

CORRUPTION AND STATE CAPTURE UNDER TWO REGIMES IN GUYANA: A PLURAL SOCIETY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares and contrasts the nature of corruption under two regimes in Guyana. It argues that corruption in ethnically plural societies such as Guyana is influenced by two main factors. In the first instance the states in these societies were not natural evolution from the societies but were established with the explicit aim of institutionalizing the dominance of one ethnic faction over all others. Secondly classes and class positions in these societies are invariably fluid and mutable. The state therefore is used by ethnic groups as a means through which both economic and political power can be attained and exercised with the latent function of enhancing the socio-economic position of the ethnic groups in the socio-economic stratification system. Consequently, the nature of this battle for power creates an environment of uncertainty which serves as a pressure upon the ethnic elites in power to accumulate as much economic resources by both legitimate and illegitimate means before their hold on political power comes to an end. Based on this analysis, the paper also proposes some measures which are likely to minimise the temptation to engage in corruption practices.

Keywords: Corruption, State Capture, Ethnicity, Social Stratification, Social Cohesion

INTRODUCTION

Guyana has been consistently gaining low scores and high ranking on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International. Prior to the 2015 general and regional elections, while there were always challenges to these ratings in some sections of the society, the general view seems to have accorded with TI's ratings. For about a decade preceding the 2015 elections, Guyana, in the perception of many, had fallen victim to an interesting manifestation of state capture and corruption. Scholars and opinion shapers struggled in their attempt to apply a label to this phenomenon in a way which could capture its main dimensions and characteristics. Thomas *et al.* (2011) describes the state during this period as a 'criminalized state' to highlight the link between the state and the criminal underworld. Fredrick Kissoon employs the label of 'elected dictatorship' in an attempt to capture and highlight the irony of a government having all the electoral trappings of a democratic state but could still be considered dictatorial because of the subverting of the constitution in other aspects of political life (Kissoon 2010). Khemraj (2013) uses the label 'elected oligarchy' to capture the way in which a small group of ethno-political leaders monopolizes the resources of the state and aspects of the private economy. Though the descriptions employed by Thomas and Kissoon capture essential features of the government in the period in question, it is the analysis of Khemraj which seems more instructive. His analysis moves beyond the conceptual and highlights the historical, legislative and ethnic dynamics which provided the enabling environment exploited by the ethno-political elite. The current paper adopts a similar approach but with respect to state capture (operationalized as political corruption) and financial corruption by Cabinet members.

This paper agrees with Tanzi (1998, 30) that corruption (political, economic or otherwise) is a complex phenomenon which is influenced by different factors in different countries. The solution to corruption, then, can be no single, simple solution. Accepting this postulate, it is logical to assume that the causes or factors which influence corruption in largely homogeneous societies will be different in ethnically plural

societies. It is argued here that corruption in ethnically plural societies such as Guyana is influenced by two main factors. In the first instance the states in these societies were not natural evolution from the societies but were established with the explicit aim of institutionalizing the dominance of one ethnic faction over all others. Secondly, classes and class positions in these societies are invariably fluid and mutable. The state therefore is used by ethnic groups as a means through which both economic and political power can be attained and exercised with the latent function of enhancing the socio-economic position of the ethnic groups in the socio-economic stratification system. Consequently, the nature of this battle for power creates an environment of uncertainty which serves as a pressure upon the ethnic group in power to accumulate as much economic resources by both legitimate and illegitimate means before its hold on political power comes to an end. Based on this analysis, the paper also proposes some measures which are likely to minimise the temptation to engage in corruption practices.

The paper is organized in the following form. The first part makes a case for the foregrounding of corruption on the national agenda and the national consciousness. This is followed by the second part which presents a brief literature review that covers some conceptual, theoretical and empirical issues covered by the literature on corruption. The third part highlights and analyses the manifestation of corruption during the post-independent Government led by Forbes Burnham. This is followed by an analysis of the evolution and changing form of corruption under the post-1992 government, specifically during the period by Bharrat Jagdeo. This is then followed by the fifth part which provides a general discussion of some of the issues brought out in the historical/sociological analysis of corruption during the two periods in question. And, the final part provides some policy recommendations informed by the preceding analysis.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT AND ADDRESS CORRUPTION?

Corruption threatens social cohesion by enhancing ethnic suspicion and intra and inter-ethnic stratification

Before the General and Regional Elections in 2015, the perception of corruption was very high. This perception was no doubt fueled and informed by almost daily reports in the mainstream media about corruption especially among the Executive arm of Government. This high level of corruption in the society resulted in two simultaneous, though opposing tendencies in the society. On one hand, it resulted in heightened criticism of the Government. This criticism came from various sections of the society, namely the independent media, the political opposition, and the supporters of the political opposition. Of the three sections referred to above, the political opposition and its supporters criticised not only the acts of corruption but the tendency for the beneficiaries of these corrupt acts to be persons of a particular ethnic group. The Executive was quick to place an ethno-political spin on these criticisms and thereby used it as a means of galvanising its own support base. The high level of corruption, therefore, indirectly heightened and reinforced ethnic tensions in the society and became a threat to social cohesion. On the other hand, however, perception of corruption resulted in the emergence of a small multi-ethnic group inspired and held together only by its need for a more conscionable approach to governance in Guyana. This group is a relatively small group, but it was large enough to effect electoral changes by combining its voting power with that of the opposition. While this integrating tendency is very important and should be further analysed, this paper will focus on the disintegrating tendency of corruption and the perception of corruption in Guyana.

Corruption leads to state capture and the subverting of national institutions

Menke (2011) argues that one of the fundamental differences in pre-colonial and (ex) colonial societies is that while the nation precedes the state in the former, the relationship between the nation and the state is inverted in the latter. Along with this inversion of the

nation/state relationship, there is also an inversion of the class/state relationship. In Western European societies of the 19th century the development of economic classes preceded the development of the state, the state therefore was the creature of a particular class with a particular class interest. In the ex-colonies the reverse is true - the state preceded the formation and crystallization of local classes. The state then became the instrument through which classes are formed and crystalized. There is the tendency then for ethnic groups to capture the state with the sole intent of converting its social capital to financial and economic capital – of transforming its horizontal relationship with other ethnic groups into a vertical relationship.

Corruption forestall national development

Corruption and the perception of it can serve as a threat to overall national development by inducing a spirit of selfishness and greed rather than a spirit of service and collective responsibility resulting in the diverting of attention from transforming the economy for the benefit of the nation to extracting as much as possible from the economy for the benefit of specific groups. Governance and development becomes then, secondary to rent-seeking and corruption.

Corruption contributes to capital flight

Gains from corruption are better saved and hidden outside the country in order to avoid detection and confiscation. This will no doubt have a negative financial impact on the economy in question. There is a growing body of literature which assesses and highlights the relationship between corruption and capital flight. Swaleheen (2008) for example, by means of an empirical cross-country analysis, presents evidence that corruption adversely affects the gross national savings rate.

Corruption induces a spirit of hopelessness influenced by a breakdown of the expectations of a meritocratic system

Modern societies are held up by the value of equality of opportunity. Everyone expects that s/he should be able to work through legitimate means and be able to move up the socio- economic ladder based on merit and hard work. Whenever persons sense that their social mobility is being hindered because of their race, ethnicity and other such ascribed factors, they tend to lose confidence in the fundamental principles which undergird modern societies. This inspires a feeling of hopelessness by those who are not near to the centers or network of socio-economic power. When the societies are racially/ethnically divided this dynamic no doubt is manifested racially/ethnically (McDougall 2008).

Corruption could be costly

The proliferation of corrupt practices necessitates the creation and function of oversight institutions which divert both government and masses focus and resources away from more sustainable development programs. In countries such as Guyana which are beset by numerous developmental challenges, corruption adds to the menu of social challenges which beg for immediate attention. This lessens and leads to the exhaustion of both the physical and intellectual resources which could have been channeled in more productive areas.

**POPULAR EXPLANATIONS OF CORRUPTION: REVIEWING
THE LITERATURE**

Conceptual issues

Corruption is generally defined as any act by persons holding public position which contravenes standing rules or ethics for personal

benefits (Transparency International 2016). This definition, as most definitions, tries to capture the concept on a very general level taking into its conceptualization a countless numbers of acts and activities by persons holding public offices. This generalized definition, notwithstanding, corruption is one of those concepts, like ethnicity, which have multiple dimensions and types and are therefore used differently by different persons to refer to different things. Any cursory glance at the literature of corruption readily reveals this reality. This signals the need for the development of a typology of corruption which would add conceptual and theoretical clarity. Towards this end Khan (2006, 2004) attempts the development of a typology which correlates intervention types in a four cell table. Bussell (2015) proposes a typology which takes into consideration the kinds of resources which are extracted and the persons who have direct and indirect control over those resources. While these typologies are useful, a typology which takes into account the flow of benefits is also needed especially with regard to societies such as Guyana. With some types of corruption, the benefits flow from officials tasked with power and responsibility to persons close to them in some regards or persons who share their political or social characteristics. In other cases the benefits flow the other way. And, yet in other cases, there is a two way flow of benefits. Although all these acts may be in contravention of formal rules, much can be learnt from the direction of flow of benefits, thereby differentiating the types of corruption on a practical level.

The lack of a comprehensive typology does not however hinder the development of theoretical explanations of corruptions, although in many instances these theoretical explanations are too general to be of any assistance on a practical, policy intervention level. Some of these theoretical explanations are reviewed below.

Social structures and corruption

One set of literature attributes corruption to the kinds of social

relations which characterize a given society. According to this viewpoint, many countries have thrown off the shackles of colonialism approximately 50 years ago. Before the advent of colonialism, these countries were steep in traditions which conflict in very fundamental ways with many of the requirements of a modern bureaucratic state. Colonialism transformed these spaces to culturally invaded spaces in which many traditional norms survived along with imposed rules-governing bureaucratic behaviour. Felson (2011), for example, argues that corruption is an effect of the tension between the primary human imperatives of close-networks guided by kinship values and the bureaucratic logic of systems organized on the basis of organic solidarity or rational-legal values. Using a Weberian framework, the author argues that traditional and patrimonial social systems are organized in such a way that there is hardly any conflict between primary human imperatives and systems imperative. Societies which are organized along the modern, rational-legal, bureaucratic form conflicts in many ways with these primordial instincts. In line with this theory Constantine (2016a), who focused primarily on perception of corruption, argues that the perception of corruption is fundamentally determined by the degree of formal or informal politico-socio-economic interactions and these are in turn determined by the economic structure of the given society. Those societies with simple and undifferentiated economic structures are usually dominated by informal interactions, consequently, there is a high degree of the perception of corruption as the *modus operandi* of the actors in those societies differs from those in societies where the formal bureaucratic rules dominate. Moreover, there is a tendency in developed societies to change rules to accord with dominant interest thereby lessening the perception of corruption (Constantine 2016a; Johnston 2013). There is a fundamental contradiction in this thesis as it is not clear whether the perception of corruption arises because of tensions between the two forms of organizing societies (organic as opposed to mechanical solidarity) or because the rules in one society accords with (or deviate from) group demands. In one case there is the argument that in societies characterized by informal rules, those rules tend to accord with the natural demands of the groups in the society, and on

the other hand there is the thesis that societies in which formal rules dominate, those rules are changed to accord with dominant group interest.

Social and economic functions of corruption

In attempting to explain the persistence and ubiquity of corruption, some theorists have argued that corruption is functional to modern societies. The functional benefits of corruption range across a broad spectrum of social life. Abueva (1970, 1966), for example, argues that corruption serves certain institutional and societal needs. The 'grease the wheel' viewpoint posits that in countries with tardy and inefficient bureaucracies and governance institutions, corruption could play a positive role by providing an avenue in which certain processes could be expedited resulting in higher bureaucratic efficiency (Huntington 1968; Leys 1965). The opposite view is posited by Meon and Sekkat (2005) who, by means of empirical evidence, posit that corruption is even more harmful in countries where governance is poor. Another set of literature examines the relationship between corruption and economic growth. Literature which highlights the negative impact of corruption on economic growth and development abounds (Abed and Davoodi 2000; Akcay 2006). Arguing against this general treatment, Drury et al. (2006) found that the negative economic effects of corruption are more likely in non-democratic societies than in democratic societies, because while corruption can be found in both types of societies, the democratic mechanism prevents it from becoming too entrenched and disruptive of economic progress in democratic societies. On the other hand, Swaleheen (2008) found that while corruption has a negative direct effect on *per capita* growth, it is important to take into any analysis, the levels of corruption and quality of democracy. Low levels of corruption could have negative effect on growth in genuine democracies, while high levels of corruption was found to have growth enhancing effect in countries with low levels of democracy. This view is supported by Houston (2007) who also

found that corruption can positively impact economic growth by serving as a substitute for a tardy bureaucracy and unsound legal frameworks. Making a distinction between growth and sustainable development, Aidt (2009) argues that while the average effect of corruption on GDP growth might be negligible, there is certainly a significant effect of corruption on sustainable development.

There is also a set of literature which attempts to explore the relationship between ethnicity, corruption and the perception of corruption. This set of literature is particularly relevant in the Guyana case, Guyana being a country characterized by ethnic pluralism and continual low-intensity ethnic conflicts. As in the other cases, there is hardly consensus on the relationship between ethnicity and corruption or the nature of the relationship. This notwithstanding, this set of literature is very instructive in the Guyana case as it highlights some issues which are not covered in the other literature but which are very relevant to Guyana.

Cerqueti *et al.* (2012) finds a nonlinear relationship between ethnic fractionalization and corruption. When a country is either ethnically diverse or ethnically homogeneous, there is a higher tendency for corruption than when ethnic fractionalization is intermediate. In the latter set of countries, they argue, opposing ethnic groups serve as checks and balances against the corruption by the leaders. Svensson (2000) suggests that foreign aid is associated with corruption but that this is most likely in societies with competing social groups especially countries with ethnolinguistic fractionalization.

As a supplement to the literature on the association of ethnic fractionalization and corruption, another set of literature seeks to explore the function of corruption in ethnically plural societies. While some researchers argue that corruption could actually lead to social cohesion in ethnically divided societies by overcoming elite cleavages and providing opposing groups with socio-economic value, another set of literature argues the opposite. Abueva (1966), for example, argues that corruption can aid in the national development and stability by serving certain institutional and

administrative needs. Huntington posits a similar thesis by claiming that corruption can help integrate alienated groups thus staving off violent conflicts. The functionality of corruption can be demonstrated in two ways using the Guyana case. In the first case, it is the high instances of corruption which effected the forging of a cross-ethnic coalition among the leadership elite which eventually led to democratic turn-over after 23 years of the rule of one party. After this change, however, persons are becoming aware that the tendency to get involved in corrupt practices is not restricted to one ethnic group or political party as was the view formerly, but that the behaviour cuts across ethnic groups and political parties. This could be used as a basis for a genuine cross-ethnic unity among the masses (instead of among the elites) out of which a genuine cross-ethnic leadership could emerge. It is in this sense that some writers posit the view that corruption could be socially functional.

THE EVOLUTION OF CORRUPTION IN GUYANA

This paper joins the body of literature which highlights the significant role ethnic dynamics play in both fostering corrupt practices and heightening the perception of corruption in ethnically plural societies. It will be argued here that in Guyana, economic and political corruption stem from the same source. Whichever one takes predominance is a function of a combination of factors, namely the prevailing value system, the ethno-political dynamics and the occupational dynamics in the country. During the 60's socialism which places a lot of value on political power was the dominant ideology. Therefore political power became the most sought after currency. In the post-socialist era, economic and material resources became the most sought-after currency. And, this partly influenced the changing nature of corruption in Guyana. More importantly, however, both the nature and the intensity of corruption or the perception of corruption are fueled by the historically constructed ethnic and distributional dynamics in the country.

The subject of corruption in Guyana has not been subjected to any in-depth academic treatment. Apart from news items and political statements, there is hardly any material available to feed into an analysis of corruption in Guyana. This major difficulty notwithstanding, there are a few major works which deal tangentially with corruption while dealing substantively with other social, political and economic issues. One such major work is Hintzen's 'The Cost of Regime Survival'. This work postulates a dependency theory of corruption in plural societies. In its most simplified form, the argument is proffered that political survival in LDC's depends on the ability and willingness of the local political elites to protect the economic interest of two powerful groups, namely the metropolitan elites and the local elites, and this comes at the cost of satisfying the collective needs of society. Protecting the interest of metropolitan elites requires that the masses be mobilized around subjective factors such as race and nationalism. Mobilization around subjective factors is used as a means of distracting them from fundamental economic issues. Rather than focus their attention on the grip metropolitan elites have on the economy, the masses are preoccupied with more subjective issues. This explains ethnic conflicts in these countries. Corruption on the other hand could be explained by the need to satisfy the economic interest of the local elites. This is done through patronage and clientelism according to Hintzen (1989; 1985). While the above theoretical postulate goes a far way in explaining both ethnic conflict and corruption, there are some fundamental problems with these postulates which rob them of any general application. The first problem is of a philosophical nature. At the base of Hintzen's analysis is the abstraction of a *homo politicus* similar to the *homo economicus* who serves as the basis of classical economic analysis. Just as the *homo economicus* is principally concerned with the rational pursuit of his material needs, the *homo politicus* is concerned ultimately with the acquisition and retaining of political power for its own selfish needs. The social (in this case ethnic) environment within which these actors were socialized and brought up is hardly taken into consideration. This is why any patronage can only be interpreted as an attempt to cement their political survival

rather than to augment the comparative position of the ethnic group (or any other social group within which they find themselves) within the socio-economic network. The most, in terms of concessions, this viewpoint is willing to make is that whenever actors think beyond their own self-interest their selflessness is limited to their class and extends to no other social group they are part of. This viewpoint hardly sees it possible that other group identification could have equal if not greater effects on the actions of actors. The other problem with this postulate is that Hintzen sees identity, namely ethnic identity as subjective in the classic Marxist sense and as purely an outcome of elite manipulation. He doesn't view ethnic identity as a social fact with prolonged durability. Ethnicity, therefore is approached as a pure outcome variable with little to no analytic power.

Because of these errors, there are a lot of unanswered questions which cannot be answered within the framework provided by Hintzen. For example, why the masses is capable of either reflectively or unreflectively forgoing certain collective needs in order to keep their ethnic representative in power as claimed by Hintzen but the political elite unaffected by decades of ethnic socialization and acculturation seems only capable of personal interest? Why the influence of the metropolitan powers decreased during certain periods as a direct outcome of the masses opposition to metropolitan control of the economy if governance in LDC's is largely geared towards protecting metropolitan interest and manipulating the subjective needs of the masses?

Another interesting theoretical postulate is provided by Khemraj (2013). He uses the economic concept oligarchy to explain the behaviour of the Jagdeo regime. The ultimate goal of an oligarchy (a political and economic elite) is to control the economic space. The author attributes the emergence and persistence of the oligarchy to several factors. Firstly, he attributes the emergence of the oligarchy to the Marxist/Leninist principle of democratic centralism which was the guiding principle in the People Progressive Party/ Civic (PPP/C). This form of social organization is used as a means

of filtering out those persons who do not subscribe to the core ideology of the party and of limiting decision making to a small group of loyalists. Secondly, the oligarchy was empowered by the 1980 'Burnham constitution' which 'bequeaths significant powers to the President, making him immune to prosecution for wrongdoing committed in office'. Thirdly, the list system also serves to consolidate the oligarchy as membership in the government is largely dependent on a political selection process (which exacts loyalty). Fourthly, and most importantly, the oligarchy persists on account of the ethnic voting dynamics in the country. Because the electorate votes according to ethnic consideration as oppose to class or any other consideration, the oligarchy made up predominantly of the ethnic group with the numeric plurality, is kept in power in spite of the political degeneration and concentration of economic wealth which comes about as a result of this political formation. This oligarchic arrangement and ethnic voting dynamics make it possible for government officials to be able to transfer state resources (through government contracts and jobs etc. and even change laws) to politically connected individuals with impunity. Though the international political economy dimension is understandably missing from Khemraj's analysis, it is similar to Hintzen's in that both interpret the behaviour of the elites in purely self-interested terms and disregard the ethnic (collective) intentions of their actions. Ethnicity is only used as a factor exploitable and exploited by elites for their own self-interest, therefore any allocation to an ethnic group is interpreted as purely an attempt to keep that group minimally satisfied. This is why, although Khemraj accedes that the oligarchy in question exhibited behaviour different from oligarchies in other countries by its apparent disinterest in wresting power from the established business class, he fails to explain why this is so in the Guyana case.

Though not writing specifically about corruption and ethnic conflicts in Guyana, Menke provides the theoretical basis upon which this analysis of ethnicity and corruption in Guyana rests. Menke (2011), in agreement with Sankatsing (2007) argues that one fundamental difference between modern postcolonial nations and

other nations is the fact that in the former the state precedes the formation of the nation, while in the latter the nation is an outcome of the state. In the latter case the state is an outcome of the ideological and economic dominance of one group which is very successful in making its ideology the dominant ideology and in naturalizing its own privileges. The process of nation-building in these societies is based on a monocultural ethnic ideology using the power of the state. It is not only the relationship between state and nation which assumed this form, but also the relationship between state and class. In Western European societies of the 19th century the development of economic classes preceded the development of the state; the state therefore became the creature of a particular class with a particular class interest. Both of these relationships were reversed in the case of ex-colonies. With respect to the formation and purpose of the states in ex-colonies, the dominant view is that these states were established with the primary intent of managing the extraction of resources from these countries. The tasks of nation-creation and nation building were secondary if not non-existent. This resulted in the existence of states without fully developed nations or classes, thus inverting the usual relationship between states, nations and classes. These were, therefore, nations in transition in which the formation and consolidation of powerful groups were paramount to governance and nation-building (Huntington 1968).

This resulted in two very important socio-political and socio-economic tendencies in ex-colonies. In the first instance it created the conditions in which various ethnic groups attempt to imprint their ethnic image on the fledgling nation, and in the second instance it created the conditions in which each ethnic group strives to make itself the economically dominant group. At the center of both of these tendencies is the need to capture the relatively developed state after the exit of the previously dominant colonial powers (Despres 1975). The strength of Menke's theoretical position is that he moves away from the reductionism present in the other works and suggests that both class on one hand and race and ethnicity on the other hand could be used as analytic categories in

the analysis of certain social dynamics in the Caribbean. Though Menke (2011) limits his analysis to the construction of ethnic identity and the role of the state and society in this process, this paper, utilizing the said theoretical framework, aims to explain a specific manifestation of corruption and state capture in Guyana.

Burnham, state capture and political corruption

The classical definition of state capture calls attention to the way bureaucratic rule and formal procedures are manipulated by private firms in their attempt to influence state policies and laws in their favour (Hellman and Kaufmann 2001; Pradhan 2000). What differentiates state capture from other forms of corruption is that while in the latter case the intent is on the selective enforcement of already existing laws, in the former case it is on influencing the very formation of laws to protect the interest of influential private firms and companies. While the emphasis is usually placed on private firms and companies, Pradhan (2000) and Uzelac *et al.* (2003) highlight instances where other social groups such as ethnic and military groups are agents of state capture. In spite of the difference between earlier and later definitions, there seems to be a consensus in limiting the application of the concept to instances in which outside groups attempt to manipulate the state. This paper deviates from this consensus. It argues that in societies characterised by the principle of the separation of powers, groups or individuals within the formal state structure can and do capture the state, change rules and draft policies to benefit their own or group interest or further their own or group agenda. It is in reference to this latter phenomenon that the concept is being applied in this work. At the beginning of the independence period many governments in the newly emerging independent states in the Caribbean and Africa were animated by the need to construct a new nation free from the political, economic and ideological shackles of colonialism (Danns 1982). It was no different with Forbes Burnham in Guyana. After Independence, and as soon as he was free from the restraints of the

coalition partner, the United Force (UF), with whose assistance he was able to gain political power, he set out on the demanding task of nation creation. His nation creation thrust had some important components, namely, nationalisation, nationalism, cooperativism and the self-sufficiency through import substitution (Rose 2002). His approach to nation creation was distinct from the two other political parties at the time. Though there were mixed reactions to his development policies (Premdas 1978; Thomas 1983), what is important to note here, however, is that in pursuit of his vision of a Guyanese nation, he was forced to involve in state capture for two specific reasons. First of all, the transition from a colonial government to an independent one does not immediately assure a loyal and compliant bureaucracy which would bend willingly to the policy direction of the new leaders. Danna (1982) outlines some of the dynamics created by this transition and some of the responses by leaders of the independent nation. Secondly, because the ethnic dynamics in the country did not afford him the privilege of gaining power as a standalone party let alone of making any major legislative changes, Burnham had very little options available to him. Beset by such scarcity of options, he chose the one which entailed consecutively rigging elections to both keep himself in power and to give himself the two-third majority needed to make any legislative changes.

His attempt at state capture started with the 1968 rigging of elections (Commonwealth Secretariat 2001); it was the 1973 elections, however, which gave him the parliamentary power necessary to cement his position. While there is limited actual evidence of rigging the 1973 election, the outcome of the election, particularly with respect to votes received by the ruling party deviated massively from all the elections before 1973 and after 1992 when free and fair election was re-introduced in Guyana. In this election, the ruling party copped two thirds of the votes cast which gave it legislative power to pursue Burnham's task of nation creation. This two third majority seat in the National Assembly was engineered so that he could make the constitutional changes that could give him the power to subject the other organs of state to his

will and to implement his programmes. As part of the legislative changes Burnham removed the office of the Prime Minister and established himself as the Executive President thus blending components of a Westminster system with a presidential system. He went on to give himself immunity from any criminal and civil suit while in office. He also gave himself power over the public service and the ability to appoint and remove persons from key positions.

“He hand-picked his judges and indicated to them what decisions to give; he controlled the media, trade unions, schools, airport. He dismissed public officers without cause. Public officers who wanted to be certain of keeping their jobs, or were looking for promotion often spent their weekends working on a government coconut estate.” (Gibson 2003).

Another bold move in the direction of state capture is the Declaration of Sophia which promulgated the principle of party paramountcy thereby reducing the government to the party serving as one of its executive arms (Burnham 1974). (See Danns 1982; Rose 2002 and Thomas 1983 for a list of strategies employed by Burnham in his quest to wield absolute control over the state and country).

Burnham's attempt at state capture was dictated by the exigency of the prevailing situation. First of all in a society divided both horizontally and vertically along ethnic lines, it was highly improbable that he would have been able to attract a large cross-sections of the votes of any other ethnic group than his own. The numerical strength of his ethnic support was, however, not sufficient to land him the presidency. To gain power therefore, it was necessary to form a coalition with another group which was exactly what happened when the People's National Congress (PNC) formed a coalition with the United Force (UF) in 1964. Governing by means of a coalition calls for many compromises and hardly results in any radical shift away from the status quo. In some cases it can lead to the enhancement of the status quo, as it has been found

that during the coalition government of 1964-1968, against the socialist inclinations of the larger party in the coalition, the Portuguese, represented by the smaller party in the coalition, were able to augment their landholdings (Jameson 1978; Constantine 2016b). The constraints and discomfort created during this period, no doubt necessitated the rigging of the election if Burnham and his party intended to maintain power. Furthermore, to carry out some of the other aspects of nation creation Burnham was forced to capture the state in numerous ways. Apart from state capture there were also evidence of financial corruption during the Burnham years. This fact notwithstanding, one get the sense that the financial aspect of corruption was secondary to, and was an unavoidable outcome of, political corruption. The main thrust of the Burnham Government was nation creation. The ethnic dynamics in the country however, made rigging the elections as the most promising option to maintain power and the concentration of power as a necessary step in order to protect the Government and leaders from any challenges. Survival in such a context necessitates the political loyalty of the bureaucratic leaders and the political leaders. This loyalty, however, comes at a price, that price is a certain amount of latitude for these leaders to be able to enrich themselves at the expense of the state and people. Hintzen (1989) dealt comprehensively with the dynamics of patronage and clientelism under the Burnham's regime but said little about the informal and indirect means by which certain leaders in the regime sought to enrich themselves. During the late 1970s and early 1980s period the level of corruption reached such levels that the government was forced to appear as if it was adopting an uncompromising policy vis-a-vis financial corruption (Danns 1978). These lukewarm attempts notwithstanding, financial corruption was one of the cost attached to regime survival.

Jagdeo, state capture and corruption

Another historical period where corruption or the perception of it

was very high was during the presidency of Bharrat Jagdeo, between 1999- 2011 (and continued unabated under the two-year reign of Donald Ramotar, Jagdeo's successor). The nature of corruption during this period, however, took on a generally different form. It will be argued here that the form corruption took on during this period is partly owed to the ideological shift in the international political sphere, but most importantly to the change in the ethno-political dynamics domestically. There were three important dynamics at play which set the stage for the emergence of a semi-predatory approach to government which was intent on transferring resources primarily to a small ethnic elite and secondarily to a larger ethnic masses.

In the first instance, by the time the PPP gained power in 1992, the intensity of the socialist and postcolonial ideologies had subsided as a result of the global triumph of neoliberalism. This global ideological shift was accompanied by shifts in the practical approach to politics and nation building in many ex-colonies. The most characteristic was the shift from planned economies prescribed by socialism to open market economies prescribed by neo-liberalism through the specific institutional mechanism of structural adjustment. The practical outcome of this shift at the political level saw political leaders' role being limited to managing the societies and economies in steady state and implementing only those changes which are necessary for the smooth and unhindered functioning of the market. The state was therefore stripped of any responsibility for nation creation and nation building. Any attempt at a coordinated and focused approach to nation building in this period would be solely a function of the internal motivation of the ruling elites than any global third world ideological pressure. The point being made here is that the post-1992 government was under no pressure to pursue a well, planned, coordinated and focused development plan.

Secondly, with the re-introduction of free and fair elections in 1992, the basis was set for the party with the ethnic plurality to form the new government. As long as this party was able to win a small

margin of support from other ethnic groups, it was highly likely that it would remain in power for an extended period of time. There was therefore no need to rig elections and engage in the level of political corruption associated with the previous administration.

Thirdly, the fact that during the previous regime, the African Guyanese elite had consolidated itself as the bureaucratic elite administering state capitalism (Thomas 1983) and the African Guyanese masses were primarily the working class peopling the bureaucracy, the new elite could not use the traditional bureaucracy as the principal means of redistributing resources to its supporters and main ethnic constituency.

These three factors were instrumental in determining the form of and relationship between state capture and corruption in the post 1992 period. The combination of these factors resulted in a socio-political environment conducive to exploitation, corruption and capture. The rigging of elections in the previous period engendered the consolidation of the ethnic support of the PPP constituency behind the party; it also offered the PPP another platform upon which it galvanised its support base. Now with the claim that they have been cheated out of power by the imperialist who have backed Burnham and the claim of continuous rigging of elections to keep them out of power, it was easy for the PPP to procure and secure the perennial support of its ethnic constituency. This historical narrative gave the PPP twenty three years of uncritical ethnic support. During this time the government under the PPP morphed into an elected oligarchy (Khemraj 2013). This description borrows somewhat from Zakaria's concept of an illiberal democracy (Zakaria 1997). The key argument here is that though the government was elected in a free and fair process, its behaviour resembled that of an oligarchy which sought to control and dominate the economic space by transferring state assets and wealth to close friends and family while creating economic hardships for those outside that small ethno-political network. It functioned as a semi-predatory state which was more intent on giving rise to what Jagdeo himself called, a Newly Emerging Private Sector (NEPS), a very apt acronym since

this sector benefited massively from the nepotistic relationship between itself and the government.

In addition to contributing to the political degeneration of the party in power, the ethno-political loyalties by the ethnic masses to their respective elites also affected the formation and development of a genuine civil society a necessary social arm in the fight against corruption. The society therefore lacks common social will - tastes, values, ethics which cut across ethnic lines. Ethnic demands have taken the place of social demands. Norton (2007) highlights the important functions of a civil society in any modern society but attributes its absence in Guyana to the political dominance of parties with deep socialist leanings which have historically dominated both the social, political and economic spheres of the society. While this assessment bears some validity, the absence of a civil society could be best explained using the plural society models of Furnivall (1956), Smith (1984, 1974), Despres (1975), and Beckford (1999). All these authors pinpoint the lack of a common social will as an inherent feature of ethnically plural societies. Civil society in the Guyana case has been ethnicized even before it was politicized during the period referred to by Norton (Edwards 2016). In Western societies, there is a bourgeois class and a bourgeois public sphere strong enough to discourage certain unlawful acts by Government officials. However, in developing societies both of these institutions are subservient to the state. The process of class formation in these societies have been left uncompleted.

The lack or ineffectiveness of social demand creates a situation in which criticisms usually come from the side outside of executive power and those criticisms can and are usually dismissed as ethnically and politically motivated. And, this is usually the case because the small pool of critics usually change whenever executive power changes hands although the form and approach to government remains the same. Political leaders are usually aware of this fact, so they ignore public criticisms because invariably those criticisms emanate not from their own ethnic support base but from the other political faction and their followers. On the other hand the

supporters of the party in power are usually silent in the face of some of the most egregious acts by its ethno-political leaders. This creates a situation similar to what the economists refers to as a moral hazard. Under Jagdeo, The Government became the second most corrupt in the region according to the CPI Index provided by Transparency International. Although the CPI measures perception, those perception were fueled by a series of questionable and glaring acts by the Government.

Another contributing factor to the nature of corruption under Jagdeo has to do with the nature and configuration of the occupational structure generally and the bureaucracy specifically. When the PPP assumed control of the government in 1992, it inherited a bureaucracy dominated on all levels by Afro-Guyanese who were the main supporters of the then main opposition. He, therefore, could not use the bureaucracy to benefit his ethnic/political constituency as any large scale reconfiguration of the public sector could have resulted in intense civil conflict because it would have been threatening the main economic channel for Afro-Guyanese. Notwithstanding, the bureaucracy could not have been left entirely in place, it being the official channels through which government policies are executed. The strategy employed by the PPP was to cleanse the top tier of the bureaucracy by removing those professionals which assume the positions under Hoyte and replacing them with persons loyal to the PPP's agenda (Khemraj 2013). These persons were invariably of one ethnic group. This party became so bold and glaring in its ethnically biased approach to governance that at one time there were absolutely no Afro-Guyanese serving in the diplomatic service (Kaieteur News 2011). While the above strategies were necessary and sufficient for state capture, they were not sufficient, though necessary, for class formation through transferal of state assets and resources. Class formation involves the usurpation of large amount of economic values and resources too large to be justifiably transferred directly to public officials without raising alarm. This amount, however, can be transferred to private individuals who have legitimate businesses or who establish businesses just for the purpose of benefitting from

this transfer. Unfortunately, apart from a few published studies of corruption and state capture under the Jagdeo-led PPP/C (Bulkan 2014; Bulkan and Palmer 2008) corruption during this period is a largely under examined phenomenon. This notwithstanding, the private news media stands as a good source of information on financial corruption and class formation under Jagdeo. In fact one of the dailies has a section labeled 'The Heist of Guyana' which lists a number of acts by the government which either borders on corruption or serves as blatant examples of corruption (Kaieteur News undated). These include, among other acts, the distribution of the Guyana airwaves to a few friends, family and party supporters; the sale of a complex on 18.9 acres of land in a prime industrial area in Guyana for significantly less than it took to renovate it immediately before; the granting of multi-million dollar contracts to contractor with absolutely no history of contracting experience (the Amaila falls access road stands as a glaring example) (Kaieteur News 2014). These acts and others stand as examples of the transference of state resources with the intent of promoting the emergence of his NEPS, a parallel, subservient business class.

Table 1: Instances of alleged corruption under Bharrat Jagdeo's Regime

The Berbice Bridge Project - In 2007 the then government decided to construct a pontoon bridge over the Berbice river similar to the bridge constructed decades ago over the Demerara river. Instead of financing the project on its own or by means of aid from multinational donors, the government opted to pursue a Public Private Partnership Agreement with two local companies. The cost of the project amounted to USD \$38m. The contractual agreement between the Government of Guyana and private investors with close connections to then President, Bharrat Jagdeo, saw companies (namely Hand-in-Hand Trust and The New GPC) which contributed a collective 5% equity in the company enjoying 50% ownership. Renowned regional economist, Clive Thomas, had the following to say about the contract "This contract agreement is clearly designed to make just a handful of people filthy rich for the rest of their lives at the expense of the poor. It is a despicable contract which must be changed. The contract agreement and the implications for our taxpayers can only be described as criminal and I will insist that the Shareholder Agreement be made public" (Wilburg 2015a; 2015b).

Granting of Radio Licenses to Friends and Political Supporters - in 2011, months before Jagdeo exited office, he distributed five radio frequencies to his close friend, Bobby Ramroop, 5 frequencies to his party, the PPP/C and 5 frequencies to a sibling of a sitting minister. The other five frequencies were distributed as single frequencies thus limiting their reach. Established media entities which had outstanding applications for radio frequencies were denied these frequencies (Kaieteur News 2014). Many in Guyana including the Private Sector Commission (PSC), the Guyana Press Association (GPA) and the Guyana Media Proprietors Association (GMPA) expressed concerns about the manner in which the frequencies were distributed as it went against criteria laid down by the

Broadcasting Act (Kaieteur News 4/29/2013).

Granting of complex e-Gov project to former president's son - In 2012, the son of former President, Donald Ramotar was awarded the management of a project to lay 560 kilometers of fibre optic cable as part of the Government's ICT Initiative. The project became bungled as the Project Head had absolutely no experience with such massive complex projects before, and another company was awarded the contract to repair the damages done by the former President's son. The cost of the entire project was US \$32 million dollars (Ram and McRae 2015).

Amaila Access Road Project - In 2010, the Government of Guyana awarded a contract to a company Synergy Holding owned by Makeswar 'Fip' Motilall to design and construct a 150 miles access road through virgin forest for the Amaila Falls project. The total cost of the project was USD \$15.4 million. The problem was that the company had absolutely no experience with building. Despite large sums of monies being advanced, the company was unable to complete the project and to meet agreed upon deadlines. Road building equipment had to be bought from the sum advanced as the company had absolutely no road building equipment. Eventually, the project had to be re-awarded to another company in 2012 under the Donald Ramotar regime (Gill 2010a; 2010b; Kaieteur News 2012). The owner, Makeswar Motilall, was claimed to have had very close relationship with former president, Bharrat Jagdeo (Khemraj 2013).

Roger Khan saga - The government under Bharrat Jagdeo was accused of allowing the drug trade to flourish and of having very close connections to persons with apparent close connection to persons who were dominant players in the illicit economy. One such case is the case of Roger Khan. Khan was a known drug lord who was eventually nabbed by the United States after a decade or so reign of terror in Guyana. Before being nabbed in the US, Khan was used by the Government in its alleged attempt to fight crime in Guyana. To assist him in his work, high tech equipment which could only be sourced by governments were bought by the government and delivered to Khan to assist him in his work. During Khan's reign it is alleged that over four hundred Afro-Guyanese youths became victims of extra judicial killing by the hand of what was then called a 'Phantom Squad' operated by Khan. In exchange for his contribution, the government turned a blind eye to Khan's illegal operation in Guyana (Vincent and Klein 2015).

Queens Atlantic - Against the laws of Guyana, very attractive concessions were granted to an alleged close friend of the former President Bharrat Jagdeo in his bid to buy over prime real estate from the Government. "The concessions were granted to Queens Atlantic – owned by a good friend of the President – without regard to their legality. The government used its majority in Parliament to amend the rules in order to bring the concessions in line with the law. The concessions, furthermore, were initiated without open bidding and a business proposal from Queens Atlantic to support its purchase of state-owned assets." (Ram 2008).

Forestry Management: Bulkan and Palmer (2008) argue that grave illegalities and corruption are allowed to take place in the forestry sector (not necessarily dominated by its own ethnic group) as it is connected with trafficking in drugs, guns and humans and money laundering (dominated by its own ethnic group) which cumulatively account for a large part of the economy (Stabroek News March 2006).

DISCUSSION

From the analysis presented above, this paper makes the claim that corruption and the perception of corruption in Caribbean countries take place against the backdrop of a retreating colonialism. The formal displacement of the colonial powers in 1966 created a power vacuum which needed to be filled. The struggle to fill this vacuum were fought out by groups which by then identified themselves through racial and ethnic lenses. Political power and the control of the formal state machinery were therefore used as a means through which these competing groups sought to solidify their collective position, both culturally and economically. In the first instance corruption (financial) was an unavoidable consequence of state capture while in the second instance state capture was only necessary as a means of transferal of unimaginable amount of wealth from the state to private, ethnic elite. It follows the evolution of corruption in Guyana highlighting how the nature of corruption changes when the nature of the ethno-political dynamics in the country changes. Knowledge of the nature and evolution of corruption is important if we intend to address it in any meaningful manner. Uncritically applying prescriptions which work elsewhere may or may not work in the Guyana (and countries like her) situation. This level of uncertainty as to the effectiveness of applied solutions can have negative impact on the populace; it can spread a high level of cynicism and disinterestedness which in turn is detrimental to the development of democracy. Countries like, Guyana, therefore are forced to be very clinical and methodological in their attempt to tackle their social problems. Intervention strategies should not be uncritically imported from elsewhere, but must emerge from a careful and thorough study of the nuances and peculiarities of the local situation. This paper is an attempt in that direction specifically with regard to corruption and the perception of corruption. The recommendations being discussed and postulated here are outcomes of the analysis of specified types of corruption in the Guyanese social context.

Another important point being made by this paper is that the nature

of corruption is largely determined by the prevailing ethno-political dynamics of the time. An in depth analysis of the dynamics of the time could therefore provide some insights into the likely evolution and outcome of corrupt practices by political leaders. From the historical analysis, the induction could be made that while the current regime exists in the a socio-economic environment similar to the immediate previous regime which give rise to high levels of financial corruption, it is also beset by the same socio-structural constraint of the Burnham's regime which give rise to political corruption and state capture. Therefore, while there is an opportunity for a different approach to politics, as will be argued, there is also the clear and present temptation to engage in both types of corruption expounded on in this paper.

The current government is formed by a coalition made up of one large party with an undeniable racial/ethnic support base of Afro-Guyanese; a medium size party which is supported primarily by a small multi-ethnic cross section of the population comprising both Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, and persons of mixed ancestry; and some smaller parties which have never been able to win any seats in the National Assembly. The coalition won the 2015 elections by a slim margin of approximately 5000 votes which translated into a one seat majority in the National Assembly against a party which held the reins of government for the preceding 23 years primarily on account of the numerical advantage of its Indo-Guyanese ethnic support base. This means that the current government rest upon uncertain grounds similar to the PNC under Burnham in 1964. This uncertainty could be either good or bad for the development of Guyana depending on the inclinations of the leaders, the level of public engagement by citizens and the effective fulfillment of the news media and civil society generally of their watchdog role. On one hand, the uncertainty could force the political leaders to pursue in a satisfactory manner the fulfillment of their election promises in order to inspire confidence in those who voted for them in the 2015 elections and to alleviate the fears of an additional few who had not supported them in the said elections. This is with the explicit aim of widening the margin of victory and lessening the electoral

uncertainty. On the other hand, there is also the likelihood that the situational dynamics would pressure the leaders to seek to accumulate as much financial resources as possible in case of an unfortunate reversal of electoral fortune. Lastly, but more importantly, the uncertainty could lead to attempts at rigging of elections if any breakdown in relationships of the coalition partners necessitate the facing of the electorate as single parties. The breaking down of relationship between the coalition partners, however, seems unlikely compared to the 1964 coalition as there is no sharp ideological difference between the major parties in the coalition. Moreover, the lack of any provision for post-election coalitions in the constitution will definitely serve as a deterrent to the parties in the coalition competing separately at the next elections. While the political logic attached to the need to increase the electoral margin of victory is a compelling logic, this no doubt competes with the need of ethnic elites to secure and accumulate as much economic goods necessary to be able to enhance the position of the ethnic collective in the socio-economic stratification system. The pressure of the latter logic has been historically a more significant than the pressure towards good governance. All these possibilities could become significantly enhanced with the eventual monetization of the recent oil finds. This, I'm convinced, necessitates in depth studies into the social, economic and political implications of the recent oil finds in Guyana.

What can be done?

Any simple correlational analysis of the complexity of economies and the perception of corruption would show that the perception of corruption is highest in countries with less-complex economic structures. This can mean one of two things or a combination of both. It could mean, as argued by Constantine (2016a) that developed countries (countries with more complex economic structures) change their laws to accord with the interest of the powerful so there is no need for the powerful to attempt to accumulate economic goods

in an extra-legal manner. Or, it could mean that, according to Khan (2006, 2004) in developed countries the opportunities to make money outside the political or public sphere is far greater thus lessening the need to engage in corruption and that in developed countries institutions work better because they can be financed appropriately. Or, it could be a combination of both. While on the surface of things the above theoretical postulates might seem at odds with the one proffered in this paper, a deeper analysis would show that in the first instance where it is claimed that in developed countries the 'rules of the game' are changed to accord with the interest of the dominant class, there is the presupposition that classes have already become sufficiently crystallized for there to be a dominant class. It means that the period characterized by groups struggling to establish themselves as the dominant group has given way to a period in which one group has already emerged the victor. In this case laws and institutions have already been put in place to restrict competition and mobility by any other means except through normatively defined legitimate means. While pursuing economic development is the avowed aim of most developing countries, to say that we cannot deal with corruption until a sufficient level of economic development is achieved leaves policy-makers and citizens helpless in the short and medium term in the face of rampant, sometimes, blatant corruption by elected officials. I am of the view that if a very comprehensive typology of corruption is developed and the causes and consequences of each types are studied scientifically, then countries will be able to tackle effectively some types of corruption in some ways in the short and medium term thus lessening the overall instances of corruption, and by extension, the perception of corruption.

This article deals mainly with corruption among the political elites in plural societies and it explains the nature of that corruption and the causes and consequences. The recommendations put forward here, therefore, do not extend to other forms of corruption nor are they intended as a final solution. Moreover, they are specific to Guyana and do not extend beyond the borders of Guyana to countries which might be grappling with the issue of corruption. Three main

contributing factors have been highlighted, namely ethnic pluralism, weak institutions, and the lack of enabling legislations. The recommendations proposed here will therefore be directed towards resolving to the extent possible some of the issues in these three areas. As a long term solution, the political leaders need to focus on an appropriate approach to development which involves increasing the economic pie through structural transformation and forward and backward linkages in the economy which would create more legitimate avenues of wealth accumulation and social mobility. It would also create new areas of economic activities thus differentiating the labour force. Development will increasingly lessen the necessity for the direct role of the state in the economy (Brownsberger 1983). This is different from the virtuous circle theory which posits a circular effect from economic growth to better institutions to further economic growth.

Legislative changes to encourage post-election coalition which would encourage the formation of smaller parties with interests which are not necessarily ethnic could go a far way in dampening the sharpness of ethnic conflicts in plural societies. This could lead to the shift from ethnicity based issues to other interest-based politics as occurred in Nigeria (Brownsberger 1983). Although it is a widespread view that third parties in the Caribbean both perform poorly and are short lived, the Alliance for Change (AFC), one of the parties which make up the current coalition, performed impressively well at all elections since its inception, and in the 2013 election it copped as much as seven seats in the National Assembly, the highest ever won by any third party in Guyana. This serves as an indication that voters are starting to despise the lack of voting options and the post-election contempt and disregard displayed by the two larger parties. A third party will not be able to pull much weight and exercise any influence if it is constrained by the constitution. Constitutional changes are therefore needed to encourage post-election coalition. This recommendation is in line with the analysis made by Khemraj (2013), who pinpointed the Burnham constitution as instrumental in aiding the elected oligarchy under Jagdeo.

A generally agreed upon solution to corruption is the establishment of anti-corruption, good governance, and oversight institutions. The Guyana case, however, has shown that these tend to become victims of the same problems they were established to solve. The Ethnic Relations Commission, the Ombudsman Office, other established commissions are either underfunded, not allowed to carry out the work for which they were established, or they become themselves victims of state capture. Although these institutions are vulnerable to capture and are usually toothless in terms of prosecution, the outcome of the recent election shows how the perception of corruption can galvanise popular support against the guilty parties leading to democratic turn-over. So even if they merely serve the function of highlighting malpractices by Government, that can be a critical function which could additively lead to changes and development. To minimise the economic strain these institutions can have on the economy and thereby enhance the prospects of political and civil society buy-in along with the effectiveness of the institutions, one solution against the proliferation of non-functioning institutions is generalisation as opposed to the specialisation of roles which are found in developed societies. Developed societies can afford to fund highly specialised institutions because, in many cases, the level of specialisation is consistent with the level of development and income. Conversely, in developing countries there is a tendency for the division of social labour to outrun the division of economic labour thereby leading to dysfunctional institutions (Riggs and MacKean 1964). One institution which is very necessary in developing countries is the enhancing of asset declaration laws and the full functioning of an independent institution answerable to parliament and funded directly out of the national coffer rather than by the Executive. Gokcekus and Mukherjee (2006) found that these laws could be effective as a deterrent of corruption if they come with a threat of prosecution for those who fail to obey the law, otherwise, they are not too effective.

Lastly, in the area of ethnic conflicts, I agree with Cerqueti *et al.* (2012), Collier (2001) and Alesina *et al.* (2003) that it is difficult to draft policies to deal with issues of ethnic fractionalization. I

however am aware that if we unpack ethnicity, we will be able to grasp its dimensions and draft policies to tackle issues relating to those dimension (Edwards 2016; Danns 2014). For example, Edwards (2016) found that there is a geographic/spatial dimension to ethnic fractionalisation in Guyana. Policies could be crafted which seek to progressively tackle this problem. One such policy is a national housing policy. Within the past decade Guyana has embarked on a noteworthy housing policy which distributed house lots based on a lottery system. This approach to house lot distribution has the potential to randomise the ethnic distribution of citizens in the new housing areas thus removing one dimension of ethnic fractionalization in Guyana. There needs to be an empirical study of how the land distribution so far has led to the randomisation and enhancement of the interaction of persons from different ethnic groups and how that has affected ethnic sentiments in those areas.

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