

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ideas that animate this book developed slowly over time—in conjunction with my own deepening ethnographic engagement with Bombay over the past decade or so. The idea to actually rope all my friends and colleagues into this somewhat-unwieldy project, however, came more recently and suddenly, during a particularly fantastic dinner in Bombay with Maura Finklestein, sometime in January 2017. As our dinner conversation turned to stories of the remarkable creativity and skillfulness of people we encountered in our research, I began to think about the generative possibilities of bringing such stories together in an unusual kind of book.

That lively Bombay dinner conversation came on the heels of a research workshop that I co-organized with Nellie Chu at the University of Göttingen—titled “The Entrepreneur and the Broker: Mediating Transnational Flow, Scale, and Belonging.” The energetic discussions and engagements during that two-day workshop inspired me to further exploration on these themes; I am grateful to Anderson Blanton, Noelle Brigden, Nellie Chu, Heidi Østbø Haugen, Gerda Heck, Sabine Hess, Deborah James, Ahmed Kanna, Elizabeth Krause, Michael Levien, Johan Lindquist, Saikat Maitra,

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Reading through the final *Bombay Brokers* page proofs in the bleak days of December 2020, I find that, in the face of the dark news filling my inbox each morning, the ethnographic accounts in this book nonetheless fill me with hope: these stories suggest that perhaps too much attention is being paid to conventional and empowered ways of reading and narrating the present. By contrast, the stories that populate these pages shine light through the cracks and contradictions that inhere in those empowered discourses and framings, revealing a world so remarkably full of creativity that it seems anything could happen.