

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18817/ot.v21i37.1135>

FORGING CONNECTIONS ACROSS REMOTENESS: Colonization Projects and Global Dynamics in Amazonia and the Guianas (Late 1800s - Early 1900s)¹

ESTABELECENDO CONEXÕES NO REMOTO: Projetos de Colonização e Dinâmica Global na Amazônia e nas Guianas (Final do século 19 - Início do século 20)

FORJANDO CONEXIONES A TRAVÉS DE LO REMOTO: Proyectos de Colonización y Dinámicas Globales en la Amazonía y las Guayanas (Finales del siglo 19 - Principios del siglo 20)²

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Abstract: This paper analyzes colonization projects and schemes that aimed to connect two remote regions in South America: the northern Brazilian Amazonia and the British colony of Guyana, during the transition from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The central problem is to understand projects designed to break or reduce remoteness and create cross-border connections (infrastructure, social and commercial linkages) that would cross societies and markets in different crisis scenarios, and to question the extent to which the ‘decadence’ denounced by contemporaries was a conjunctural element within long-term structural dependencies that cannot be solely attributed to competitiveness, mechanization limitations, or production rationalization. This study adopts a diachronic historical approach to examine three key aspects: (1) the challenges posed by the prolonged dominance of sugar monoculture in British Guyana and the concurrent rubber boom in the Brazilian Amazonia; (2) the interrelated matters of circulation and labor scarcity; and (3) the persistent issue of food shortages amid the setbacks encountered by integration endeavors.

Keywords: Globalization. Amazonia. Guyana. *Remoteness*.

Resumo: Este artigo analisa projetos e esquemas de colonização que buscaram conectar duas regiões remotas na América do Sul: o norte da Amazônia brasileira e a colônia Britânica da Guiana, entre o final do século XIX e o começo do século XX. O problema central é compreender projetos concebidos para quebrar ou reduzir o remoto e criar conexões transfronteiriças (infraestruturais, sociais e comerciais), que cruzariam sociedades e mercados, em diferentes cenários de crise, e questionar em que medida a ‘decadência’ denunciada pelos contemporâneos foi um elemento conjuntural dentro de dependências estruturais de longo prazo, as quais não podem ser explicadas simplesmente em termos de competitividade, de falta de mecanização ou de racionalização da produção. Este texto aborda três pontos sob uma abordagem histórica diacrônica: (1) os problemas em torno da longa permanência da monocultura de açúcar na Guiana Britânica de um lado, e o *boom* da borracha na Amazônia brasileira, de outro; (2) a questão conexa da circulação e falta de mão de obra; (3) em finalmente, a permanência da escassez de alimentos diante do fracasso dos projetos de integração.

¹ Artigo submetido à avaliação em agosto de 2023 e aprovado para publicação em setembro de 2023.

² The author wishes to acknowledge the financial support provided by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT), Portugal, enabling the completion of the research project “Possessing Amazonia: Global Disputes over the Amazon Basins and the Guiana Highlands (c.1840-c.1903)” in 2023, and by extension, the publication of this paper. Furthermore, the author extends sincere thanks to Fraser Sharp, Igor Sousa, Shuhao Que, and Tiago Ferreira for their invaluable contributions to the final draft of this paper, and would also like to convey appreciation to the organisers of this issue.

Palavras-chave: Globalização. Amazônia. British Guiana. *Remoto*.

Resumen: Este artículo analiza proyectos y planes de colonización que tenían como objetivo conectar dos regiones remotas de Sudamérica: el norte de la Amazonia brasileña y la colonia británica de Guyana, entre finales del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX. El problema central es comprender las iniciativas diseñadas para superar o reducir el aislamiento geográfico y establecer conexiones transfronterizas (incluyendo aspectos de infraestructura, sociales y comerciales). Asimismo, se cuestiona hasta qué punto la “decadencia”, denunciada por los contemporáneos, representaba un elemento coyuntural dentro de dependencias estructurales a largo plazo que no pueden explicarse únicamente en términos de competitividad, limitaciones, mecanización o racionalización de la producción. Este estudio aborda tres puntos desde un enfoque histórico diacrónico: (1) los desafíos relacionados con la prolongada predominancia del monocultivo de azúcar en la Guayana británica, por un lado, y el auge del caucho en la Amazonia brasileña por otro; (2) la cuestión interrelacionada a la circulación y la escasez de mano de obra; y (3) por último, la persistente problemática de la escasez de alimentos en medio de los contratiempos sufridos por los proyectos de integración.

Palabras clave: Globalización. Amazonía. Guayana. *Remoto*.

Introduction

This paper analyses failed projects which attempted to connect two regions and in opening the remoteness between North Brazilian Amazonia, and the savannahs of British Guiana in South America (see figure 1). The main goal is to understand projects intended to integrate remote areas and create cross-border connections (infrastructure, social, and commercial) which were intended to intersect societies and markets in different crisis scenarios. In other words, this article will look at failures in integration and in diversification.

The lack of labour force, struggle with movement (migration and immigration schemes), and shortage of credit, delayed these projects, as well as striking contemporary debates about the reasons for crises and decadence. Moreover, boundary disputes intertwined with local nation-building processes which shaped policies of national/imperial governments to accelerate or cancel the projects were deeply related to territorial interests. To explore this matter, I explore three scenarios: (1) The monoculture of sugar in British Guiana and the struggle with global competition. (2) The related issue of circulation and lack of labor force. (3) Finally, consistent scarcity and failure of integration/alternative projects. This paper employs a multi-method historical and causal narrative: Firstly, I will aim to stress common causal relationships and document some significant events. My approach seeks to emphasise junctural aspects, but I will not consider the geographical spaces of North-East Brazil and British Guiana as separate universes, due to the uniqueness of the national state, according to their respective national historiographies.

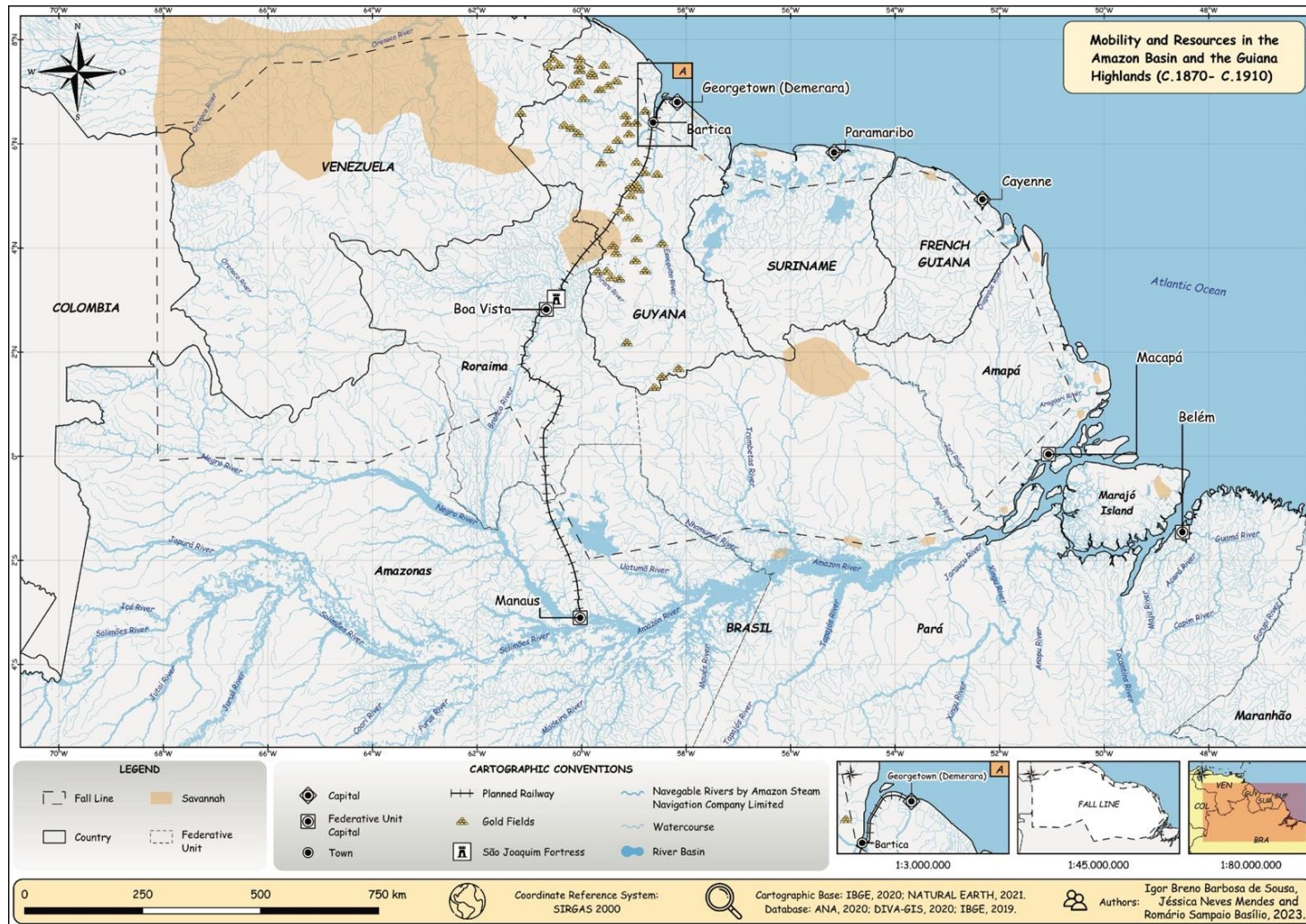
As a framework, I propose interpreting *remoteness* as a spatial category, not just as a spatiality defined by bounds, distance, and time variables. Broadly speaking, remoteness is a geographical space profoundly overlapped by local/and non-local territorialities, without precise official bounds, and by artefacts dispersedly organised in system model. Historically, the remoteness was separated usually by distance, the presence of an open frontier, and by its social composition. Such a region was used for marginalised groups as a zone of refuge. Integration of such remote places with the world and the connections established by different kinds of relationships with the outside, did not create relations of interdependence, since the remote is discernible by circuits and movements based in alternative territorialities and temporalities³.

My central hypothesis rests upon the need to pay attention to junctural causalities which shaped forces and policies in these projects. In times of economic boom or price stability, where one could see an increase in commodity exportation, those commodities being primarily rubber and sugar, the urgency of breaking/reducing remoteness projects was usually forgotten. In times of crisis and ‘decadence’, more intensive social and political criticism occurred, due to the absence of certain conditions for local economic development, which should be combatted with the creation of new colonisation schemes.

(Figure 1 on the next page)

³ From this debate, my definition of territory and territoriality, space and spatiality, makes a dialogue with Raffestin (2012), Santos (1996) and Lefebvre (1991) in a first place. From the first one, I consider territoriality the central aspect of our study, as it reflects “a system of relations is also a system of exchanges (Raffestin, 2012, p. 129). Saks (1999) understands territoriality as means of assessing control over people and their relationships. Succinctly, territoriality is the ‘skeleton’ of everyday life according to Lefebvre. In this paper, *remoteness* is a distinct kind of territoriality. This proposal dialogues with the design of a *history of the remote*, to raise question regarding the colonial and imperial projects of these distant lands, full of savagery and exotic/uncivilized people. Understanding why several schemes of colonization or projects on reducing/breaking the remoteness failed, gives ground for inquiries which take into consideration distinct forms territorialities, and temporalities performed in these voids of the globe. See Basilio (2023), *Introduction*.

Figure 1 - Mobility and Resources in the Amazon Basin and the Guiana Highlands (C.1870- C.1910)



Map Source: Custom-designed for this article.

At this level, one can find two testing hypotheses: firstly, we can consider that societies with plantation system stress developed more similarities than differences. However, the kind of legal, social, demographic, and economic structures that emerged from the commodity economy (plantation and forest collection) was not the primary cause of the failure of countless projects concerning hinterland colonization, and regional infrastructural integration. In the Guiana sugar production system, even though the stability of global demand and local structures of the plantation was a reality, the dependence on immigrated workforce and the bad work conditions kept people in constant stress, provoking frequent revolts and the return of thousands of indentured workers to their countries of origin. In Amazonia, the rubber boom had a different experience: the work system, based on forced indigenous labour and migration of Brazilians from the northeast, created another structure problem: the scarcity of foods and essential goods.

Secondly, I propose to analyse the Amazonian-Guianas economic structure in a long-term process that is deeply related to the position of artefacts throughout the geographical space. Artefacts such as rubber trees, sugar canes, plantations, indigenous religious settlements and frontier marks. Namely alternative projects and indigenous cosmologies. These artefacts and the relationships occurring in the place were profoundly resistant to juncture changes, and their economic organization and social mobilization did not cause coalescence with the language of global capitalism. This was particularly the case with the ‘creative destruction’ proposed by Schumpeter (2006 [1947], p. 82-84), since this incessant transformation does not come *from within* and does not necessarily produce creation or destruction of old structures, mainly based on the permanence of traditions. From the *outside*, colonisation projects represented the replacement of the local ‘totality’.

This research makes a dialogue with crucial accessory literature (Santos, 1980; Dean, 1989; Weinstein, 1993, 2002; Coomes and Barham 1994; Stanfield, 1998), but I intend to invert the way the question is posed. A panoramic overview of Brazilian and foreign literature on the rubber boom in Amazonia (usually analysed from 1870 to 1910), and also on sugar production in British Guiana and the West Indies, in economic or social-cultural dimensions, usually makes use of an exciting and unlimited mechanism of imagining what would have occurred if certain ‘mistakes’ had not been made. In other words, imagining with a certain degree of anachronism, conditions that could have changed the social, political, and mainly economic outcomes of the period, or correcting history and historical agents to build

“win-win scenarios”, where the social and political ‘national’ order would reach optimal ‘development’ with fewer inequalities and exploitation⁴.

The inquiry here is not why the economic boom in Amazonia and the stable plantation system in Guianas did not unfold in sustainable growth, but to what extent the ‘decadence’ denounced by contemporaries was a junctural element inside long-term structural dependencies, which cannot be explained simply by terms of competitiveness, lack of mechanisation or rationalisation of the production.

Alternatively, I propose a framework that attempts to explain relations of causality around Amazonia spatiality from a transnational perspective, i.e., to what extent alternative projects on territoriality and colonization (including indigenous artefacts) which are usually ignored by historiographical, political, and economic traditions, played a central role in the success or failure of integration/diversification schemes. Also, I propose to consider these colonisation schemes as megaprojects, not only their infrastructural part. This is to say all possible dimensions, including settlements, immigration and education for indigenous communities. New commerce routes were transforming landscapes and displacements too, as stated by Gellert and Lynch (2003, p. 15), however not necessarily as rapidly or radically as they propose.

Stability and Monoculture in the British Guiana: background of a crisis

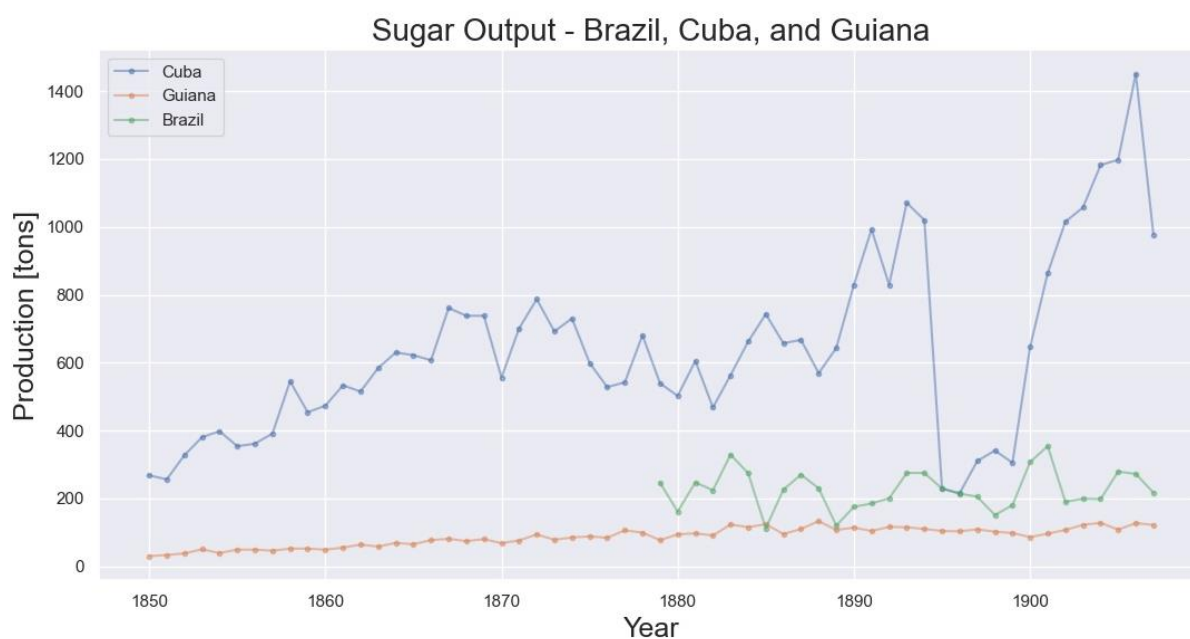
In 1886, the colonies minister of the British Empire, Mr Chamberlain, sent a commission to investigate and propose actions for improving the structural problem of local goods production and exportation that had been long denounced. The driving force behind this initiative was a series of reports that raised concerns about a growing sense of discontent in various colonies. These reports largely reflected the prevailing perception that the Imperial governments were neglecting issues perceived as ‘local’ in nature. During a visit to Guiana, a British commissioner, engaged in multiple dialogues with local residents, reached the conclusion that the situation was indeed critical. A noteworthy perspective emerged wherein certain members of the community expressed a belief that the annexation of the colony by the

⁴ Some anachronisms commonly seen in classical works intend to make clear what could be obscured by commentators and contemporaries, that could not understand the “nature” of that “proto capitalism” where the reasons for deep depression after accelerating growth would reside. These narratives also have a common feature: a high level of empiricism and market analysis, which have produced high-quality works, despite ideological or theoretical bias.

USA would constitute a favorable development. This sentiment arose from a perception that the Imperial Government had essentially forsaken their interests⁵.

These difficulties were the decrease of prices in the global sugar market in the 1880s and 90s, and the lack of direct intervention in the matter, despite several communications. The fall of prices was not followed by the same movement in commodity production, which remained stable. Then, the pressure on the system and the increasing competition with Brazil and the Caribbean islands, mainly Cuba, heightened tensions, and criticism. The graph below displays how British Guiana, despite being a small colony, was one of the largest sugar producers in the continent; Cuba had been in the lead for decades, having a significant disruption only during the war of independence (1895-98); Brazil was an important sugar exporter, particularly in the north-east (Venezuela, not shown in the graph, became a considerable producer in the twentieth century).

Figure 2 - Sugar Output Brazil, Cuba, and Guiana. There are considerable available data on Cuba and Guiana production in long term, particularly the last one



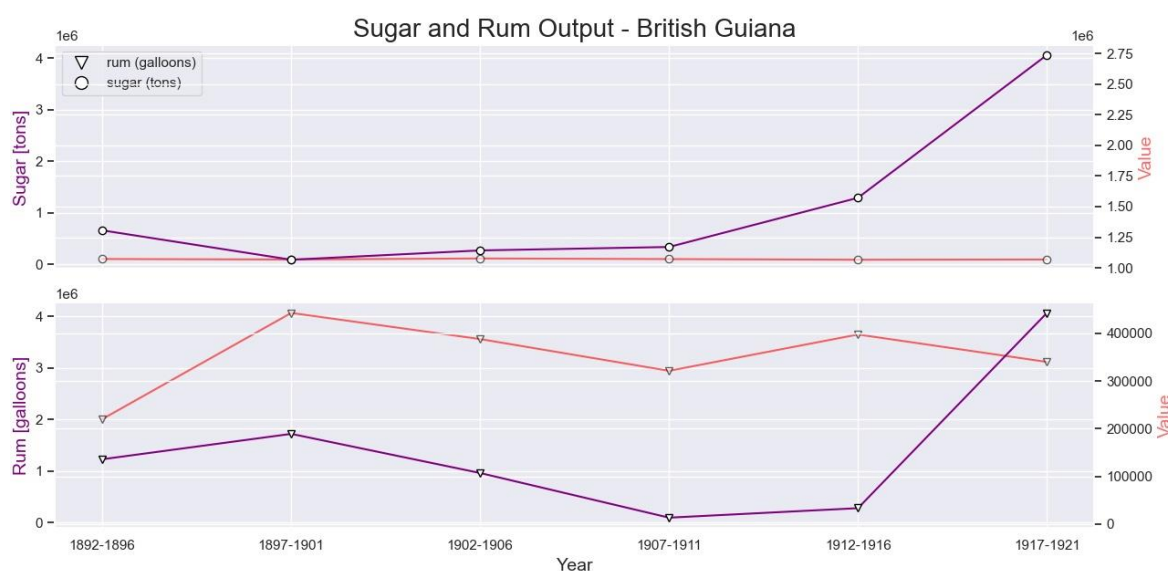
Source: This graph was created with data organised by B.R. Mitchell (1996, p. 185-196).

In 1887, after being in Georgetown and other West Indies’ sugar producing locations, the Royal Commission launched their report⁶. It described emphatically what was

⁵ NA-UK. London, CO 884/5, Colonial Office: West Indies: Correspondence relating to the report of the West India Royal Commission on 1896-7, Nos. 71 and 73 to 89, 1886-1904.

already known locally: the significance of sugar in the total exports, and the risks of a prolonged crisis in the area for the socioeconomic stability of the colonies. The commodity represented more than 70% of the exports of British Guiana, apparently a non-dramatic scenario, if compared with St Lucia (74%), Antigua (94.5%) or Barbados (97%) (Richardson, 1997, p. 35; 143-157). Also, another problem stated was the dependence on East Indian immigrants to supply the plantation workforce, which obligated British Guiana and Trinidad (the most dependent ones) to cover the costs in bringing the workers, and also keeping them in the colony. The second most produced and shipped product, rum, was still far away from sugar profits; see graph below. While the relation value-production was more variable in the rum exports, the sugar exportations increased in the 1890s and 1900s while the prices remained stable. The “anger” was well settled.

Figure 3 - Rum and Sugar Output in the British Guiana



Source: This graph was created from the data organised by B.R. Mitchell (1996, p. 185-196).

Mr Chamberlain then received a series of recommendations from the report: grants of aid for the Government colonies’ deficits, reinforcement of the sugar industry and other related ones, and the support of peasants’ proprietors not necessarily of sugar plantations. The old Regulations Relating to the Crown Lands from 1887 were revoked for others in 1890, partially already facilitating access to the non-cultivated lands, and imposing a series of taxation and registers that, in practice, impeded widespread land and mining

⁶ GREAT BRITAIN. *Report of the West India Royal Commission*. London: Printed for Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1897-1898.

concessions. The suggestion of local planters was to cheapen the price of lands, a recurrent demand of their's: an elevated price would impede sale. Landowners of Demerara recommended one acre for one dollar, and also the reversal of any rule against public competition, as done in Australia⁷. In March 1898, the British parliament approved the aid for deficits, roads, and settlements, dividing them among the colonies. This series of regulations on land access did not unfold in spontaneous settlements, as were waiting.

In Latin America, several national legislations in the 1840s and 50s also intended to regulate the inland occupation but this contrasted with the lack of interest of free workers and former black enslaved communities. In Brazil, the land law in 1850 is remarkably similar to the counterparts launched in Guiana. It had the same practical consequence: avoiding that peasants and black communities had access to vast portions of land.

The dynamic of circulating and settling in the British Guiana

In Demerara, news of the boundary award with Venezuela in 1899 from a tribunal in Paris gave the local government more confidence for a time. However, the producers did not share this confidence. This revealed, even more, the clash of interest between the colonial administration, neighbouring countries and local natives as well as immigrated communities. The governor J.W. Sendall wrote to Mr Chamberlain, asking about the use of the lands now attributed to the colony; and the response was that they should make new concessions with discretion. A statement which did not escape the Venezuelan authorities, since recent discoveries of diamond around the Mazaruni River could be in their territory⁸. Additionally, news that the Venezuelan Senate had approved a series of concessions to railway construction in their Guiana Essequiba, including territories under the unaccepted arbitration, rushed Sendal to get the colonial office's approval in carrying out new colonisation projects. However, the problem of workforce viability still remained.

Although tropical immigration was a considerable part of the Empire's expansion, these inland projects found both immigrants and planters resistant, mainly due to the issue of settling immigrants further south. Firstly, the nature of foreign immigration to the

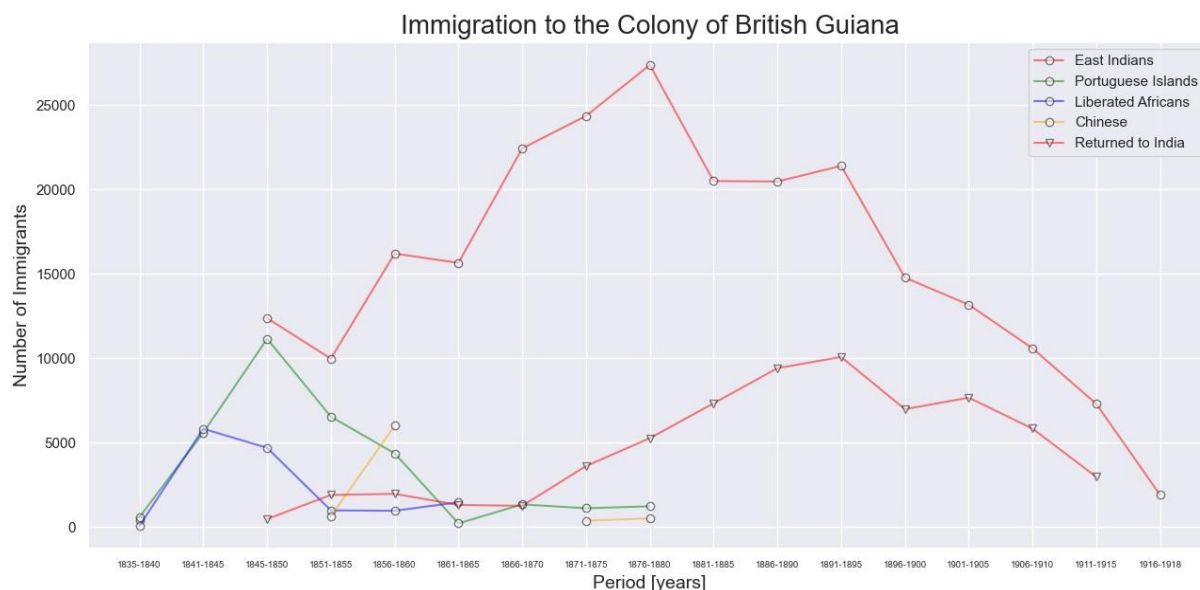
⁷ *Daily Chronicle*, Georgetown, November 12, 1885. p. 3; NA-UK. London, CO 884/6/18, Colonial Office: West Indian Nos. 90 to 112, 1899-1905, Papers relating to proposals for concessions in British Guiana. Papers by Sir Walter J Sendall, Governor of British Guiana and a letter from Joseph Chamberlain, 1900 May 29-1900 Oct 18; CO 884/6/18, Suggestions for applicants for concessions in British Guiana, 1901 Mar 9.

⁸ *Venezuelan Herald*, Caracas, October 22, 1900. p. 4.

colony after the abolition of slavery and indigenous segregation: the perception that the colony was in a transitional stage, a temporary stay for obtaining wealth and then returning to their countries. This was a reality with regards to the Portuguese coming from Madeira, as well as East communities from Africa, India, or China, and also for British nationals arriving for administration or business purposes. This happened more intensively in the 1870s and 80s, despite the high degree of absentee ownership in the sugar estates; see graph below (Heuman, 1999, p. 470-473; Moore, 1995, p. 262-4).

The efforts in settling catechism and educational missions for the native communities failed successively from the 1860s onwards: due to different forms of resistance, such as lack of enthusiasm from local planters, who did not oppose yet also did not support the Church. Attention was deviated progressively to the evangelisation of West Indian and Chinese Immigrants from 1850s on, who were considered easier to convert than in their country; however, the outcomes of these approaches were not as expected: Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists resisted with cold indifference, and sometimes open opposition, to keep their cultural autonomy in the new society (Moore, 1995, p. 262-263).

Figure 4 - Immigration to the Colony of British Guiana



Source: This graph was created from the data organised by G. W. Roberts and J. Byrne (1966, p. 129-132).

Indenture labour was central to solve the lack of workers problem in the West Indies after the abolition of slavery in the region. East Indians were the group with the highest rate of entrance, and also highest rate of returned. After a ten-year contract, the indentured immigrants could return to their countries with the fee paid for by the government.

Furthermore, the bad work conditions of the cane plantations, problems with indentured labours rights, and structural racism, led to social organisation being in permanent stress. This caused some to start cane plantation fires in protest the reduction of wages. Moreover, segregating legislation, and breach of contracts, caused rural and urban conflicts, which were met with violent police action. In October 1896, May 1903, December 1905, death and injuries of “collies” were reported to London⁹.

In 1900, the minister for the colonies wrote to the British Guiana governor defining the rules that would govern the ‘opening up the hinterland of the colony’. These rules included policies on immigration dependence and conditions of indentured labourers. Also set out were mandates for three railways, one of them being from the coast to the still undefined boundary with Brazil. Some were set to be further south, conserving just some indigenous and existent mining rights, and another for the Mazaruni river, the contested region with Venezuela.

The benefits in building this line were believed to be endless. One such benefit would be the commerce with the effervescent market of Amazonian Countries, mainly Brazilian province of Amazonas and Pará, who were enjoying an economical rubber boom. Furthermore, the governor also received instructions on the way lands should be conceded and about settlements of East Indian immigrants. As was expected, the answer of J.W. Sendall in October 1900 was in accordance with the proposals. Curiously, the governor suggested that one question should be stressed in the subsequent reports and memorandums: British Guiana was part of the continent of South America, and therefore should not be treated as part of West Indies anymore. This was, in the capitalist mind, according to him, due to the “bad name” of the neighbouring colonies, which could play an essential part in the “business sentiment”. It seemed that the intense competition with Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto Rico sugar production, pushed aside previous ideas in congregating the British West Indies into a confederation¹⁰.

This news was received with excitement by local planters, but also with some reservations. They believed that the capital influx coming along with a possible new wave of

⁹ News of those events spread, all over West Indies, where similar uprisings and repression have happened in Trinidad (1884; 1903), Dominica (1893; 1898), Saint Kitts (1896), Montserrat (1898), and Jamaica (1902). NA-UK. London, CO 884/9/1, Colonial Office: West Indian N. 147. Involvement of troops in insurrections in Trinidad, Dominica, St Christophers, Montserrat, Jamaica, and British Guiana; NA-UK. CO 884/9/5, West Indian N. 151, 1905-6, Disturbances in Georgetown, British Guiana. 1905.

¹⁰ NA-UK. London, CO 884/6/18, Colonial Office, West Indian N.107, 1901, Papers relating to proposals for concessions in British Guiana. Papers by Sir Walter J. Sendall, Governor of British Guiana and a letter from Joseph Chamberlain, 1900 May 29-1900 Oct 18.

immigrants would change the situation; this is, impeding capital outflow and immigration of local workforce to other colonies, particularly South Africa, which was currently experiencing a gold rush (Lencaster, 1993, p. 7-9). However, the plans for building new railways further south were met with a certain distrust, since the number of workers needed to construct the new lines, and the promises of more concessions and incentives to alternative industries, could attract the valuable west Indian immigrants. In this regard, a series of agreements with Belgium, Canada and the USA in the sugar commerce, and the intervention of the imperial government, changed things for the better, at least in the first decade of the new century. Even though British Guiana was no longer an attractive colony for the Empire, and the African colonies had a better position in international commerce than the 300.000 inhabitants South American colony. The colony's remoteness remained an open frontier.

Rubber, food, and British Guiana boundaries with North Brazil

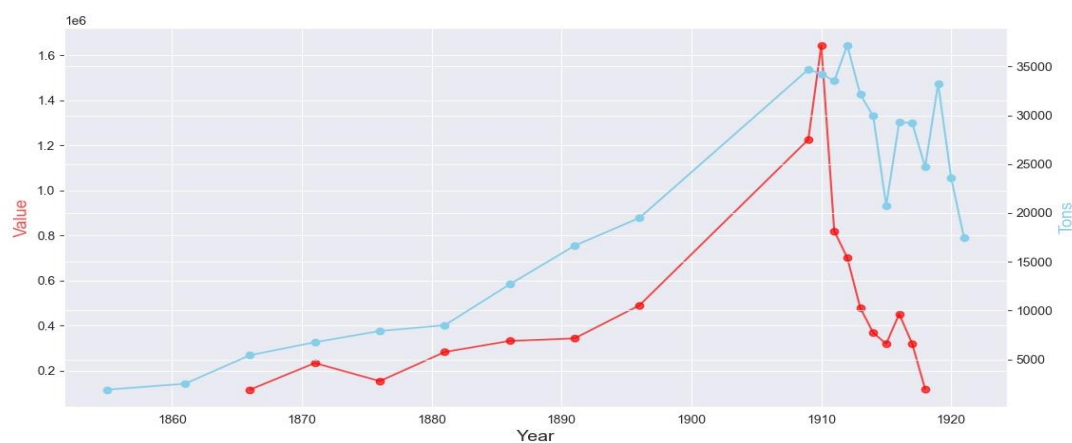
The scenario in North Brazil, from which the news of prosperity of the rubber industry was coming to British Guiana, was far from admirable, if compared with the posterior data on productivity and more critical social conditions. In 1853, when travelling in the region, the English botanist Richard Spruce, going down the Rio Negro, had a similar impression and wrote that "the smoke was seen ascending from recently opened seringales, principally in the islands. The extraordinary price reached by rubber in Para in 1853 length woke up the people from their lethargy"; as a consequence, he continues, "Mechanics threw aside their tools, sugar-makers deserted their mills, and Indians their roças, so that sugar, rum, and even farinha were not produced in sufficient quantity for the consumption of the province" (Wallace, 1908, 507). Several creators of herbs of the regions with a higher concentration of *seringais*, abandoned their farms and entered the rubber tapper. Furthermore, religious settlements of indigenous communities, which used to work in the plantation system, also started to hunt the rubber tree.

While in British Guiana, East Indian immigration was a problematic, but available solution for the workforce, in Amazonia, the answer seemed to be found internally with the migration of Brazilian Northeasters. Indeed, the structural problems in the Amazonian economy were quite similar to the highlighted issues addressed before: labour supply, and the overall social dimension of a "rubber fever", which unfolded in an intense change in economic framework, and the creation of a highly hierarchical market. Another element was quite different: local food scarcity. The relative rising prices of rubber globally,

and the consolidated position of Brazil (Provinces of Amazonas and Pará) in supplying around 50% of the global demand, unfolded in inflation, supply problems, domestic or external debt, as well as in a rubber rush globally, although the first signs of these events had been evident decades before.

In Amazonas and Pará, the high attractiveness of the rubber prices left local food commerce in a bad situation. The same thing was already happening in Putumayo, Peru: urban and rural people were dependent on expensive imports from abroad. In 1877, a British botanist described that everything in Belém was “very dear”: butter and fish came from Norway; rice and flour from the USA, while sugar, coffee, and cassava flour (*farinha*) came from other Brazilian provinces¹¹. Even decades before the boom, travellers, observers, and deputies of the Legislative Assembly of Amazonas, observed the difficulty in obtaining fresh meat (*carne verde*) or dried meat (*carne seca*) in the city of Manaus, unless at elevated prices. Usually, the deputies blamed the local small merchants (*regatão*) for negotiating their goods from wholesale and proposed the prohibition of their activities on the one hand, and on the other, proposed laws for rewarding local landholders rearing cattle in the province¹².

Figure 5 - Rubber Output in Brazil. Rubber production in Brazil reached its peak in the 1890s and 1910s, period usually described as the rubber boom



Source: This graph was created from the data organised by Santos (1980) and Weinstein (1993).

¹¹ NA-UK. London. FO 88/4771, Report on the investigation and collection of plants and seeds of the India-rubber trees of Para and Ceara and balsam of Copaiba [all in Brazil], by Robert Cross. With black-and-white illustrations of tree-tapping for rubber and balsam, and of rubber preparation. Cross discusses the relative suitability of different trees for introducing to India, concluding with remarks about rubber production in other parts of the world. IOR/L/E/5/70 no 50. Edinburgh, 27 mar. 1877.

¹² APEAM. Manaus. *Anais da Assembleia Legislativa Provincial do Estado do Amazonas*, Sessões: 17-08-1854; 06-09-1854; 03-04-1879. The deputies also proposed a price-freezing of the main products consumed in the province (dried fish, corn, butter, oils, meat, cassava flour).

Furthermore, it was a long-lasting problem, according to subsequent reports and commentators in the following decades. In 1882, in a speech in the Assembly, the governor Alarico José Furtado, Baron of Maracajú, analysed the increasing scarcity of food, and pointed out that it was an unsettling scenario but not that bad; the solution could be the plantation of more rubber trees. He argued that a large-scale plantation of *Havea* and posterior extraction would remedy the migrants and natives in the region. Then, the cultivation of rubber plants would eradicate the distance problem, and migrants would have reasons to take up residence locally¹³. The solution offered by the governor for the shortage of food was not new or accessible: a road to the savannahs of Rio Branco, borderlands with the British Guiana and Venezuela. In 1881, the governor received a report from the engineer in charge of the road who travelled to the region: more than thirty ranches were identified in the region, with around 25 thousand cattle units. In the same year, a local captain received the task of making the road, with no success¹⁴.

News that Brazilians were rearing cattle on a large scale in north Rio Branco was not uncommon. In 1897, Lord Salisbury wrote to the Brazilian Legation in London, to the minister Sousa Correa, denouncing those herds growing in British territory, a violation of the neutralisation agreement of 1842. The question was of minor importance, but in communication with the governor of Amazonas, the Brazilian minister stated the urgency of the case to avoid hostile manifestations from the population against the British, who were accused of occupying the Brazilian territory¹⁵. The high number of cattle reared freely in the vast fields of the state-owned national farms were seen as the easiest way to bring meat for the capital Manaus, despite the distance and the difficulty in going up the Rio Branco. Its

¹³ RELATÓRIO *apresentado ao Ill. mo e Ex. mo Sr. Dr. Alarico José Furtado, presidente da Província do Amazonas*: pelo engenheiro Alexandre Haag; encarregado da exploração de uma estrada contornando as cachoeiras de rio Branco; com a carta hydrographica da zona encachoeirada d'este rio, levantada e desenhada pelo mesmo engenheiro. Manaus: Typ. do Amazonas, 1881. p. 20-45. After calling for investigation of the condition of the work migrants from the Brazilian north-east in the colonies and in the construction of the Railway Madeira-Mamoré, the governor also expresses the fear that the ongoing enslaving of indigenous communities, to work in the rubber tapping, could bring international problems.

¹⁴ APEAM. Manaus. *Relatório apresentado ao Ill. mo e Ex. mo Sr. Dr. Alarico José Furtado, presidente da Província do Amazonas*: pelo engenheiro Alexandre Haag; encarregado da exploração de uma estrada contornando as cachoeiras de rio Branco; com a carta hydrographica da zona encachoeirada d'este rio, levantada e desenhada pelo mesmo engenheiro. Manaus: Typ. do Amazonas, 1881. Since the introduction of the fist bovine cattle animals in the eighteenth century by the Portuguese, the animals reproduced without control, making the need of communication between the capital of the province and with the villages up to the north essential. Travellers in the region on the nineteenth century, including Schomburgk, described the large number of herds in the rich pastures of the region, AHI. Rio de Janeiro. *Correspondência Amazonas*. Contabilidade da Província do Amazonas, 307/2/6, 1881-1900.

¹⁵ AHI. Rio de Janeiro. *Assuntos de Estrangeiros*, Guiana, lata 239. Documentos históricos posteriores a 1822, Guiana Britânica (1897-1900), correspondência.

course was marked by several rapids, and it was only navigable during the flood season (May to Sept.), when the water level submerged the falls.

Additionally, the provincial Assembly deputies proposed studies on privatizing these farms, as well as several breaches of contract with local meat suppliers, who could not provide the province's internal needs, forcing the government to buy and slaughter livestock for sale on the local markets. First, a road project was already envisioned in 1854, to establish this route, and the governors as well as deputies insisted on this idea for decades, without success. Since rubber was the most important product of that era, naturally, the regions with a more significant concentration of the tree received more attention. Secondly, the small village of Boa Vista was the only notable settlement in the region, and according to an internal province report, there was "nothing worth mentioning" about the village: just modest tax collection on cattle and rubber exportation¹⁶. This is a central element in our argument: the lack of a ranch culture in the fields of Rio Branco seemed to be a bottleneck in production and distribution of meat, while with high demand. Even though in 1892, the governor of the province launched a public notice to select a project for the railway from Manaus to Boa Vista: one year after they signed a contract, but the parties did not implement it¹⁷.

The problem of linking remote regions in a conjuncture of boom effervescence did not seem to be urgent. In 1881, the question was not just the lack of foodstuff, but the competitiveness of the Amazonas province with Bolivia, Peru, and the Brazilian province of Pará. In that year, the governor described, strangely, that the province's finances were in deficit. He stated the reason for this was the circulation of foreign steamships competing with companies subsidised by the State, and corrupt producers as well as traders, which hid the origin of the rubber produced. The commercial association was prospering due to the elevated price of the product, and the high number of migrants of Northeast Brazilians working in the tapper industry. Also, the local merchants were asking for a decrease in the freight price, and more monthly boat communication with the USA than with Europe¹⁸. Contemporaries constantly repeated this argument, and projects for building local facilities deployed local and foreign companies and consulates. At the beginning of the century, Manaus was just a

¹⁶ APEAM. Estado do Amazonas. *Relatório dos Negócios do Interior*, Publicado na Administração do Snr. Coronel José Cardoso Ramalho Junior. Relatório Apresentado ao Sr. Dr. Fileto Pires Ferreira, Governador do Estado pelo Secretário de Negócios do Interior, em 5 de Janeiro de 1905, administração de 1896 a 1900. 1898.

¹⁷ APEAM. Manaus. Repartição de Obras Publicas, Terras e Colonização. Livro n. 23. *Annais da Assembleia Legislativa Provincial do Estado do Amazonas*, 17-08-1854. 1893; APEAM. Manaus. *Annais da Assembleia Legislativa Provincial do Estado do Amazonas*, Several Sessions: 1854.

¹⁸ NA-RJ. Rio de Janeiro. Província do Amazonas, Relatórios dos Presidentes (1881-87). *Fala com que o Exmo Sr. Dr. Satyro de Oliveira Dias, Presidente da Província do Amazonas, abriu a 2ª Sessão da 15ª Legislatura da Assembleia Provincial*, 4 de abril de 1881 e 16 de maio de 1881.

commercial hub, and complaints were shared about the need for a considerable port in the Amazon River. Competition between the British and the Germans in getting the public calls were constant, not only in pressuring the government but also in doing some “favours” to change the preferences¹⁹.

Failed projects in inland Guiana and north Brazil: myths of integration and diversification

British Ministers for Colonies and Foreign Affairs were constantly trying to solve the ‘integration’ problem as well as the boundary dispute with Venezuela and Brazil without going against the economic principle of the British Empire. Included in the government aid to the colonies was support for the costs of local botanical gardens, and experiments on new varieties of sugar cane, as well as proposed scientific expeditions and settlement projects.²⁰ In other words, the cost of implementing stable new industries in the West Indian Colonies would undoubtedly be higher than the uncertain benefits, and the strategy was reinforcing sugar production, while proposing studies be done in other sectors. However, some options were already on the ground: the mining boom excitement coming from the well-known gold and diamond fields in the remote lands of the British Guiana colony and a possible railway that would connect Demerara to the undefined borders with Brazil.

The neutralisation of the disputed region of Pirara (1842), in the Brazil-Guiana borderland, deviated the attention of the Guianese authorities in settling immigrated communities in the southern region for decades. The only events taking place in the region were accusations coming from both sides over breaking the agreement, along with some small projects in evangelising the indigenous population, altogether with some military and scientific expeditions, that produced maps, census and narratives, later used for the preparation of cases and arguments of the boundary arbitration.²¹ Again, the official award in 1904, dividing the territory between Brazil and British Guiana, was a new encouragement in

¹⁹ CLL. Liverpool, 387 B00 5/1-17, *Correspondence*, Manaos Harbour Limited.

²⁰ NA-UK. London. CO 884/6/18, Colonial Office, West Indian Nos. 90 to 112, 1899-1905, Papers relating to proposals for concessions in British Guiana. Papers by Sir Walter J Sendall, Governor of British Guiana and a letter from Joseph Chamberlain, 1900 May 29-1900 Oct 18. The West Indies and Imperial aid. Colonial Office memorandum concerning grants in aid and methods of encouraging industries including the sugar industry, 1905.

²¹ AHI. Rio de Janeiro. *Correspondência Amazonas*. Contabilidade da Província do Amazonas, 307/2/6, 1881-1900.

opening the inland for new colonisation projects, but without any practical consequences. Despite the fact that concessions were given to gold, diamond, and rubber companies, and that attempts to settle East Indian immigrants in comprehensive colonisation projects were made, none of these endeavours had any success. The same happened with several agricultural colonies set in the Amazonas province in Brazil; since the 1880s, all of them, mainly occupied by migrants coming from the northeast, along with other foreigners, failed. Thousands of settlers submitted to lousy work. This led to bad health conditions when they went to the rubber extraction regions (Barboza, 2015; Weinstein, 2002).

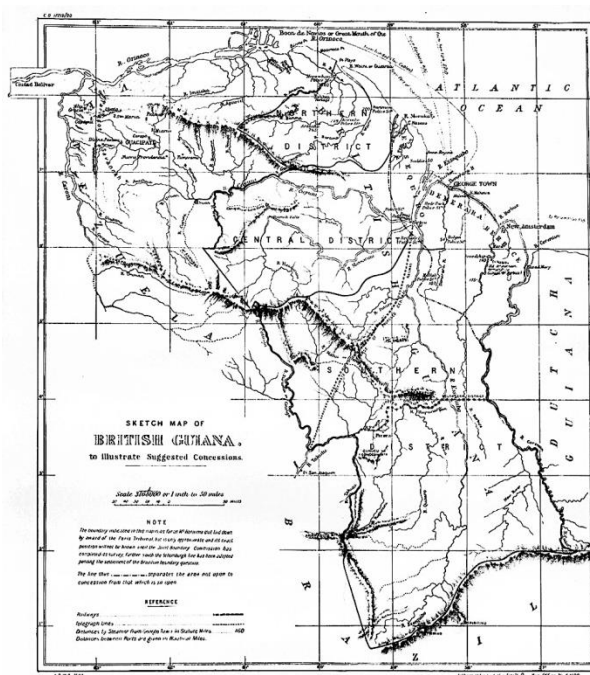
No concession was made for the promised hinterland railways in Guiana until 1908, when Colonel John Waldo Link, from the Colonial Rail and Tramway Syndicate, proposed the Georgetown-Brazilian borderlands line (see figure 6). The conditions asked by the company (land concessions and rights over the mineral exploration), were rejected by Governor Frederic Rodgson. Colonel Link, then, affirmed that the Brazilian government was interested in building a rail line from Manaus to the savannahs of Rio Branco, in the British Guiana borderlands: the advantage of trade with Brazil was the central argument to persuade the concession. Hodgson then wrote to the colonial secretary defending another project, similar to Link's idea, but with problems in the proposal: their plan did not detail where the railway would end (another 3rd proposal was accepted, but never was executed). The main criticisms in a newspaper article, against the resistance of the governor, were about the interest in building a railway throughout the goldfields' regions. Due to the nature of mining, the project could not produce a settled industry; it would make more sense to have a line in regions where the development of agriculture and cattle could be possible (Lancaster, 1993, p. 9-13).

Meanwhile, the former governor of Nigeria, Walter Egerton, assumed the office and the project in 1912. He contracted an engineer to make the plans and costs and presented a concept: the project was a precondition for the developments of the interior, and attached a colonisation plan, with immigration settlements in the south of the colony. Curiously, this would be financed by the imperial government and not by investors, as had occurred in the railway built in Uganda. The then secretary of the colonies, Lewis Harcourt, said that despite the potentials of the hinterland of Guiana, the governor's plans were not following the economic principle of the Empire. British Guiana, according to the secretary, was not a new colony and did not satisfy the same conditions of Uganda for construction. Harcourt questioned the need for a railway for its development. Furthermore, the colony had no

significant population of “uncivilised” in the interior, for which the Empire would take responsibility²².

An increase in hostilities in the districts between Venezuela and Guiana, as well as further talks in settling the conflict by arbitration, affected the Brazilian authorities in Rio de Janeiro, already driven by the ongoing escalation of violence in the borderlands with French Guiana. Newspapers in Manaus, Belém and Rio, reproduced in the country, maintained an “inflamed” and aggressive rhetoric against foreign interest in Brazil, particularly in the Amazon basin. In 1895, the chamber of deputies raised the question and approved undertaking studies for a railway from Manaus to the boundary with British Guiana, and the foundation of three settlements in Rio Branco²³. Like the British Guiana case, no concession project was done for the promised Boa Vista railway until 1911.

Figure 6 - Sketch Map of the suggestions for concessions with the possible railway trajectory



Source: NA-UK²⁴.

²² In fact, the British minister had fresh in mind the financial assistance of the previous decade to West Indies; the improvements in the sugar market were visible after 1903. The 1880s and 90s sugar price crisis and gold lower output followed a slow and bureaucratic interest in the rubber market mainly for the spread of news of economic prosperity coming from Brazil, and in minor dimension, from Africa and Asia nascent rubber plantations. NA-UK. London. CO 884/12/6, Colonial Office, Correspondence Concerning the building of a railway through the interior of the colony to the Brazilian border, 1914 Feb 17/1914, July 7.

²³ *Jornal do Comercio*, Rio de Janeiro, December 8, 1895.

²⁴ NA-UK. London. CO, 884-6-301-306. *Sketch Map of the suggestions for concessions with the possible railway trajectory*, 9 mar. 1901.

However, the conclusion of the Madeira-Mamoré Railway in Southeast Amazonia (linking the Brazilian river ports to the rich rubber forests in Bolívia and Peru) in 1912, encouraged local authorities to initiate a new project. Hanibal Porto, merchant and president of the local commerce association, sent to the Assembly of Amazonas a proposal of concession, with arguments not different from Colonel Link's project of the line of the Georgetown-Brazilian borderlands. The project describes endless benefits in connecting Manaus to the Rio Negro, and its most important tributary, the Rio Branco, with its forests, which were probably rich with rubber. Additionally, the region was an open frontier with other countries, and a railway would enhance commerce not only for Brazilians, but for Colombians and Venezuelans, which would use it as an alternative to the difficult Rio Orinoco navigation. In the memorandum, the reality of foreign rubber competition is quoted as another cause for the emergence for the concession. Although the north Brazilian States had important rivers as a "Mediterranean Sea", navigation was not possible all year, and the conclusion of Madeira-Mamoré should be seen as an incentive for commerce; trade was the substitute of war between nations, which were the unique modern regimes²⁵.

Meanwhile, the governor of British Guiana suggested sending communications to the Brazilian foreign minister in Rio de Janeiro, proposing that a railway connection project through the common border be accomplished together. However, those communications were never responded to. At the time, the powerful Brazilian minister Baron of Rio Branco did not have too much interest and found these investments non-essential before the complete demarcation of their boundary on the ground. In 1904, the arbitration award by the King of Italy, defined the borderline generically without precise details of divided territory; discussions about the insertions of frontier marks by mixed expeditions rested upon the interpretation of the award, and the difficulty to travel through and map the territory.

In 1906, C. Anderson, the British official surveyor, sent to work on the study of the future boundary marks, concluded a report on his travel to the region without optimism: some timber could be found, but more for house building; the cattle in British side was not notable; the soil was not fertile (more suitable for grass plantation); the single widespread agricultural production was cassava manioc, from which the indigenous produced their "flour" (*farinha*), although the commissioner remarked that it tasted "strange". Finally, *ballata* was the single forestall product that could be substantially explored in the savannah

²⁵ SGEAM. Manaus. *Memorial Sobre a Estrada de Ferro Noroeste do Amasonas*. Rio de Janeiro, 3 July 1911.

borderland. But the *ballata* was not of the best quality. Not like the *Para rubber (Havea Braziliensis)*, found in Brazil²⁶.

There was a clear connection between the new regulations of land concession of 1890 set in Guiana, and the increase of people hutting and tapping rubber in the forests of Berbice. The Court of Policy moved the government to approve special licenses for tapping rubber, with payment of royalties and rules to “avoid injury to the Crown Forests”. However, the leading sugar planters’ interest in the ballata industry was not expressive, as demonstrated in a meeting of the colony’s Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society. The bad receptions of incentives for rubber production as an alternative industry to sugar, demonstrated the group’s lack of interest. On the contrary, some were more interested in investing in cocoa and coffee, such as was being done in the neighboring Dutch colony of Surinam.²⁷ Most rubber trees were scattered on crown lands, and forest supervision legislation was seen as a barrier; then, *ballata* could never be in the position of sugar²⁸.

Looking for agricultural alternatives on the coast seemed problematic, since the producers demanded massive distribution of sugar estates in the best lands. The rubber trees were mainly naturally located in the hinterland, where only indigenous and black communities existed. In 1895 the director of the Royal Gardens in Kew (RGK), William Thiselton-Dyer, sent thousands of Para rubber tree seedlings to the colony, and suggested experiments in planting them locally, but was initially ignored (Dean, 1989, p. 90-92)²⁹. This RGK initiative was widespread globally: the rise of rubber demand, and new technological improvements in its use, made the institution act in these “industrial plants”. They tested species and sent them to all the tropical zones of the Empire³⁰.

²⁶ NA-UK. London. CO 884, 9, 372-392. Colonial Office, Report on the Work of Demarcating the British Guiana-Brazilian Boundary, C.W. Anderson, Government Surveyor, April 1907.

²⁷ In Suriname, the same lack of workers reality and the clear flagging of mining production were conducting planters to try banana, rice farming and even attempts to reintroduce the Arabian coffee (*Port of Spain Gazette*, Trinidad, October 10, 1908, p. 7).

²⁸ *Daily Chronicle*, Georgetown, August 16, 1885. p. 3. This plant farming in the West Indies was already a well-known laboratory in European colonies in Africa and Asia. However, the transfer of native trees from Amazonia to the other parts of the British, French, and German empires faced countless problems of natural adaptation (soil, adverse weather conditions, insects, and plant fungus) and also with political questions with the local communities. In Jamaica, Trinidad, Panamá, and Barbados, news of success in farming was every day, even with new native varieties and several tests in the Indian rubber.

²⁹ RGS. London. J. B. Harrison, Pamphlet, July 1907. British Guiana and Its Resources. London: The West India Committee Rooms, p. 25-27.

³⁰ In Nigeria and parts of Gold Coast, local gardens also received material and instructions, but found several local resistances: a 1900 report on rubber testing of the Director of Agriculture on the Aburi region, denounced that the local leaders were advised to clean the forest to test the plants of rubber and also cola; the director

Years before the 1880s and 90s rubber boom, the RGK began making experiments meant to find out what tropical seeds could do. In one of them, Robert Cross, in 1876 sailing from Liverpool, arrived in Belém to study methods of tapping, and collect plants and seeds from the valuable Pará Rubber, which gave the best quality material, and also palm nuts and the copaiba oil tree³¹. Cross concluded that the hottest parts of India were the most suitable region for planting the trees, similar to the summer monsoon seasons in Pará, together with Malay, Burma, and Ceylon. The plants of for experiments were loaded onto ships in October in Pará and sent travelled to England; he left more than one thousand Pará rubber seedlings and other forest industry plants in Kew. After that, the reception of expeditionary, orientations, and materials in all the quarters of the Empire became common. The encounter of these two policies in British Guiana led to local sugar producers in Demera.

European investors were still unconvinced. Problems with testing trees in the local botanical gardens, and also the fear that the workforce could be left with the plantations for tapping rubber, postponed further initiatives in the industry.

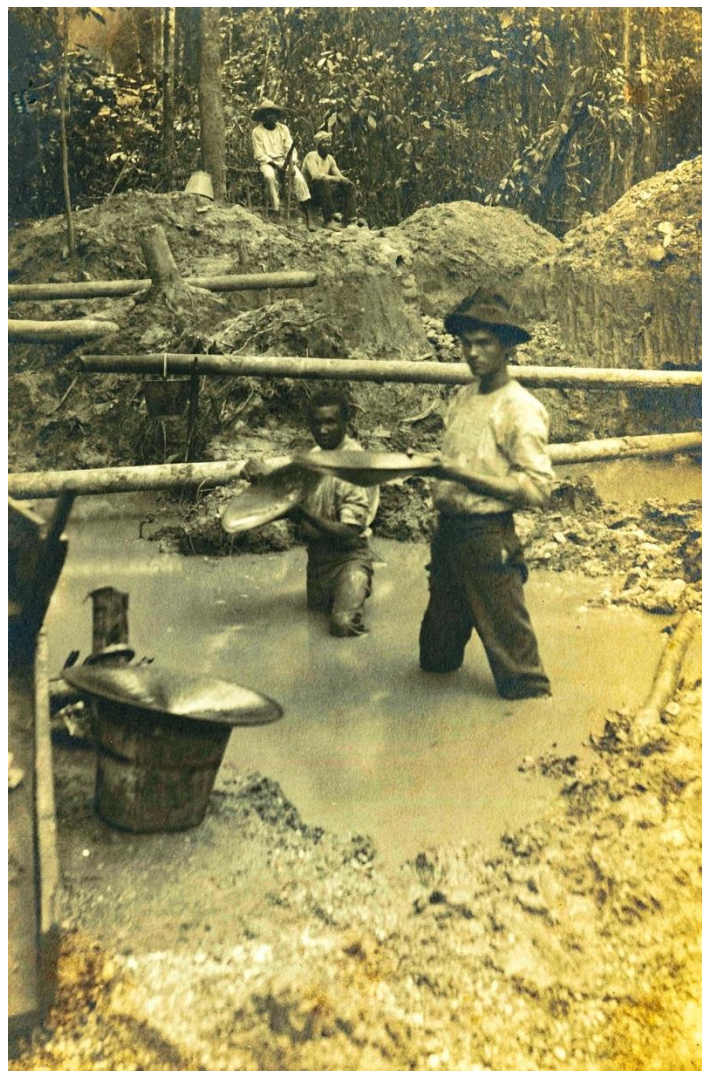
These new activities and immigration were a long-term problem. In Guiana, the Omai Mining Company started to work in gold and diamond in the Potaro River, in a direct effort by the government to establish a monopoly for the company — an attempt to end small mining activities. Thus, the fact that most of the gold production of the colony was in the hands of “pork-knockers” — an offensive word to black, gold washers, living in the districts distant from the coast, which added more questions to the governors. The widespread idea was that only big capitalists could support development in the colony, which resulted in the 1905 Mining Regulations. These regulations had the clear objective to eliminate the indebted “parasite” of the “small men”. The general annoyance held by local government and planters about these groups was also related to the lack of control of their movements and the “small

promised them aid of the governments and instructions of the botanical garden on how to plant the testers; however the leaders used little part of the material and made no efforts whilst doing it. Finally, the director concluded that to carry out these plantations with the natives was futile; in The Belgium Congo and Portuguese Angola, local wild rubber trees were being explored, while in Asia, rubber estates in British Malaya and Dutch Sumatra were dealing with adaptation problems, but with a promising future. NA-UK. London. CO 879/65, *Correspondence*, Relating to Botanic and Forest matters in British Tropical Colonies and Protectorates in Africa. Colonial Office, September 1908. For a broad summary in this global transference and acclimatation of rubber tree, see Dean (1989) who proposed a study in ecological history, analysing the ecological limitations of the other parts of the globe in testing the Para rubber and the long process of research and developments of methods of adaptation until success in regions where the plant was not native.

³¹ NA-UK. London. FO 88/4771, Report on the investigation and collection of plants and seeds of the India-rubber trees of Para and Ceara and balsam of Copaiba [all in Brazil], by Robert Cross. With black-and-white illustrations of tree-tapping for rubber and balsam, and of rubber preparation. Cross discusses the relative suitability of different trees for introducing to India, concluding with remarks about rubber production in other parts of the world. IOR/L/E/5/70 no 50. Edinburgh, 27 Mar. 1877.

economy” driven by them in the digging areas. In fact, only settlements created around the gold washers’ fields could be seen in the remote districts, and transportation upriver was usually done by companies from Georgetown, to where the miners usually went to sell their “grams of gold”. Again, local producers feared that immigrants could rebel and abandon the plantation area. Instead, they tried their luck searching for gold and diamonds.

Figure 7- Gold washers (*garimpeiros*) prospecting manually in the British Guiana inland. As depicted in the image, the absence of jurisdiction and local institutions resulted in an escalation of violence within the goldfields. Tropical diseases and substantial mortality rates constituted significant factors



Source: RGS³².

³² RGS. London. *Photography of Gold washers prospecting manually in the British Guiana inland*, Pictured by Everard Im Thurn, 01-01-1890.

The successive orientations sent from the Colonial Office were in a certain sense conciliatory, but based on legal violence: as long as the colony did not attract any considerable foreign investments in the mining sector, the tiny gold-digging should be tolerated³³. The colony, in contrast, was overburdened by the planting of sugar cane, and incentives for the area were resulting year after year³⁴ (Lancaster, 1993, 15-17). The big picture correlates to the long-term project in creating monopolies and incentives, while promoting the marginalisation of diggers in the gold and diamond areas. At the same time, the incentives coming from the colonial office stayed concentrated in the sugar estates on the coast, and in a few companies working on other commodities.

These policies created an intense modification of landscapes on the coast, while isolating in the inland colony not only the formerly enslaved decedents, but also indigenous communities — now, after the boundary award, they were officially in British territory. The indigenous forced labour option, largely used in colonies in Africa and Asia, was out of the question for several reasons. When slavery in the colony was abolished entirely in 1838, some of the communities, who used to enslave natives of enemy nations, and sold or exchanged them with the planters, lost their channel of economic communication, and only evangelisation projects could be seen inland. This fact provoked a retreat of the indigenous peoples from coastal and plantation society (Hoonhout, 2020, p. 42). Add to this centuries of genocide and mistrust, and we see a significant decline of the population of the highland and lowlands, down the Essequibo River³⁵.

Conclusion

The scenarios described above are permeated by a series of failed projects that give me space to propose three main conclusions.

Firstly, the plantation system, as a project to solve the problem of distance, failed not only due to the lack of workers, but also due to the structural production of scarcity. High demand for food in regions marked by alternative economic activities cannot be solved internally with the creation of integrated and dependent markets, based on commercial houses

³³ NA-UK. CO 884/6/18, Colonial Office, West Indian Nos. 90 to 112, 1899-1905, Papers relating to proposals for concessions in British Guiana.

³⁴ *Daily Chronicle*, Georgetown, January 3, 1895. p. 3; *Daily Chronicle*, Georgetown, October 20, 1896. p. 4.

³⁵ Schomburgk in 1840 estimated that the indigenous population in British Guiana would be around 17.000; the official census of the colony did not include indigenous in the total population but give some imprecise idea: 1851 census: 7.000; 1861 census: 7.000; 1881 census: 7.656; 1921 census: 9.700. Reports from religious organisations give some similar numbers, but it is not possible to take these numbers as precise.

of central cities. The failure of the Georgetown-Manaus megaproject is just one clear example of how the myth of integration shaped the business mind of that generation. Globally, megaprojects were schemes based on the territorial expansion of capitalism, and part of the discourse of the supremacy of European technology. They were part of the perception that the world should be reached in all its dimensions. In the end, the imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century, tried to make planetary some patterns of market organisations, commodity exploitations, and local relationships. This process involved several sorts of violence and dehumanization, since modern globalisation was not initially based on the universalisation of work methods, or even the concept of humanity.

Secondly, cattle rearing without forming a ranch culture in the Savannas of Rio Branco, failed in setting up new connections and regular movements between the remoteness and coastal regions. The same question can be raised with the attempts to globalise the nascent mining industry, and the imposition of a working system to several indigenous and non-indigenous groups with different interests. This included forming independent groups of gold washers, who were not interested in paying taxes in the main cities. Modes of adaptation developed; first, for the controlled policy coming from the colonial office, and second, because the rituals in the production system were consistently accommodated in the local mentality. The constant entry of foreigners to work in sugar cane fields, led to a social structure of low fragmentations and inter-ethnic marriages, keeping a strong sense of group, without dense involvement in local institutions. The long-term consequence was that laws controlling immigrants' entry, permanence, and behaviour, had highly effective results in the second half of the nineteenth century, even by dissolving uprisings and tensions due to police violence and, in some cases, conciliation.

In the Brazilian scenario, although the exact conditions could be found in terms of social organisation and the integration of local migrants, the rubber system of production resulted in a degree of specialisation and hierarchisation, centred in random areas — unlike the plantations in the Guianas, concentrated on coastal estates. The rubber system found local territorialities and movements perfectly adapted to the rubber trees, dispersed geographically. However, the global and local dependencies (*aviamento* and global capital) created immense disparities and inequalities, which was a feature exacerbated principally due to the rising global demand of rubber from 1890 to 1910.

Finally, breaking/reducing remoteness as a colonising project with structural violence, did not result in coalescence — neither in Amazonia, in the Guianas or any part of the colonised world. Documented genocides in the Amazonia-Guiana were not evidence of

colonisation projects' failures, but were part of them, a mechanism in erasing and creating new territories in the remoteness. The “problem” of nomadism of indigenous and black communities — constantly associated as an expression of multi-territorialities — should also be read as a resistance mechanism. Additionally, it must be understood inside the dynamics of local relationships and demographic outlines.

Imperialism and modern globalization of the end of the nineteenth century are related to the topics developed in this paper: processes of making planetary specific schemes of production of space, particularly those drawn on inaccurate maps, which represented some unknown territories, unmapped remoteness, regions, and borderlands in dispute. The remoteness in Amazonia/Guianas, and its specific timetables and territorialities, were composed and designed to incorporate dispersion as an artefact and mechanism of resistance. Breaking the remoteness and concealing local territorialities was an imperialist policy aimed at ending the possibility of organized resistance.

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a) Abbreviations

AHI	Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty, Rio de Janeiro
APEAM	Arquivo Público do Estado do Amazonas, Manaus
CLL	The Central Library, Liverpool
NA-RJ	Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro
NA-UK	The National Archives, London
RGK	Royal Gardens in Kew, London
RGS	The Royal Geographical Society, London
SGEAM	Sociedade Geográfica do Estado do Amazonas, Manaus

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