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**Frontier Politics: French, Portuguese and Amerindian Alliances
between the Amazon and Cayenne, 1680–1697**

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Gomes Freire de Andrade, the Governor and capitão-geral of Maranhão (1685-1687), was convinced that establishing forts in Cabo do Norte, the area between the Amazon, Parú and Oyapock Rivers, would help protect Portugal's interests. In a letter to the King from São Luís do Maranhão on October 1685, he identified the old site of Torrego on the northern bank of the Amazon River and the mouth of the River Araguari as being the most strategically advantageous position to build the forts. He also stated that to counteract French presence and secure the Cabo do Norte, it was key to befriend the Tucujús, the Amerindian group that lived around the location called Torrego. The Tucujús were well known to the Portuguese, to the point that they named that geographical space the 'sertão dos Tucujús' (backlands of the Tucujús). Andrade had singled them out amongst other Amerindians due to the fact that he considered them the bravest 'nação' and because '...sem Indios não é possível que nos conquistem, nem nos deffendamos...'.² Andrade's statement highlights three key aspects that I will address in this chapter: European rivalry over the land and rivers between the Amazon and Oyapock Rivers, the European need for Amerindian assistance and their active pursuit of

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² All translations are mine: '...without Amerindians, it is impossible to be conquered or to defend ourselves...', Governor Gomes Freire de Andrade to the King, São Luis de Maranhão, 15 October 1685, in Reis, 1993, 188–90. On the specifics of the fortifications built and planned in Cabo do Norte in the late seventeenth century, see Chambouleyron, Bonifácio and Melo (2010, 35–6).

it, and the fact that the region under consideration remained mostly outside European control and, for the most part, under the influence of several Amerindian groups.

The few publications that deal with the centuries-long process of drawing the frontier line between the Portuguese and French empires or Brazil and France (Reis, 1993; Malafaia, 2002; Silva and Rückert, 2009) have tended to focus on the diplomatic relations and international arbitration in regards to the establishment of this frontier, whilst overlooking the alliances and conflicts between Amerindian groups and Europeans and how these interactions have shaped the history of this region.³ Were Amerindians unable to define their future and played around by Europeans, enslaved and decimated, or were they the main actors in French–Portuguese frontier politics in the late seventeenth century? Research elsewhere suggests the latter (Farage, 1986; Whitehead, 1988; Thornton, 2012, 248–311).

In this chapter I show that the history of French–Portuguese frontier initiatives and the threats to each other in the Eastern Guianas (nowadays consisting of the Brazilian state of Amapá and French Guiana) cannot be fully comprehended without taking into account indigenous agency. I analyse two cases of French–Portuguese–Amerindian interactions in the area between Cayenne and the mouth of the Amazon River between 1680 and 1700. The first case details the establishment of a Portuguese Jesuit mission in Cabo do Norte in 1687, which lasted only a few months and ended abruptly with the murder of the missionaries and their helpers at the hand of Amerindian groups. The Portuguese attributed the intellectual planning of these killings to the French, whom—the Portuguese argued—did it to hinder Portuguese settlement. I question this accepted analysis by shedding light on kinship and on Amerindian decision-making gatherings, and I suggest that they may have been the masterminds behind these killings. The second case details the French attack and the temporary occupation of the Portuguese forts of Macapá and Parú on the Amazon River in 1697. My reconstruction demonstrates that Amerindian intervention was key for French success and the centrality of indigenous planning and persuasion—combined with the Governor’s ambition—to the

³ Reis (1993) nevertheless included sources that showed indigenous agency.

establishment and maintenance of French–Amerindian alliances. Ultimately, this chapter discusses why different indigenous groups positioned themselves on the French, Portuguese or their own side, and shows the effects the Amerindians’ positioning had in influencing and shaping the (lack of) European occupation of this space.

Figure 2: Map of French Guiana and Northern Brazil

French–Portuguese Rivalry over an Amerindian Space between the Amazon and Cayenne

Europeans had been visiting the coastal Guianas down to the Amazon River since the early-sixteenth century. The English, Irish, Dutch, French and Portuguese established either trading spots, small plantations, settlements or forts. They were intent on acquiring land, extractive resources and the Amerindians living there were not only used as labour force but also as guides, paddlers and interpreters.

By the mid-1640s, the Portuguese had expelled most other Europeans from the mouth and northern bank of the delta of the Amazon River. The area north of the Parú/Jarí River became the hereditary captaincy of Cabo do Norte in 1637 when it was granted to the Portuguese Bento Maciel Parente during the Iberian Union of Crowns, and consequently Portugal considered the captaincy rightfully hers when it returned to the Crown in 1693. France had only secured her colony in the island of Cayenne in 1666 (and permanently only from 1676) as previous initiatives had been unsuccessful due to Amerindian, English and Dutch attacks and takeovers. After settling in Cayenne, the French turned their attention once again to the Amazon River. France had a long-standing interest on the Atlantic coast of Brazil, having had a colony in Rio de Janeiro (France Antarctique between 1555–1567) and São Luís do Maranhão (1612–1615). On both occasions, France counted on Amerindian allies and lost the colonies when they were taken over by the Portuguese (Hemming, 1978, 119-138; Jarnoux, 1991). From the 1680s, the French and Portuguese empires expressed a

renewed interest in the area comprised between their settlements in Cayenne and Belém respectively, and their peoples travelled there to trade with Amerindians, to build forts and to establish missions, although none of them had the human numbers and resources to achieve a physical settlement there.

The standard historical narrative deals with this rivalry with a clear political focus, presenting the region's past as one in which only Europeans, the newcomers, are the protagonists. Such a narrative argues that the first frontier line was drawn between France and Portugal in a provisional treaty in March 1700 which set the upper limit of the Portuguese territory on the River of Vicente Pinzón. This river was interpreted as the Oyapock for the Portuguese but the Araguari for the French, and this discrepancy ignited a two-hundred year dispute. Whilst this provisional treaty was ratified in the Utrecht treaties (1713-1715), it was systematically questioned until an international arbitration set the frontier on the Oyapock in 1900.⁴

According to this narrative, Europeans carved up the space and defined its cartography and its history. However, without Amerindian knowledge and help none of them would have succeeded. The region between Cayenne and the Amazon was a densely populated Amerindian space crossed by multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic Amerindian networks which expanded beyond the Eastern Guianas before the arrival of the Europeans (Rostain, 1994, 2012 and 2015; Saldanha and Cabral, 2010). Although the European colonisation influenced existing networks and contributed to processes of ethnogenesis, Amerindians continued to dominate the space. However, historical research on Amerindians in early modern French Guiana and Amapá has only recently built upon the seminar works of Curt Nimuendajú (1948, 2004), Jean Hurault (1972), Pierre and Françoise Grenand (1987) and Pierre Grenand (2006), significantly with the work of Gérard Collomb (2006) and Lodewijk Hulsman (2011).⁵

⁴ See the *Contesté Franco-Brésilien* (1900) amongst other documentation backing up that final decision.

⁵ Flávio dos Santos Gomes (1999, 225–318) also incidentally dealt with Amerindians in his studies of maroon communities. At the time of finishing this chapter, Pierre Grenand was finishing an article on early modern Amerindians that I have not had the chance to read.

Archives spread across countries, however, do hold governmental, missionary and judicial sources which, read against the grain and contrasting the data, make it possible to identify and analyse indigenous agencies. Contrasting sources written in several languages helps to overcome some of the limitations imposed by documents written by Europeans for a European audience, while bringing along its own difficulties, for instance regarding ethnonyms and toponyms. I have decided to retain the names that designate Amerindian ethnic groups, peoples' names and toponyms as they appear in each source's language, except when generically referring to the groups who have a contemporary agreed spelling as Aruã and Palikur. Hence, the Amerindian groups living on the islands on the mouth and on the northern bank of the Amazon River in the early modern period were Aruas/Aroans for the Portuguese and Aroua(s)/Aroüas for the French, and are now named Aruã (as is the extinct language they spoke). Aruã back then might have referred to a single Amerindian group with subgroups/clans using the same name, or could have been a generic ethnic name used to refer to different groups who might have named each other or were named by Europeans in other ways. In any case, archival sources clearly show indigenous involvement and the existence of Amerindian politics in addition to European politics in northern South America. Here I use the term 'politics' to refer to the initiatives that were deployed by the involved parties to defend their interests. In so doing, I argue that we need to think about this geographical space not only as frontier space between the Portuguese and the French, but as a space inhabited by multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Amerindian groups who were not subdued to the Europeans and maintained their independence and freedom in acting. Ultimately, my aim is to reconceptualize French-Portuguese-Amerindian relations by locating the region in the context of indigenous polities in Northern South America and at the heart of European imperial rivalries in the Atlantic world. These two sides are interwoven in the following analysis.

The Portuguese in Cabo do Norte: A Jesuit mission and its Amerindian neighbours, 1687

In April 1680, the King of Portugal issued a law ordering the Jesuits to establish missions on the northern bank of the Amazon and in the Cabo do Norte with the double objective of securing the territory and controlling and converting its inhabitants (Leite, 1943, vol. III, 254). In the decree's own words, they had to '[tomar] noticia das paragens aptas para se porem residencias (...) para por aquelle meio impedir as communicações das nações estrangeiras com os indios de seu Estado do Maranhão'.⁶

The Portuguese feared that French contact with Amerindians could lead to the French settling in Cabo do Norte, as French trading parties that exchanged goods and people in the area were so common that their presence posed a palpable threat of loss of control over the space.⁷ For instance, in the expedition that explored Cabo do Norte following the King's order, the Jesuits Gonsalvi and Pfeil encountered a small French party that was returning with some Amerindians that the French had—in the Jesuits' words—*resgatado*. Resgatado here meant that the French had obtained these Amerindians by trading with other Amerindian groups—who first had held them prisoners—in exchange for goods, and the French were taking them to be sold or to be used as labour. Gonsalvi confiscated and freed these Amerindians arguing that they had been seized in Portuguese territory and consequently were free, as France could not intervene in Portuguese territory (Reis, 1993, 72; Leite, 1943, vol. III, 254–56).⁸ Again in 1687, the Portuguese complained about the French trading and seizing Amerindians in the sertão dos Tucujús and the 'Ilhas dos Aroans' (islands of the Aruã) on the mouth of the Amazon. The Portuguese magnified the French threat by stating that France's intent was to settle and have Amerindian allies.⁹ Rather, French

⁶ '... [to] identify the suitable locations to establish settlements (...) in order to prevent the communication of foreign nations with the Amerindians of his [the King's] state of Maranhão', in Bettendorff's contemporary *Crônica dos padres da Companhia de Jesus no estado do Maranhão* (Bettendorff, 1990, 345).

⁷ However, the Portuguese intention was never to kill the French traders, but simply to prevent them from entering into contact with the Amerindians. See the order from the King to the Governor of Maranhão, 24 February 1686, in *Livro Grosso do Maranhão*, 70–71.

⁸ See Arenz (2010, 423 note 233, and appendix 10) for the dual use of Consalvi and Gonsalvi in the original documentation.

⁹ On the 1687 French traders and enslavers, see Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (hereafter AHU), Pará-Avulsos, Caixa 3, Doc. 267, annex, Antônio de Albuquerque Coelho de Carvalho, 19 July 1687, Belém. See also Hurault (1972, 46) and Bombardi (2014, 61-63).

traders were more interested in the extractive resources and labour force than in settling Cabo do Norte.¹⁰

The King's orders in 1680 were not implemented until June 1687, when the Portuguese Jesuits Antonio Pereira and Bernardo Gomes established a mission in Cabo do Norte (Leite, 1943, vol. III, 264).¹¹ The small island of Camunixary located in the lake Camacary was the chosen location, an unidentified spot close to the actual Cabo do Norte. On the island they were welcomed by Macuraguaya/Macuraguaia, whom the Portuguese identified as the 'principal' of the village, its main authority, and he and the inhabitants of the island were said to be Maraunizes/Maruanís/Maruaníes.¹² Along the shores of the lake there were other Amerindian settlements, and it was these neighbouring groups who, probably in September of the same year, killed the Jesuits Pereira and Gomes, their interpreter of Aruã language (Lopo), their pilot and two young helpers, and burned down the village of the Maraunizes (Bettendorff, 1990, 426 and 430-33).

Upon learning of the killings, the captain Antônio de Albuquerque sent a military expedition and declared a just war (*guerra justa*) against the Amerindian groups that had participated in the killings, with the Portuguese justifying this attack because the Amerindians had refused to listen to Christian teachings. Albuquerque led an expedition to capture the killers made up of nineteen soldiers from the nearby recently established fort (*casa forte*) of Aragarí, fifty Amerindians—some of whom might have been Ariane –, the Jesuit Pfeil—who had surveyed the area before—and Nathalia, a Maraunize interpreter of Aruã and said to be the daughter of one of the most important

¹⁰ The French found it difficult to keep Cayenne with a high enough population for the creation of families, and recurrently requested men and women to be sent to Cayenne. Archives nationales d'Outre-mer (hereafter ANOM), Colonies, 14/2 Fol. 62, 29 January 1688, asking for single young women to marry; ANOM, Colonies, C14/16 fol. 241r–243r, 28 April 1734, asking for women to send to the Oyapock; ANOM, Colonies, C14/16 fol. 235r–237r, 26 February 1736, asking for single French women because settlers were marrying Amerindian women in Cayenne.

¹¹ The delay was due to the exploratory voyages to survey the area and also to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Belém between from 1684 until 1686, when they were allowed back with the Regimento das Missões (1686). On the eviction see Arenz (2010, 467–77) and on the Regimento das Missões see Leite (1943, vol. IV, 87-94 and appendix D).

¹² Leite (1943, vol. III, 258) names him Macuraguaia. The Amerindians were named maruanís and maruaníes in AHU, Pará-Avulsos, caixa 3, doc. 267, annex, Antônio de Albuquerque Coelho de Carvalho, 19 July 1687, Belém. For the other naming, see Bettendorff (1990, 425 and 431).

authorities ('maiores pincipaes') of the nation of the Maraunizes.¹³ The expedition was fooled by their Amerindian guides who made them go around for days. They eventually found their quarry and killed 39 Amerindians, among them the two self-confessed assassins, the pincipaes Canariá and Amapixaba. The expedition also captured other Amerindians and forcibly resettled them into villages on the southern bank of the Amazon.¹⁴ By killing and resettling the Amerindians directly or indirectly involved in the killings of the Jesuits, acts that questioned the missions as state-sponsored initiatives and consequently questioned Portuguese territorial domination, they broke kinship, exchange networks and spatial ties. The ultimate aim was, as stated in the King's orders, to achieve control of the land and of the people.

Why did the neighbouring Amerindian groups kill the Jesuits and their companions, and burn down the Maraunize village? Contemporary Portuguese sources provided several explanations. Some governmental sources argued that the French instigated the killings using as their agent the Jesuits' Aruã interpreter, Lopo. These sources argue that he convinced the surrounding Amerindian villages that the Jesuits were stealing from them, preventing them from continuing with their cultural practices (such as not being monogamous), and were preparing the terrain for a Portuguese enslaving expedition; all this in addition to trying to convert them.¹⁵ Consequently, they were killed and the village burnt down.

Along the same lines but providing an additional insight, the contemporary account of the Jesuit Bettendorff—who had not been present but heard it second-hand—stated that the neighbouring villagers spoke to the Principal Macuraguaya and asked him to stop protecting the

¹³ Bettendorff (1990, 433–35) did not give the ethnonym of the group who had accompanied Albuquerque. However, these events happened in 1687 and on that same year Férolles had gone to the Aragarí fort and stated that the allies of the Portuguese there were the Ariane: ANOM, Colonies, C14/2 fol. 44r–45r, Férolles to Seignelay, 22 September 1688, specifically fol. 44v.

¹⁴ AHU, Pará-Avulsos, Caixa 3, doc. 271, annex, Miguel da Rosa Pimentel, Belém, 27 February 1688, and Bettendorff (1990, 432–35). On the relocation, its rationale and the different number of Amerindians who had been made prisoners, see Chambouleyron, Bonifácio and Melo (2010, 39).

¹⁵ AHU, Pará-Avulsos, Caixa 3, doc. 271. See Chambouleyron, Bonifácio and Melo (2010, 41–46) for their endorsement of the role of the French in the killings, and identifying the interpreter Lopo as a French mediator. They do however highlight the Amerindian agency through the alliances they chose to establish with the French or Portuguese (2010, 41 and 43). Bombardi (2014, 64–67) also endorses the French connection.

Jesuits and also to expel them from his village (Bettendorff, 1990, 428). Macuraguaya refused and left the island with most of his people because he—probably—knew what was about to happen and did not want to be associated with the killing of the Jesuits (Bettendorff, 1990, 428–29 and 431). The neighbours were thus described by Bettendorff as ‘barbaros’ and ‘inimigos’ (savages and enemies), constructing the other as an enemy to those willing to be converted; this served as a justification for Portuguese retaliation against the killers and their kin, and had the potential to establish an understanding of the two Jesuits as martyrs (Bettendorff, 1990, 427–28).

These two explanations present a dichotomy between good and evil, differentiating between Amerindians allied with the Portuguese (the Amerindians attacking with Albuquerque or the Maruanizes willing to be converted), and those against the Portuguese’s territorial grasp, manipulated by the French and who had no capacity of discernment on their own (the Amerindians living in the neighbouring villages). Did the French instigate the killing of the Jesuits? Were the Amerindians defending their preferential relations with the French? My analysis suggests that the killings were an answer to decisions taken by several Amerindian groups in a collective decision without influence from the French.

Two hitherto-unstudied Jesuit sources point to the relevance of ethnonyms associated with the different Amerindian groups as the answer to these questions. The story goes as follows: the principal of the village who welcomed the Jesuits was Macuraguaya, a Maraunize. While the killers were generically referred to as Oivanecas,¹⁶ the two identified killers of the Jesuits were the principal Canariá, who was said to be of nation Aguaraca, and his uterine brother and also principal, Amapixaba (Bettendorff, 1990, 429). Amongst the other Amerindians, Goamimani was said to be an Aricoré, and Moximaré was a Maraunize. The disparity of ethnonyms is unified by a common vehicular language. The interpreter stationed with the two murdered Jesuits, Lopo, spoke Aruã,

¹⁶ Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisboa (hereafter BAL), 54–XIII–4, nº 77: ‘Relação feita por Aloysius Conradus Pfeil da maneira como indagou as circunstancias em que foram mortos em Setembro de 1687 os Padres Antônio Pereira e Bernardo Gomes’, Araguaí, 12 July 1688.

which was the same language that the retaliatory expedition's interpreter, Nathalia, spoke.¹⁷ They might have all spoken Aruã, or they spoke a related Arawakan language whose lingua franca was Aruã.

In addition to this linguistic connection, kinship and authority ties linked the different Amerindian villages. In 1690, the Jesuits in São Luís do Maranhão, among them Bettendorff, took declarations from three related surviving Amerindians who had been forcibly resettled in a nearby village. The three people had been related to the assassin and principal Canariá: they were Ararû (his wife), Amâru (his sister) and a male relative of the two women, Petirî.¹⁸ The widow Ararû was known by the Christian name of Maria and lived in a newly-formed village on the river Icatû.¹⁹ When asked why Canariá had killed the Jesuits, Ararû stated that the principaes of the nearby villages had come to meet her husband, asking him to explain why his father-in-law, Macurâuiâ (the same Macuraguaia) allowed the Jesuits into his village. They asked him to force Macurâuiâ to expel the Jesuits, or else the principaes would take the decision to kill the Jesuits. The reason for this—she said—was that they did not want to be friends with the Jesuits and also that they did not want their mass.²⁰

The narrative so far is as portrayed by Bettendorff, but what he did not highlight is that Ararû was not only Canariá's wife but also the daughter of Macuraguaya. It is clear that the villages of Canariá, of Macuraguaya and those of the unnamed principaes of the surroundings were part of an interrelated group of villages linked by kinship and decision-making processes, despite the different ethnonyms associated with them. Their gathering and discussion suggest some type of political

¹⁷ AHU, Maranhão—Avulsos, caixa 7, doc. 798, annex, Antônio de Albuquerque Coelho de Carvalho, 22 November 1687, Araguari. See also Chambouleyron, Bonifácio and Melo (2010, 41).

¹⁸ BAL, 54—XIII—4 n^o 44: 'Atestações judiciais sôbre a morte que se deu ao P. Antônio Pereira e a seu companheiro no sertão do Cabo do Norte, Bispo do Maranhão, os quais indo prègar aos Índio foram mortos por êstes'. S. Luís do Maranhão, 22 July 1690. The Amerindians' names vary throughout the source as Canariá/Canariâ, Ararû/Araru, Amarû/Amrâru and Petiry/Petiri/Petirî. Bettendorf (1990, 429) names her Aracú, demonstrating that he knew about these proceedings as he had been present on the day as attested by the document (BAL, 54—XIII—4 n^o 44, fol. 1v), but had in the end only selected what was relevant to his narrative.

¹⁹ BAL, 54—XIII—4 n^o 44: Atestações judiciais, 22 July 1690, fol. 1v.

²⁰ BAL, 54—XIII—4 n^o 44: Atestações judiciais, 22 July 1690, fol. 4r: '...que não querião sua Missa...'

reconnaissance, and there is no mention of the French in any of the three witnesses' declarations. Rather, a French source of 1688 states that the place where the mission was established was frequented by Dutch and French traders.²¹ It might have been that the Amerindians were not specifically interested in relations with the French, but in freedom to continue with their lives and relate to whomever they chose. This case shows how Amerindian agency and their decision-making processes culminated in the prevention of the permanence of Portuguese Jesuit missions, which were a fundamental part of the colonisation process of Amazonia. Those Amerindians who lived in the missions were deployed to serve colonists and the colonial governments' needs, and Amerindians may have already heard about (via communication networks) or experienced the disturbances that a nearby mission could bring into their lives.

The French on the Amazon: The Franco-Amerindian takeover of Portuguese forts, 1697

Fast-forwarding ten years in the history of the region takes us to the French takeover of the Portuguese forts of Parú and Macapá on the northern bank of the Amazon River in 1697. The existing analysis of these temporary occupations deals with the events that took place in the forts and the fact that they pinpoint the start of the negotiations that led to the provisional treaty in 1700 to settle the frontier between French and Portuguese Guianas (Reis, 1993, 88–101). My focus, on the contrary, is on the French–Amerindian alliances that made the French expedition a success.²²

Governor Pierre Éléonor de Férolles (in office 1681–1684 and 1691–1705, interim in 1688) had a strong interest in the Amazon area, and his reports are permeated by details of the benefits that controlling the land and rivers between Cayenne and the Amazon River would bring to the colony of Cayenne. Already in 1687, when he was not governor, Férolles commanded an exploratory expedition which stopped on the Araguari River and at the Portuguese fort from which departed in

²¹ ANOM, Colonies, C14/2 fol. 44r–45r, Férolles to Seignelay, 22 September 1688, specifically fol. 44v.

²² The changing Franco–Amerindian and Portuguese–Amerindian alliances between 1685–1697 were pointed out but not analysed by Hurault (1972, 37–38 and 44–45).

1687 the Portuguese Governor Albuquerque's retaliation party as mentioned earlier.²³ This first expedition most likely gave him in-situ Amerindian contacts who would help him ten years later in the occupation of the forts.

In 1697, Férolles himself led the expedition to conquer the forts of Macapá and Parú. This military expedition was made up of forty French soldiers and of eighty Amerindians. The fort of Macapá was given up without much fighting, and La Motte-Aigron was sent to take and ultimately to destroy Parú.²⁴ Albuquerque was taken by surprise at the attack, and expressed his astonishment to Férolles given that there was no war between the two countries. However, Férolles argued that Pope's Alexander VI division of the territory was not valid. He ordered the destruction and burning of the Portuguese houses in the forts as means of showing to Governor Albuquerque that they were not to build and settle in French territory. The French incidentally did not burn the Amerindians houses located in the vicinity of the forts.²⁵ While the rhetoric of keeping the Amerindians' houses standing is that of a defending power—destroy the (Portuguese) invader but protect the locals—I argue that Férolles kept the Amerindians' residences intact because they had been instrumental to French success. Without their Indigenous allies, the French lacked both the material means and knowledge necessary to take the forts: from planning, to logistics en route and in situ, to human fighting force.

Governor Férolles had no problem acknowledging in a report sent back to France that along the route to the forts he had been helped by several Amerindian groups.²⁶ Rather than undermining his expedition, demonstrating alliances with different Amerindian groups showed the Minister in France that he had established durable links that would allow him to claim the contested territory, if the French King were to deem this necessary. It was, after all, a demonstration of his skills as governor of a rather small and—up to then—unproductive colony.

²³ ANOM, Colonies C14/2 fol. 44r–45r, Férolles to Seignelay, 22 September 1688.

²⁴ In 1688, La Motte-Aigron had been in Cayenne at least for a decade, as in 1688 he had been on an expedition up the Oyapock and learnt about a land route to the Parú River (Hurault, 1972, 39).

²⁵ Letters from 19 June 1697 and 3 June 1697 (Bettendorff, 1990, 624–26).

²⁶ ANOM, Colonies, C14/3 fol. 127r–130r: 'Relation de mon voyage des Amazones en 1697', Férolles, Cayenne, 1697.

Who were the Amerindian allies and what was their role? On departure from Cayenne, Férolles travelled with, according to Bettendorff, eighty Amerindians in canoes. These eighty Amerindians may have been some of the four hundred Aruã that had moved from a location on the northern bank of the Amazon to the Cayenne area seeking the protection of the French sometime before 1688, although they might have been accompanied by other Amerindians living in the Cayenne area.²⁷

On the way to Macapá, the whole expedition made up of French soldiers and Amerindians rested and provisioned themselves ‘...chez les Indiens Palicours...’.²⁸ Rather than a stopping point on the way, the Palikurs were their true means of subsistence and support, as the French left with them those who were too ill to travel.²⁹

In Macapá, Férolles stated that he had seen in the ‘Indiens Aroas, Ticouyous et Arianes qui habitent sur cette côte, beaucoup de marques d’amitié pour les françois, et de joye de voir les Portugais dehors; ils me promirent de ne pas laisser manquer de vivres la Garnison que j’y laisserois’.³⁰ Referring back to the quotation with which I started the chapter, the Ticouyous come to the fore as the allies of the French, and they might well be some of the Tucujús that the Portuguese had identified as those they had to befriend to defend Portuguese positions in Cabo do Norte. The Portuguese had evidently obtained some support from the Tucujús as they had established a fort in their lands, but it seems that they had lost their favour. Conversely, the Ticouyous did not actively side with the French either. Although Férolles boasted to the Minister back in France about the fact

²⁷ ANOM, Colonies, C14/2 fol. 101r–104v (copy in fol. 105r–107v), ‘Mémoire des R P. Jesuittes de Cayennes... depuis 1678 jusqu’à (sic) en fin de 1687’, Jesuit Saint–Gilles. Also Jean de la Mousse mentioned the episode (Collomb, 2006, 152). Bettendorff (see note 31 in this chapter) says that Aruã came and went with the French, and that de la Mousse was their missionary.

²⁸ ‘... at the Palikur’s home...’, ANOM, Colonies, C14/3, fol. 127r–130r, ‘Relation de mon voyage des Amazones en 1697’, Férolles, Cayenne, 1697, fol. 127v.

²⁹ On the contemporary Palikur see amongst others Grenand and Grenand (1987) and Passes (1998).

³⁰ ‘... [I had seen in] the Indians Aroas, Ticouyous and Arianes who reside on this coast, many gestures of friendship towards the French, and happiness to see the Portuguese gone; they promised me they would not leave unsupplied the garrison that I was to leave there...’, ANOM, Colonies, C14/3, fol. 127r–130r, ‘Relation de mon voyage des Amazones en 1697’, Férolles, Cayenne, 1697, quote from fol. 129r.

that the Aroas, Ticouyous and Arianes had promised to feed the forty soldiers he left behind upon his return to Cayenne, they certainly had not promised to defend them against the Portuguese.

Shortly after Férolles's departure, the Portuguese retook the fortress and the French soldiers were sent back to Cayenne in canoes manoeuvred by the Aruã.³¹ Amongst the French was Jean de la Mousse, a French missionary who had worked and travelled extensively in the area surrounding the coast of French Guiana and its rivers, and had reported visits from indigenous groups living close to the Amazon River.³² His joining the military expedition and going along accompanying the Aruã might have been more than a casual occurrence. He may have been instrumental in establishing connections between several of the Amerindian groups, the governor and other individuals present. The fact that while at Macapá he went on a canoe trip to visit other Amerindian groups speaks about the role of mediators and go-betweeners in the area, and of the relevance of the Amerindians' role in the whole expedition.

Once clear alliances are established between the French governor and Jean de la Mousse with the Amerindian groups and French intentions, the question that remains unanswered is that which asks why the Amerindians wanted to help the French against the Portuguese. The analysis of the Ariane case might partially respond to this question.

Who were the Ariane? Were they a big Amerindian group or a small composite of a larger group? The answers are uncertain. Pierre and Françoise Grenand mention them as one of the groups that appear only sporadically in written sources and did not come across in their 1960s-1970s

³¹ '... concedendo-se-lhes sómente a vida e passagem livre para Cayennas com o necessario para a viagem por mar, em canoas, como tinham vindo com o Marquez de Ferroles para o Macapá. Para isso os mandaram aos Aruans, que foram os que os levaram, indo com elles o Padre Claudio de Lamousse, seu missionario...'. (Bettendorff 1990, 627). Translation: '... granting them only their life and free return to Cayenne with what was required to travel by sea, in canoes, as they had come with the Marquis of Férolles to Macapá. With that purpose, they were sent to the Aruans, who took them, going with them the Father Claudio de Lamousse, their missionary...'

³² Artur argued that '...les quarante soldats se virent bientôt bloqués par cinq ou six cents Portugais ou Indiens qui prirent d'abord le père Le Mousse qui était allé faire une excursion chez les Indiens du voisinage...', as published by Polderman (2004, 51 and 215). The same narrative of events was told by Bettendorff (1990, 626–627) and discussed by Hurault (1972, 44–45).

ethnographic work among the Palikur in Amapá and Guyane.³³ However, they appear in Nimuendajú's ethno-linguistic map (1981, map and 46, 79, 87) dated to 1698, which references Froger's map produced by the French in 1698 after Férolles's expedition.³⁴ Both sources locate the Ariane in a vague space close to Macapá and the sertão dos Tucujús, clearly on the northern bank of the Amazon and relatively close to the forts overtaken.³⁵

According to the Jesuit Grillet, the Ariane and the Portuguese were attacking other Amerindian groups located on the northern bank of the estuary of the Amazon Amazon before 1674 (Grillet, 1682, 205–206). However, this Ariane-Portuguese alliance did not last, and the development of events shows that the Ariane sought an alliance with the French. One day in February 1694, three years before the takeover of the forts, an unnamed Ariane man arrived in Cayenne. He told Férolles that a fellow Ariane had located a mountain so bright that he could not even look at it with the sun shining, and it was located in a northern tributary of the Amazon. Although the mineral was not named at that point, Férolles was very pleased to send this news to France.³⁶ In the summer of that same year, three Ariane 'capitaines' visited Cayenne to invite the French to settle with them, again at an undetermined location on the Amazon River.³⁷ As proof of their good intentions, the capitaines gave Férolles marcasite, a mineral,³⁸ which they said could be obtained in three rivers located on the north bank of the Amazon.³⁹ Even though Férolles had deemed the quality of the mineral to be of a low grade and also not adequate to make munition for 'fusils' (in the original French), the capitaines assured him that the mines could produce better quality resources. What was this marcasite? In his

³³ Grenand and Grenand (1987, 19) name them 'Aririane', with a double 'ri', but it might be a mistake as in another publication, Pierre Grenand (2006, 124 – map) names them 'Ariane'.

³⁴ François Froger, 'Carte du Gouvernement de Cayenne ou France Aequinoctiale', 1698, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département cartes et plans, GE DD–2987 (9566).

³⁵ For a discussion of the Ariane and other Amerindians in the region, see my article forthcoming article in *Ethnohistory* (2018).

³⁶ ANOM, Colonies, C14/3, fol. 29r, Férolles to the Minister, 22 February 1694.

³⁷ ANOM, Colonies, C14/3, fol. 43r–48v, Férolles to the Minister, 14 December 1694. Were the 'capitaines' the same as the 'principaes'? The sources consulted do not attribute to either principaes or capitaines spiritual or political attributes, or specify the type authority they had over their peoples or the reconnaissance they got from them.

³⁸ The marcasite seems to be a type of pyrite. Hurault (1972, 44) references the same source as (ANOM, Colonies C14/3, fol. 43r–48v) to state that there were 'gisements d'or et d'argent', which are not mentioned.

³⁹ ANOM, Colonies, C14/3 fol. 43r–48v, Férolles to the Minister, 14 December 1694, fol. 44v.

early seventeenth-century account of the mouth of the Amazon and Guianas, Jesse de Forest mentioned the existence of a golden marcasite, whilst the discussion of the contemporary edition of his text states that there was another type of marcasite, white or pale marcasite, which looked like burnished steel when polished (De Forest, 1914, 275). It is probable that the marcasite the Ariane brought was the latter, given that Férolles spoke about making munitions out of it. Even more, Polderman (2004, 192) states that according to recent archaeological research on the Sinnamary, flint stone ('silex taillés') were used as munition in Guyane in the late early modern period or nineteenth century.

Both Ariane visits are linked by the marcasites, clearly establishing that the February meeting was testing the limits of French interests. The French governor was interested in much more than that, and they knew as much when they offered to settle with the Ariane on the Amazon bank. Ariane knowledge of the space of the Amazon was fundamental for Férolles, as it opened up a chance to establish a French fort or to even envisage a settlement on the main river. From then until at least March 1695, the Ariane and other Amerindians gave to the French details of developments along the banks of the Amazon: the Portuguese attacked the Ariane villages and kidnapped their women and children, and started mining again along the northern tributaries of the Amazon. Férolles thought that these enslaving expeditions and Portuguese mining enterprises were the reason why the Ariane were looking for French protection, and indeed this might have been one of the reasons.⁴⁰ The governor considered the offer and ultimately reported to France that he had decided not to send his men with the Ariane as he feared a Dutch attack.⁴¹

Were the Ariane actually looking for the French to settle with them? Or was it French presence in the Amazon that would disturb the Portuguese and destroy their forts? The 1697 French expedition that I have analysed suggests that the Ariane changed sides and decided to offer their support to the French, as even though the French did not settle with them, they did attack two

⁴⁰ ANOM, Colonies, C14/3 fol. 53r–57v, Férolles to the Minister, 24 March 1695.

⁴¹ ANOM, Colonies, C14/3 fol. 49r–52v, Férolles to the Minister, 22 March 1695.

Portuguese forts, counting on the Ariane's help to—at least we are sure of this—provide food for the soldiers after the takeover of the forts.

Conclusion

With these two cases I have analysed the complex set of alliances and conflict that developed between the French, the Portuguese and several Amerindian groups between the Amazon and Cayene in the late seventeenth century. My aim has been to demonstrate how it is necessary to integrate all of the actors living in a specific geographical space in any discussion of the settling or establishment of international frontiers. It is clear throughout that the space between the Amazon and Cayenne remained outside the control of Europeans despite their tentative efforts to establish themselves. Amerindian groups tackled European initiatives to establish forts and missions and attack each other to their interests, helping out those who would be more beneficial to them at specific times.

The failed Jesuit mission shows that the events that have been previously studied and analysed as a lack of interest on the part of Amerindians to convert to Christianity, or as the French manipulation of Amerindians to gain control over a space that was Portuguese, could actually be understood as an agency on the part of the Amerindians to decide who was to settle in the space that they inhabited. The fact that there was a council or gathering of Amerindians and that the different Amerindian authorities (principaes) reached an agreement suggests some kind of decision-making processes in which the Portuguese mission was being ruled out. Incidentally, the Araguari fort from which the Albuquerque retaliation party departed was abandoned by the end of the seventeenth century.

On the other side, Férolles' Amazon initiative was driven by his own ambition as much as by the motivation provided by the Ariane and the other Amerindian groups that helped the French on the way to the forts and back. It is very likely that what has been portrayed as a French initiative may

have instead been planned by the indigenous people in Cabo do Norte as well as by the French. It is unlikely that the Ariane invited the French to their home without discussing it with neighbouring or kin-related Amerindian groups beforehand. It must have been a wide-ranging decision affecting all of the Amerindians living on the northern bank of the mouth of the Amazon River, a decision that ultimately led to providing help to the French throughout the trip, as they were well aware of Férolles' ambitions on the Amazon. The invitation to the French might have been a way to position themselves with the European group least capable of action at that specific moment, or those they deemed more advantageous in serving their intra- or inter-groups politics: playing Europeans around.

The Portuguese had actively tried to occupy the territory through missions and forts, physically establishing themselves—even if in small numbers—amongst the Amerindian settlements. On the contrary, the French were only present through trade parties and military expeditions, always against the Portuguese but not the Amerindians, and did not try to settle. This might have been one of the reasons why the Ariane, Aruã, Ticouyous/Tucujús and Palikurs sided with the French in 1697. Were these Amerindian groups well informed of the difficulties that the French were experiencing as they attempted to develop a fruitful colony, in contrast to the Portuguese who by then had been present on the Amazon River for a longer period of time? France's recent establishment and still-weak position at that specific time, the enormity of the space and the distant presence of the Portuguese on the Amazon River meant that the Amerindian groups who were living in the lands, rivers and lakes between Cayenne and the Amazon remained independent for decades, and France and Portugal struggled to physically settle and occupy the space. The frontier politics that unfolded in the Eastern Guianas at the end of the seventeenth century had multiple key actors: French, Portuguese and Amerindian groups. Any analysis of that space should incorporate all of these groups of people, including the maroon and mixed-descent communities who would appear as actors in this context in the following decades.

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