Amerindians…it hasn't done anything very…profitable. I think it spoil, um...it change the lifestyle I should say. It has not encouraged them to maintain their culture and most of their lifestyle. It do in one way create an employment, where they could be able to get something like cash, and this was not before. And also the mining activity has damaged the ground for the Amerindians. The farming is not really there as it should be. As you see already the good soil has been removed…Mining has not helped at all. So the Amerindians today, especially around Mahdia, 'cause there's great activity happenin' 'round there, do not know much of their lifestyle, their culture…it is very bad…If I like the minin' thing after doin' it for so long…there is nothing more I could do in terms of employment and if I have to hold on to that…That is all there is that any young person or anybody around can find…there is nothing better that we could do…Years ago, in the industry I should say, people go with their spade and picks, with a battel, an' much more simpler than it is now.

It was suggested to me from various people that formal education about Amerindian ways of life would provide a means of increasing knowledge about, and thus interest in, Amerindian history and culture in younger generations of Amerindians. The teacher who asked Paula about Carib cannibalism was an example of some of the pale attempts to introduce this classroom-based approach in the interior. Though the Treasurer of Campbelltown said he thought Patamuna culture should be taught in classes at school, that it "should be part of the education," he also later said that Amerindians learn best by standing behind a

man, and watching him do something, then copying him; it would be hard to teach about culture in school, he concluded, because "that is not how Amerindians learn." A regional politician, and coastlander, pinpointed the same need for (re-)education, positing without apparent irony that "[the] Ministry of Amerindian Affairs needs to set up a body that comes out to visit here and discuss with people their way of life." These extreme views, however, are mediated by the perspectives of people like Paula's sister, who came to visit her parents for a week while her husband worked in the backdam around Mahdia. After spending her time there listening to her parents tell me about the ways Amerindians used to live, she told us all matter-of-factly that "identity only changes if people want it to." Her statement was one of few on this issue that could be interpreted as a kind of defense of the flexibility of indigenous culture in the face of modernity.

Back in Georgetown near the end of my fieldwork, I shared a meal with two of the country's most well-known Arawak artists. One told me of his own previous involvement in mining on land dredges in the Upper Mazaruni. They both emphasized that Amerindians are "very big on intuition," and trust their instincts immediately, historically possessing a sense of connection with each other and their surroundings, though Amerindians are "losing their traditional values, and it is disappointing." At the same time, the younger brother posited that Amerindians make good miners because of this sense of connection, saying one will never have luck finding gold "if you don't know the earth, if you can't read the earth and the animals and you can't understand what it's telling you, what it's giving you." While Paula and others around Mahdia conspicuously referred to "Patamuna culture" and "Amerindian culture" interchangeably, these two artists consistently referred only to "Amerindians," without referencing themselves as specifically Arawak. The men expressed disappointment with "loss" of cultural values and an intrinsic sense of being once shared among Guyana's indigenous peoples. However, the comment about connection with the earth as a source of success in extractive industry may also be understood as an

example of "indigenizing" modernity (Sahlins 1999), and, vice versa, modernizing indigeneity. Both processes reference the idea that cultural tropes, or the deployment of traditional, local knowledge (Li 2005; Scott 1998), can be utilized for individual (or "ethnic") success in the larger, and sometimes overpowering, processes of state modernization. And such processes are one manifestation of what it means to *be Amerindian*, to be an indigenous person in Guyana today.

"Evil" Spirits

Ideas of cultural loss are omnipresent in discourse borne of both Amerindian and non-Amerindian sources. And while this discourse focuses heavily on traditional activities, it tends to minimize the fact that invocation of particular Amerindian spirits, particularly "evil" beings (including Water Mama, Bush Dai-Dai, and *kanaimà*) is common. The idea of *kanaimà* finds its way uneasily into both colonial documents and more recent anthropological literature of Guyana. It escapes clear definition because it takes many forms, expressions, and incites a vast range of reactions, both in Guyana and around the indigenous Caribbean. Balkaran devotes several paragraphs to the word in his *Dictionary of the Guyanese Amerindians* (2002), demonstrating the difficulty of articulating the concept. "Kanaima is the bogeyman of the jungle," he states without obvious irony, later explaining that there is both the "real or imaginary *kanaima*. The imaginary…is like a spirit who has the power of invading the body of any animal he pleases. From the *kanaimas*, come all injuries…When an epidemic seeps through a village or a slow sickness occurs…it is the *kanaima*" (101). Whitehead's ethnography on "the poetics of violent death" in Patamuna culture (2002) explains more directly that *kanaimà* refers to the killing of an individual by violent mutilation, and aside from producing "poisoned and mutilated bodies," it should also be viewed as a "shamanic practice" (40) that is "itself almost outside history…kanaimà as a way of being in the world is beyond time"

(41). Roth's much earlier work on *The Animism and Folklore of the Guiana Indians* (1970 [1915]) most thoroughly outlines the idea of *kanaimà*:

> But the word mentioned really has a very extended meaning; it is the expression of the law of retaliation, which is sacredly observed among the Indians of Guiana…Though applied to the man who has devoted himself to perform a deed of blood, it seems more properly to belong to the murderous Spirit under the influence of which he acts, and which is supposed to possess him…Schomburgk says it was impossible to learn clearly how Kanaima is regarded, because he appears not only as an evil invisible Being…and, in many cases, as a particular personality, but always as the avenger of a known or unknown injury (356).

Roth's explanation of *kanaimà* finds many parallels in Evans-Pritchard's classic work among the Azande (1937). In Guyana, Evans-Pritchard's explanations of the role of "magic" and "witchcraft" in maintaining social order and cohesion, and in providing an explanation for reality and a means of predicting the future, can be replaced by "violence," the unknown, and an unseeable "evil."[50]

This understanding of *kanaimà* was reiterated on various occasions in my field season. Paula's eleven-year-old son informed me over breakfast one morning that *kanaimà* is "a killing spirit" that sits in trees, with one arm a feather and the other a leaf, that "kill you by bitin' you wi' sharp teeth in da back of da neck." On another occasion, Paula and I encountered a Patamuna woman sitting at the shop in Princeville, and Paula asked her how many children she had; the woman said "now seven," as the oldest had recently been taken by a *kanaimà*. Several weeks before I left in Mahdia, a ten-year-old girl living next to me woke in the middle of the night and had to go to the toilet. On the way back to her hammock, something whacked her on the head; she could not say what it was, and insisted she never saw it. She was later air-lifted to hospital in Georgetown for emergency surgery, after it was discovered she was suffering from a brain aneurysm. The event and injury were both explained and understood as the actions of a *kanaimà*.

[50] Through a colonial lens in South America, the idea of *kanaimà* is also reminiscent of Taussig's writings on the Putumayo and the rubber terror (1987).

Kanaimà figures very generally as a sociohistorical rationale that is used to explain present situations, and predict the ways in which these realities will transform into the future. It is my suspicion that current reliance on, and invocation of, *kanaimà* is positively correlated with the frequency of some activities or circumstances that tend to characterize mining towns, including abuse, violence, and long absences of male partners in the backdam (leaving females alone at home), as a general explanation for "evil" as it is manifested in its many forms. This may also prove indicative of an increasing notion – or perhaps simply perception or awareness – of "evil" in these mining contexts, and thus in the lens of cultural change as it is focused through modernization.

From daily conversation, and based on migration of Amerindians around the country, as well as the different sites in which I conducted fieldwork, it is difficult, if not impossible, for me to distinguish between "Amerindian culture" and "Patamuna culture." Nonetheless, I continue to point to a conspicuous perception of change, and often *loss* of heritage, tradition, or culture at both the specific and more general level. Two themes emerge within this discourse of loss and observation of Amerindian ways of life. First is the paradox inherent in the complaints about the deleterious effects of mining on Amerindian culture as voiced by the same people who own land claims, dredges, and participate heavily in the mining sector (a paradox I have described earlier in more detail). Second is a diminishing value placed on TEK concurrent with a steady, if not increasing, focus on ideas of manifestations and the role "evil" in and around mining areas. These themes are examples of both "indigenizing modernity" *and* the modernization of indigeneity, and illustrate the often paradoxical intersection of "traditional" and "modern" values that can form part of the basis for an "alternative modernity," and constituent redefinitions of identities.

Mining as Intermediary Identity

I have proposed that being a miner is a form of identity, beyond a social role, and in many ways acting as a kind of intermediary between being Amerindian and being Guyanese, and bridging the ways in which local experiences of place are connected to an over-arching national space. Thus, the lifestyles I outlined in the *Mobility* section are indicative of the traits that tend to define that identity, to fix the ontological category of "miner," to include such traits as constant and sporadic movement, uncertainty about the future, and hopes, aspirations, or ambitions that are either realized or quickly diminished by irregular cycles of resource boom-and-bust. Being a miner is defined by limitless possibility and dreams of making it big, and is paradoxically also an existence limited by the local environment and the availability of local resources. Production of most minerals in the Guiana Shield has slowly declined over the last quarter century; however, due to the high price of gold on the global market, the region has seen exponential growth in production of gold (Hammond et al. 2007: 661). Though much of this gold is low-grade ore, its poor quality does not deter people with dreams of wealth or a need for subsistence from trying to find it.

Furthermore, being a miner and being Amerindian are not mutually exclusive categories; in fact, as I pointed out in the above description of the Arawak artist, the two are often built upon each other. "Working the gold" as a form of being in the world is not only embodied by those who physically participate in the labour in the backdam, but is necessarily taken on by those indirectly involved in the sector as well, including wives, girlfriends, children, friends, and families of miners themselves, whose lives are often as uncertain and unstable as their husbands', fathers', boyfriends', or brothers'. I have illustrated above and in the preceding the *Mobility* section what it means to be part of a mining place in Guyana today, and why people are, connecting both non-Amerindians and Amerindians to a national place. Here, I wish to move to a discussion of the connection between ontological notions of indigeneity (Guyanese Amerindian) and nationalism (Guyanese), illustrating that Amerindians seek to become a legitimate part of the nation by redefining what it means to be indigenous.

Being Guyanese

One focus in studies of state modernization has been the examination of the historical role of the "peasant" and the effects on peasant ways of life of the expansion and consolidation of the state and market. Marxian interpretations viewed peasants as a source of cheap, accessible, and easily controlled labour, helping to ensure intra-state institutional and territorial consolidation (Hayami 1996; Thompson 1971; Wolf 1971). More recent studies have focused on "everyday resistances" from agrarian and rural peoples to incursions by the state on traditional and ways of life, thus emphasizing the ability of historically powerless people to take social action through the creation of, and momentum that can be gained through, new social movements (Niezen 2003b; Scott 1998, 1976).

Scott's study of the moral economy of peasants is driven by the goal of discovering "what makes them angry and what is likely, other things being equal, to generate an explosive situation" (1976:4). Here, I argue that the role of *kanaimà* in Amerindian cosmology (or eco-cosmology) is to provide an outlet for this generation of an explosive situation. I discussed in the *Mobility* section the shared perception and understanding from Guyanese citizens – both Amerindian and non-Amerindian – of an unfair and unjust economic structure as it is has been framed according to the current Government of Guyana. The use of *kanaimà* to rationalize unfortunate events, or events that are unfair and inexplicable, demonstrates a means of expressing moral economy in discrete cosmological terms, but also a means of tolerating or enduring what is currently commonly perceived as an *imm*oral governance (and thus economic) system. This can be seen as an example of what I have referred to in this section as "indigenizing modernity." It is not that the *kanaimà* is necessarily a new response to the irrational, unknown, or unjust, but that this *particular indigenous metaphor* is being employed for *specific reasons*. These reasons are political: the

assertion of indigenous identity vis-à-vis the rhetoric of indigenous engagement with the state in the context of modernity.

This does not, however, detract from Amerindian expressions of national identity. In his 1983 exposition on national identity, Benedict Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). Thus, given the geopolitical separation between Guyana's coast and interior (albeit shrinking through the process of state modernization), how do Amerindians imagine themselves as Guyanese? And does this imagination extend beyond the context of oppression and ideas of a moral economy?

Every morning, I joined five to six other female residents of Campbelltown, along with their children, at the creek, to wash bodies and clothes. While scrubbing our clothes, one sixteen-year-old Patamuna girl talked to me about her ambitions to join the AFC, or Guyana's Alliance for Change, a political Party that works to match the realities on the ground with that which is written in its constitution: "The…AFC is…committed to the view that each and every person is equal, and dedicates itself to guaranteeing the equality, freedom, dignity, and well-being of every citizen of Guyana" (AFC 2009) through "meaningful participation" by all citizens in a "just society…founded on the supremacy of the rule of law." The AFC finds popularity among Guyana's younger generations, based on the overlapping notions of a Utopian vision for society and the historical conjuring of a national moral economy. I asked her why she wanted to join the party and she said she "just" thought life was not fair for some people in Guyana.

"But Amerindians actually have the most rights of anybody else," she told me as we scrubbed our clothes in the water. "We even get our own month." She was referring to the fact that every September in Guyana is Amerindian Heritage Month, during which celebrations and performances of traditional activities are

performed in Amerindian communities around the country. “And,” she continued, “We got this land here.” With some exclusive land-use and resource-access rights through land titles, she considered Amerindians fortunate in relation to the rights other citizens (and other ethnicities) are currently afforded.

The desire to be included in some expression of a national culture at times compounds the notion of privileged ethnic positionality, directly contrasting ideas of cultural and environmental degradation, or loss. On the second return trip from Princeville, I was seated beside Paula’s youngest daughter, Monica, in the back-seat of a cruiser, with Paula in the front seat beside the driver. A version of the Guyanese national anthem started to play on the CD we were listening to:

Dear land of Guyana, of rivers and plains,
Made rich by the sunshine, and lush by the rains.
Set gem-like and fair, between mountains and sea,
Your children salute you, dear land of the free.

Green land of Guyana, our heroes of yore,
Both bondsmen and free, laid their bones on your shore.
This soil so they hallowed, and from them are we,
All sons of one mother, Guyana the free.

Great land of Guyana, diverse though our strains,
We are born of their sacrifice, heirs of their pains.
And ours is the glory their eyes did not see,
One land of six peoples, united and free.

Dear land of Guyana, to you will we give,
Our homage, our service, each day that we live.
God guard you, Great Mother, and make us to be
More worthy our heritage, land of the free.

When it finished playing, Paula told our driver that she did not approve of the way in which the song was translated into Patamuna. It was a literal translation, she said, and the sense of honour and glory of what it means to be “real, real Guyanese” conveyed in English did not translate easily in Patamuna. She announced to him that whenever she was asked to sing the national anthem, she

would not do it in Patamuna, only English, so that she could express national pride "proper."

Plurality of Identities in an Alternative Modernity

Throughout my fieldwork, I often encountered a visible plurality of identity, as seen in the sometimes uncomfortable coexistence of Amerindian, miner, and Guyanese ways of being. And while Castells (1997) has asserted that one must take supremacy over the other, the constantly changing and often uncertain conditions that characterize contemporary life on Guyana's interior landscapes allow for no such thing, with the supremacy of one ontological category over another dependent on specific contexts, local realities, and discrete historical trajectories of cultural change. An indigenous person whose life is conspicuously connected to mining within the territorial boundaries of Guyana may thus embody three distinct identities at once. Navigating the complexities of what this means in the context of ongoing state modernization requires one to focus on the intersections between entrenched ideas of old and new, traditional and modern, or what I also referred term the "indigenization of modernity," and the "modernization of indigeneity." I conclude that these processes are happening concurrently in Guyana today, as part of the unfolding of one modernity; these are mediated by a mining identity, which transfers and translates specific cultural understandings of landscapes and the beings that dwell on them, into profitable gains in extractive industry, and into a means of coping with some of the negative effects of this industry. Intensification of extractive industry invites increased state presence and regulation in Guyana, and gold mining is fuelled in part by the ideals of a free-market economy. Thus, mining continues to combine traditional and modern tropes in nuanced and complicated ways that lead to a plurality of identities more than they do to the coalescence of these ontological categories into *one* idea of what it means to *be*.

CONCLUSION

Arjun Appadurai opens his *Modernity at Large* (1996) by stating the central problem in understanding and then writing about modernity: "[it] belongs to the small family of theories that both declares and desires universal applicability for itself" (1996: 1). Modernity cannot be defined in a singular or substantive way because it is relational: a self-conscious process of "progressive" transformation, a condition that can be found in a broad range of times and places. Gaonkar later summarized this idea using what seems a deliberate tautology: "alternative modernities" (2001). This thesis presents one place in which evidence of an elusive modernity is emerging today – in a mining town called Mahdia in the middle of Guyana's rainforest – and uses this place as a microcosm for the nation. It also draws out the paradoxes that characterize some of the ways people in Mahdia understand and continue to experience this emergence, this modernization.

In the introduction to this work, I drew on Giddens' (1998) definition of modernity because, while it is limiting in its simplicity, it does provide an idea of some general expected outcomes of the process of modernization. These outcomes include: a recognition that humans have the capacity to transform their environments, leading to the introduction of industrial production and a market economy, the formation of the nation-state, and the establishment within national borders of a democratic order (1998: 94). The unfolding of modernity in Guyana is based on the introduction and/or enforcement of these ideals. The process of modernization is thus predicated upon the expansion and consolidation of state and market across national territory. Gold mining invites increased regulation from the state, and is propelled by free-market ideals. Thus this mining place in the rainforest epitomizes the complexities of ongoing state modernization in the smallest country in Amazonia.

The anthropology of Guyana is limited, and much of this literature is separated according to coastal versus hinterland geography; this thesis therefore contributes to the small corpus that currently exists, and further, works to bridge an historical and disciplinary division. I have divided the work into three sections: an historical background (*Men and Things*), *Mobility*, and *Imagination*. *Men and Things* explains the making of this place in the rainforest in the early twentieth-century. *Mobility* focuses on the livelihood strategies and Utopian ideals that keep people coming and going from this place. And *Imagination* explores some ideas of what it means to *be* somebody (or many –bodies at once) in this place. These three sections represent and describe some of the many "ingredients" that keep the contentious crucible of modernity in anthropology still boiling.

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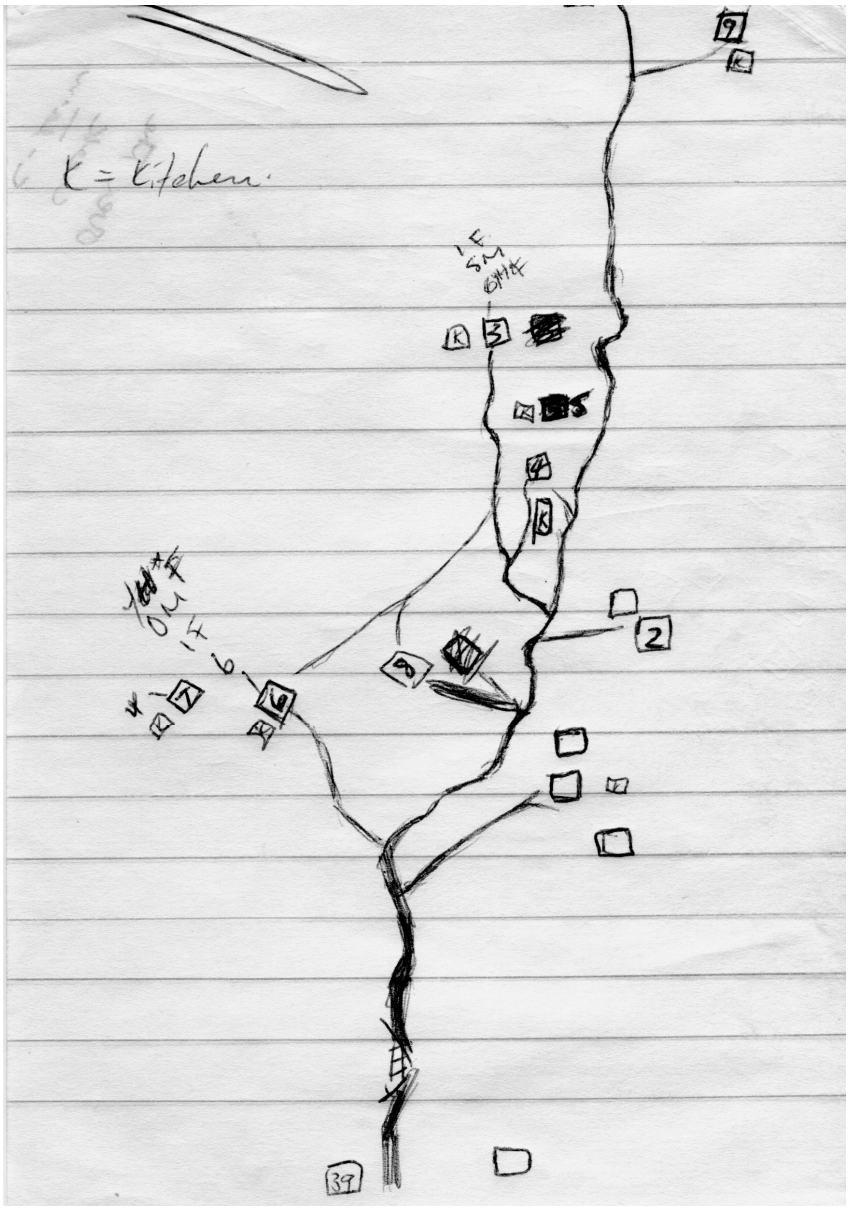
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A presents two cognitive maps of Campbelltown. The first shows the area where village council meetings are held. The second shows an area of commonly referred to as "Over the Creek." These maps correlate with the numbers of houses surveyed in two different household surveys.


K = Kitchen
K
2
37

Appendix B

Appendix B shows the quantitative data collected during two household surveys in Campbelltown. These household surveys were primarily used as a means of obtaining information about Amerindian productive practices. For more information about these surveys see the *Methodology and Logistics* and *Imagination and the Plurality of Identities* sections in the body of this thesis.

HOUSE	AREA	PPL/HOUSE	FARM (Y/N)	NUMMINERS	FISH (Y/N)	HUNT (Y/N)
H1	H	10	Y	1	Y	Y
H2	H	6	Y	4	Y	Y
H3	H	6	N	3	N	N
H4	H	8	Y	3	Y	Y
H5	H	.		.		
H6	H	10	N	2	Y	N
H7	H	4	Y	1	Y	Y
H8	H	.		.		
H9	H	2	Y	1	N	N
H10	H	3	Y	1	Y	Y
H11	H	3	Y	3	Y	Y
H12	H	7	N	3	N	N
H13	H	2	N	2	Y	N
H14	H	2	N	0	N	N
H15	H	4	N	0	N	N
H16	H	3	N	0	N	N
H17	H	11	N	0	N	N
H18	H	4	N	0	N	N
H19	H	4	N	1	N	N
H20	H	2	Y	1	Y	Y
H21	H	5	Y	0	Y	N
H22	H	.	N	2		
H23 & 24	H	6	N	2	N	N
H25	H	4	N	1	N	N
H26	H	12	Y	4	Y	Y
H27	H	4	Y	1	N	N
H28	H	9	Y	3	Y	Y
H29	H	11	Y	4	Y	Y
H30	H	2	Y	1	N	N
H31	H	5	Y	5	N	N
H32	H	4	N	4	N	N
H33	H	.		.		
H34	H	1	Y	0	N	N

H35	H	11	Y	2	N	Y
H36	H	2	N	1	N	N
H37	H	5	N	1	N	N
H38	H	8	Y	4	Y	Y
H66	H	2	Y	2	Y	Y
H40	H	6	N	0		
H41	H	1	N	1	N	N
H42	H	1	N	0	N	N
H43	H	4	N	3	N	N
H44	H	3	N	0	N	N
H45	H	5	N	0	N	N
H46	H	6	N	0	N	N
H47	H	7	N	2	N	N
H48	H	5	N	2	N	N
H49	H	6	N	1		
H50	H	2	N	1	N	N
H51	H	1	Y	1	N	Y
H52	H	.		.		
H53	H	7	N	0	N	N
H54	H	2	Y	2	Y	Y
H55	H	9	N	1	N	N
H56	H	3	N	0	N	N
H57	H	10	N	1	Y	Y
H58	H	4	Y	1	N	N
H59	H	3		1		
H60	H	.		.		
H61	H	5	N	1	N	N
H62	H	.		.		
H63	H	7	N	1	N	N
H64	H	2	N	0	N	N
H65	H	3	N	1	N	N
H67	H	12	N	1	N	N
OC1	O	4	Y	1	Y	N
OC2	O	9	Y	0	N	N
OC3	O	6	Y	5	Y	Y
OC4	O	7	Y	3	Y	Y
OC5	O	6	Y	1	N	N
OC6	O	6	Y	0	Y	Y
OC7	O	4	N	0	N	N
OC8	O	.		.		
OC9	O	7	Y	0	Y	N
OC10	O	16	Y	2	Y	Y