Suriname and the Atlantic World, 1650-1800

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Introduction

When sailing into the Suriname River from the Atlantic Ocean in the eighteenth century one would see plantations along the river and defence works protecting the river mouth. There were sugar plantations inland, but close to the coast one would find predominantly "coffee plantations, lying on both sides of the river." After passing the first defences and plantations, the "very advantageous and strong fortress *Zeelandia*" would come into view "just north of Paramaribo."[1] The city itself was a sight to behold with its white houses and fragrant trees lining the streets. Between 1650 and 1800 present-day Paramaribo was founded on the remnants of an indigenous village and developed into a bustling colonial city. The centre of Paramaribo, as the indigenous village before it, is situated along the Suriname River on shell ridges several kilometres from the Atlantic coast, not far from where the Commewijne and Suriname River merge before they flow into the ocean. Both rivers have a low gradient and are rich in sediment. Over millennia they have left a thick and fertile layer of clay, which makes much of Suriname's northern seaboard very suitable for agriculture once irrigational systems deal with both the incoming tide and excess rain water. Developing plantation agriculture was the main motive for European colonisation along the Suriname River. The shell ridges that form Paramaribo's foundation are slightly higher than much of the surrounding swamp-like area. These ridges and the robust build of the fort ensured that "the violent current that streams along the fort wastes its force in vain."[2] The fort and the ridge made Paramaribo the first good location to make landfall when coming in from the Ocean. To this day the ridges determine the stretched-out gridiron street pattern of the city.

Paramaribo transformed from a fort with some houses and inns into a lively city with its waterfront, markets, theatres, scientific and literary societies and houses of worship.[3] A European visitor described Paramaribo

[1] "een meenigte Coffy-Plantagien, die aan weerzyde gelegen zyn, maar ook de zeer voordeelige en sterke Fortresse Zeelandia leggende in het Noord-oosten, een uur van de Schans, even boven Paramaribo" Thomas Pistorius, *Korte en zakelijke beschrijvinge van de Colonie van Zuriname* (Amsterdam: Theodorus Crajenschot, 1763), 2.

[2] "Het geweld der Stroom, die zelfs deeze Vesting bespoelt, verspilt haare kragten te vergeefs" ibid., 3.

[3] Many visitors left descriptions of the town. The most important ones are summed up here in chronological order. Lenghtier citations from these can be found throughout the book. George Warren, *An Impartial Description of Surinam Upon the Continent of Guiana in America. With a History of Several Strange Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Serpents, Insects and*

in 1718 as "the meeting place where planters come together, where the Lords of the Government give their orders, and where the populace receives them. Here the ships sail hither and tither."[4] Practically all connections to the outside world were across water, making the *Waterkant* (waterfront) buzzing with activity. On the river in front of the city one could see the large ocean-crossing vessels of the Dutch, sometimes carrying enslaved Africans, and somewhat further upstream the ships of the non-Dutch intra-American trade. Barges and tent boats moved back and forth between the ships, the waterfront and the inland plantations. The population of Paramaribo grew from a few hundred in 1700 to ten thousand at the end of that century. In the second half of the eighteenth century Paramaribo expanded beyond its original core near the fort. Outside the centre the neighbourhoods of the manumitted and their offspring came to be situated between broad, sandy streets. The city not only grew in size, but certainly became a city in terms of the social, economic and governmental activities that took place there.[5]

Customs of That Colony, &c. (London: Printed by W. Godbid for N. Brooke, 1667), 1–2; J. D. Herlein, *Beschryvinge van de volk-plantinge Zuriname: vertonende de opkomst dier zelver colonie, de aanbouw en bewerkinge der zuiker-plantagien. Neffens den aard der eigene natuurlijke inwoonders of Indianen; als ook de slaafsche Afrikaansche Mooren; deze beide natien haar levens-manieren, afgoden-dienst, regering, zeden* (Leeuwarden: Meindert Injema, 1718), 46–50; Pistorius, *Korte en zakelijke beschrijvinge*, 3–4; Jan Jacob Hartsinck, *Beschryving van Guiana, of de Wildekust in Zuid-America*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Gerrit Tielenburg, 1770), 567–571; David de Isaac Cohen Nassy et al., *Essai historique sur la colonie de Surinam: sa fondation, ses révolutions, ses progrès, depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours, ainsi que les causes qui dépuis quelques années ont arreté le cours de sa prosperité ...: avec l'histoire de la nation juive portugaise & allemande y etablie, leurs privileges, immunités & franchises, leur etat politique & moral, tant ancien que moderne, la part qu'ils ont eu dans la défense & dans les progrès de la Colonie* (Paramaribo, 1788), 43; John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam, in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America, from the Year 1772 to 1777* (London: J. Johnson & J. Edwards, 1796); Albert Sack, *A Narrative of a Voyage to Surinam: Of a Residence There During 1805, 1806, and 1807, and of the Author's Return to Europe by the Way of North America* (Printed for G. and W. Nicol by W. Bulmer, 1810), 44; John Augustine Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies: Containing Various Observations Made During a Residence in Barbadoes, and Several of the Leeward Islands: With Some Notices and Illustrations Relative to the City of Paramaribo, in Surinam* (Richard Phillips and Company, 1820), 64.

[4] "Dit is de vergader-plaats van Parimaribo alwaar de Planters t' zamen komen, daar de Heeren van de Regeringe hun bevelen uitgeven, en het gehele Volk dezelve ontfangt; hier varen de Schepen af en an." Herlein, *Beschryvinge*, 48.

[5] This was nicely put by Philip Curtin when he wrote that a city is a place "where people do different things, and the more different things they do, the more the place is a city." Philip D. Curtin, "Preface," in *Atlantic Port Cities. Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*, ed. Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

The city's growth in size and function should not come as a surprise; the eighteenth century saw cities booming all along the American Atlantic coast, including the Caribbean. In Paramaribo's hinterland the number of enslaved Africans increased to almost 60,000 after the middle decades of the eighteenth century.[6] Paramaribo has always been understood as an extension of the colonisation process in Suriname and the growth of the plantation economy.[7] This study seeks to provide depth and detail to this history by adding to it an understanding of Paramaribo's role as an Atlantic nodal point. An Atlantic nodal point is a city that facilitates connections between different regions in the Atlantic world. These connections can be purely economic, for example the trading and shipping of plantation produce for sale on European markets. But the movement of goods almost always also meant the movement of people. They in turn took with them the latest news, their cultural traits and ideas about the world. The Atlantic nodal points did not just develop in relation to their hinterland, but existed within a network of cities. These networks were not just trans-Oceanic, but often regional in character.[8]

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[6] Alex van Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast: roofbouw en overleven in een Caraïbische plantagekolonie, 1750-1863* (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 1993), 33–35.

[7] G. A. de Bruijne, *Paramaribo: stadsgeografische studies van een ontwikkelingsland* (Romen, 1976), 15; De Bruijne does stress the importance for intercolonial connections, but only for Spanish America and cities like Shanghai with large non-European empires as their hinterland. G.A. de Bruijne, "The Colonial City and the Post-colonial World," in *Colonial Cities. Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, ed. Robert Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, Comparative Studies in Overseas History (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 233.

[8] While Price stresses the importance of production in the hinterland, the variations within networks of cities help to explain why some cities were more successful than others. Jacob M. Price, "Economic Function and Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974): 123–186; Max Savelle, *Empires to Nations: Expansion in America, 1713-1824*, vol. V, Europe and the World in the Age of Expansion (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), 143–145; A very early example of this would be Havana where a regional system of connections sprung up beyond the connections made by the return fleet. Alejandro de la Fuente, César García del Pino, and Bernardo Iglesias Delgado, "Havana and the Fleet System: Trade and Growth in the Periphery of the Spanish Empire, 1550–1610," *Colonial Latin American Review* 5, no. 1 (1996): 95–115; The North American coast was no different. There "coastal trade served two basic functions: one was to carry out the distribution of colonial products destined for domestic consumption; and the second was to collect commodities for export to overseas markets from the larger ports like Boston, New York, Philidelphia, and Charleston, and to distribute imports from such commercial centers as these." James F. Shepherd and Samuel H. Williamson, "The Coastal Trade of the British North American Colonies, 1768-1772," *The Journal of Economic History* 32, no. 4 (December 1972): 783–810, doi:10.2307/2117255; What is true for the cities on the Atlantic's western coasts seems to accord with global

The same applies to Paramaribo; its network of economic relationships was more extensive than its role in the connections between the plantations and the cities in the Dutch Republic. Facilitating and regulating these connections added to the urban functions of city. As the authors of the *Essai Historique* (1788) argued: "To facilitate the movement of goods, prodigious shops were founded, located mostly on the river side. The shops for edibles and many other things for the Negroes on the plantations were carried there by the Americans."[9] Paramaribo's role in connecting different parts of the Atlantic world changed over the eighteenth century. When it was just a fort and some houses, Paramaribo was functioning as a gatekeeper between the plantations and the Atlantic. During the eighteenth century it turned into a colonial city. A multitude of people had settled there running their businesses and maintaining relationships to places around the Atlantic world. In the late eighteenth century the local Surinamese wanted to be increasingly free to organise their own trade and shipping unhindered by metropolitan regulations. The authors of the *Essai Historique* argued for making "Suriname a free port" where the colonists "had the permission to sell their products themselves."[10]

patterns. Peter J. Taylor, *World City Network: a Global Urban Analysis* (London New York: Routledge, 2004), 7–27.

[9] See next footnote for full citation of this passage.

[10] "*Pour le débit de cela, ils s'est formé une quantité prodigieuse de boutique, la pluspart situé au bord de la riviere; des magazins pour les comestibles & la plupart des choses, aporté par les Américains pour l'approvisionnement des Negres des Plantations: & ils les intérêts de la République permettre, de faire de Surinam, un port libre, & que les colons eussent le permission de vendre eux mêmes leur produits, la colonie sentiroit sans doute un changement heureux, sans pourtant causer à la métropole aucun dommage.*" Nassy et al., *Essai historique*, 42–44.

[Figure 2]

Figure 1 View of Paramaribo's waterfront in the early eighteenth century
Reinier Ottens, Accurate en Origineele Afbeeldinge, van Paramaribo, of Nieuw Middelburg, geleegen in de Colonie Zuriname, n.d., UBM: Kaartenzl: 104.01.02

This dynamism in the eighteenth century strongly diverges from the stagnation and decline of Amsterdam and Middelburg, Paramaribo's trans-Oceanic connected cities in the Dutch part of its network.[11] Not only did Amsterdam and Middelburg fail to grow during the eighteenth century, but in Amsterdam there was also marked shift from a situation in which there was a strong combination of production management and staple trade towards one in which financial services became an important aspect of the city's role in its urban network. Paramaribo fared differently, its population increased. In Paramaribo's hinterland production expanded rapidly, while in the Dutch Republic the industries that were not connected to the Atlantic world contracted or even disappeared.[12] Much of the Paramaribo's growth can be attributed to the expanding production by enslaved Africans in its plantation hinterland. In addition, the changes in the economic functions of the nodal point appear to be related to the connecting function the city had, not just between the production on the plantations and the consumption in the metropolis, but also in trading with other places around the Atlantic world, predominantly the North American East Coast.

[11] Suriname managed to grow in terms of production, shipping and population, therewith strongly diverging from the trend in the Republic. In Holland and Zeeland most central cities either stagnated or shrunk in the period between 1688 and 1795. Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1107.
[12] Jan de Vries and A. M. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

This book covers Suriname's history from roughly the onset of English colonisation in 1650 until the collapse of Dutch overseas power at the end of the eighteenth century. The mainstay of the book deals with the period that the Dutch chartered Suriname Company (*Sociëteit van Suriname*, SC) ruled the colony (1683-1795). The Dutch conquered Suriname from the English in 1667. The conquest of Suriname had taken place under the auspices of the States of Zeeland at a time when Suriname was a sugar colony under English rule. Zeeland found it difficult to manage the colony after conquest because of inland wars with several indigenous groups, lack of supplies and departing colonists. In 1682 the States of Zeeland sold Suriname to the Dutch West-India Company (WIC). For the WIC Suriname was a means to acquire tropical products for the Dutch market, to create a new market for finished goods from Europe, and to expand its shipping industry.[13] The WIC could however not afford to buy the colony from Zeeland directly, and the WIC directors decided that their company should not carry the full burden of colonial management on its own. They found the city of Amsterdam and the rich family Aerssen van Sommelsdyck willing to participate and fund part of the project. In 1683 these three parties formed the SC through which they would share in the colony's profits, costs and general management. The Aerssen family withdrew from the SC in 1770. In 1771 the SC continued operating as a two-party arrangement but was disbanded in 1795 when the Patriot movement assumed power in the Netherlands with the help of the French revolutionary army. The new rulers quickly pushed to bring all colonial domains under a central governmental body. The colony itself fell (temporarily) into British hands in 1799.

For the SC, securing the feasibility and profitability of the colony was a complicated balancing act. They could not over-tax plantation owners, but simultaneously had to bring in tax money exceeding the defence and maintenance cost if they wanted to accumulate a handsome profit for

[13] The charter under which the Dutch West-India Company would come to rule Suriname was explicit about how the Dutch Republic would profit from Suriname's colonisation: "through the growth of commerce and shipping, the debit of the many manufactures and fruits, through the producing of raw materials, which will come from there in return-shipments which will be adapted and debited and traded to other countries, through the continuous building and repairing of ships sailing there and being eaten by the worm, through the training of seamen and capable sailors, and in other ways, all the inhabitants, and the state itself [will profit]." Octroy ofte fondamenteele Conditien, onder dewelke haar Hoog: Mog: ten besten ende voordeele van de Ingesetenen deser Landen, de Colonie van Suriname hebben doen vallen in handen ende onder directie van de Bewinthebberen van de Generaale Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie (1682) in: Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:623–624.

themselves.[14] To control the enslaved Africans, the European plantation owners, a small group of freemen as well as the indigenous and Maroons in the hinterland, the Suriname Company mainly relied on the Governor. The position of Governor, as well as all the other appointments of SC-personnel, including doctors, preachers, teachers and secretaries were made by the directors of the SC in Amsterdam. The second in command, in case the Governor was absent or had died, was the commander of the armed forces. To support the Governor in ruling the colony there were two councils of civilians: the political council, which also presided over criminal cases, and the court for small and civic cases. The members of these were elected from among the free Protestant European planters, who nominated two candidates per available seat. From these nominees the Governor chose his councillors. While the Governor and the councils wielded considerable power, they were held to follow the charters of the colony and directives from the directors of the SC. In cases where the charters were open to interpretation, or conflicts arose, the Dutch States General had a final say in the matter.[15]

Given that the Governor, the commander, and the courts were all situated in Paramaribo, governmental activities were a central part of the city's function. During the eighteenth century Paramaribo also became more important relative to its hinterland in terms of religious, cultural and scientific activities and increasingly as a market for local produce. The desire to safeguarde and control the non-Dutch connections further increased the social, economic and administrative functions of the city. In the Atlantic world power and productivity were gravitating towards the British and North American Atlantic cities. This change in the Atlantic city-network has not been sufficiently considered as a part of Paramaribo's development and as part of the historical scholarship on Suriname. Historians have treated Paramaribo primarily as a by-product of the plantation economy and its connection to the Dutch Republic. In this book I argue that a considerable part this dynamism in the eighteenth century can be attributed to Paramaribo's role in facilitating and controlling the connections between the plantation economy and a non-Dutch network of connected cities. The directors of the SC were faced with the dilemma of either closing off the colony to the interests and connections to other empires, or allowing such connections to supplement the limited economic capabilities of the Dutch. Part of the eighteenth-century transformation of Paramaribo can be explained by incorporating its Atlantic connections. This book describes the

[14] G. W. van der Meiden, *Betwist Bestuur: een eeuw strijd om de macht in Suriname, 1651-1753* (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 2008), 36–39.
[15] Ibid., 12–13.

changes in Paramaribo's urban network, what caused these changes and what they meant for the city's function in the Atlantic world.

[Figure 3]

Figure 2 View of Paramaribo's waterfront, 1831
P.J. Benoît, Voyage à Surinam (1839).

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The notion that there was an Atlantic world in the early modern period plays an important role in this book. Inspired by the field of Atlantic history and research into historical globalisation, this study takes into account the geographic openness of the Atlantic region as an important factor in the colonisation of Suriname and the development of Paramaribo from functioning as a gatekeeper with a landing place and a fort into a colonial city.[16] It was relatively easy to reach colonies across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe, even in smaller vessels. In the absence of indigenous maritime powers in the Americas, the European ships only faced metropolitan restrictions when they tried to connect across imperial boundaries. The Atlantic world became an area that was difficult to police by state or semi-state institutions such as the Dutch States General, the WIC or the SC.[17] This

[16] There are a growing number of historians who emphasise the interimperial connections in the Atlantic world. The primary overviews and reflections on the field are to be found in: David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 11–30; Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L Denault, eds., *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500-1830* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman, *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000* (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007); Thomas Benjamin, *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and Their Shared History, 1400-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xxiii–xxiv.

[17] Henk den Heijer and Victor Enthoven, "Nederland en de Atlantische wereld, 1600-1800. Een historiografisch overzicht," *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis* 24, no. 2 (2005): 147–166; Rudolf Paesie, *Lorrendrayen op Africa: de illegale goederen- en slavenhandel op West-Afrika tijdens het achttiende-eeuwse handelsmonopolie van de West-Indische Compagnie, 1700-1734* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2008); Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York University Press, 2011); Wim Klooster, *Illicit Riches: The Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1795*, 1995; Cornelis Ch Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas, 1680-1791*, Anjerpublikaties 19 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1985); Gert Oostindie, "'British Capital, Industry and Perseverance' Versus Dutch 'Old School'?: The

relatively open geography created possibilities for circumventing monopolies and imperial boundaries by using shipping lanes between Atlantic ports, factories and fortresses.

This study seeks to add to the knowledge about the Dutch connections of Paramaribo an understanding of the linkages that existed throughout the Atlantic world. Johannes Postma has done the ground-breaking work for this by examining the size of the network around Suriname looking at its demand for local provisions and tracing the connections through which they arrived.[18] The SC was founded on the basis of the exclusive right for the Dutch to profit from all the trade and production of the colony,[19] but in line with the general pattern seen in the Atlantic world, the directors of the SC were unable to create such a walled garden. They had to allow non-Dutch traders to their colony to supply it with the necessary provisions in exchange for wood and molasses.[20] The inter-colonial trade caused friction between colony and motherland; the schemes created by merchants around the Atlantic to evade trade restrictions were often creative and played a crucial role in the integration of the Atlantic world. For Suriname, molasses was the most important export product in the inter-colonial trade. In many decades of the eighteenth century, regional non-Dutch ships carrying molasses outnumbered their Dutch counterparts. Molasses, used for the production of rum, was crucial to the North Americans, prompting signer of the declaration of independence and second president of the United States John Adams to remark that "molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence."[21]

This book deals with the economic connections between Suriname's plantation economy, through Paramaribo, to the Atlantic world from its

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Dutch Atlantic and the Takeover of Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo, 1750-1815," *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 127, no. 4 (December 18, 2012): 28–55.

[18] Johannes Postma, "Breaching the Mercantile Barriers of the Dutch Colonial Empire: North American Trade with Surinam During the Eighteenth Century," in *Merchant Organization and Maritime Trade in the North Atlantic, 1660-1815*, ed. Olaf Uwe Janzen, vol. 15, Research in Maritime History (St. John's, New Foundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1998), 107–131; Johannes Postma, "Suriname and Its Atlantic Connections, 1667 - 1795," in *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585 - 1817*, ed. Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven, vol. 1, The Atlantic World (Leiden Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 287–322. The quantitative part of this study will present data that was gathered by Johannes Postma, and which he made into an invaluable database. Johannes Postma, Suriname North American Data Collection (PSNADC) (2009).

[19] Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:630.

[20] Postma, "Breaching the Mercantile Barriers."

[21] Frederick Bernays Wiener, "The Rhode Island Merchants and the Sugar Act," *The New England Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (July 1930): 464–500, doi:10.2307/359398.

founding as a European settlement around 1650 until the collapse of Dutch overseas power around 1800. Some historians have been sceptical of the importance of an Atlantic world. Piet Emmer has argued that there was not enough interconnection between the various Atlantic regions to speak of an integrated world, and that the connections were only of cultural significance, but had no economic importance.[22] There is an important point to be taken from such scepticism about early modern globalization. It is absolutely clear that even plantation colonies, dispite their integration into geographically spread-out commodity chains, could not survive without production for local or regional consumption. Detailed studies of the Barbadian plantation system have shown that several aspects of its economy were not dependent on transoceanic connections, and that a great part of the workforce did not produce for European markets.[23] While the importance of trans-Oceanic links should not be overstated, it goes almost without saying that for the colonies in the Americas the trans-Atlantic connections were not merely a cultural affair without significant economic impact, but formed indispensable lifelines for the colonial project. In addition, also in the case of Europe, historians are increasingly finding that trans-Oceanic exchanges were of greater importance than they had hitherto thought.[24]

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[22] P.C. Emmer, "The Myth of Early Globalization: The Atlantic Economy, 1500-1800," *European Review* 11, no. 1 (2003): 37–47; P.C. Emmer, "In Search of a System: The Atlantic Economy, 1500-1800," in *Atlantic History. History of the Atlantic System, 1580-1830*, ed. Horst Pietschmann (Göttingen, 2002), 169–178.

[23] David Eltis, "The Slave Economies of the Caribbean: Structure, Performance, Evolution and Significance," in *The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, ed. Franklin W. Knight, vol. III, VI vols., General History of the Caribbean (London: UNESCO Publishing, 1997), 105–137; David Eltis, "The Total Product of Barbados, 1664-1701," *The Journal of Economic History* 55, no. 2 (June 1995): 321–338.

[24] Of course there is a basic validity to the observation that transoceanic shipping was dwarfed by the size of trade and migration on the respective continents. However, this line of reasoning does not take into account the qualitative shift that occurred after the onset of the Columbian Exchange or the institutional transformation in European nations connected to the Atlantic world. See for example: Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003); Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, "The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth," *The American Economic Review* 95, no. 3 (June 2005): 546–579; But also the direct economic impact was far from insignificant. To use the example of the Netherlands, the Atlantic trades and their connected industries were the most dynamic sector of the Dutch Republic in the eighteenth century. De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 467–477; See especially the introductory chapter to Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven, eds., *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817*, vol. 1, The Atlantic World (Leiden Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003); Even a minor trade circuit like the slave trade resulted in

The connections that are studied in this work are the durable routes that people, goods and ideas travelled to and from Paramaribo. Material constraints forced early modern Suriname to rely heavily on local resources. The carrying capacity of ships and the lengths of their voyages across the ocean did not yet allow for the great compression of space and time seen in later days. This forced colonial projects to rely on their own devices and not count too much on any metropolitan input. The colony heavily depended on short distance circuits of exchange through networks of interconnected colonial cities. National borders did not limit these connections between cities. Although the early modern period saw the rise of the idea that political borders enclose territories, those ideas rarely reflected reality. The contrast between town and country as well as between cities was still the dominant scale of political relationships.[25] Most of the colonial urban centres were tied together into networks that easily crossed political borders. If one would plot the interconnections between cities around Atlantic Ocean on a map, the famous 'triangle' of the triangular trade would just be one of the many circuits that existed amidst a world of connections. That is not to say that the power imbalance between the metropolis and the colonies was unimportant, but rather emphasises that power can be measured by the ability to include and exclude actors from a network.[26]

The connected nodal points all had their own circuits connecting their hinterlands to the wider Atlantic world. When documents on the ownership of cargoes and letters to far-off family members are read, a wider network appears that can be traced into the hinterlands of Europe, Africa and North America. Operations by merchants and companies organized from cities in the Dutch Republic were shaped by the networked structure of the Atlantic world as a whole.[27] In the triangular model, Paramaribo sits at the American end where enslaved Africans were disembarked and tropical produce loaded on Europe-bound ships. A networked conception of Paramaribo's place in the Atlantic world does not replace the triangular

considerable economic activity on all three sides of the triangle, not in the least in Europe. Matthias van Rossum and Karwan Fatah-Black, "Wat is winst? De economische impact van de Nederlandse trans-Atlantische slavenhandel," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 9, no. 1 (2012): 3–29.

[25] David Held, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 418–421.

[26] Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: a Short History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 9.

[27] Gert Oostindie and Jessica Vance Roitman, "Repositioning the Dutch in the Atlantic, 1680–1800," *Itinerario* 36, no. 2 (2012): 129–160, doi:10.1017/S0165115312000605.

model, but is a necessary way to decentre its history and highlights its autonomous development.

In contrast to the sceptical view on the importance of Atlantic interconnections it is increasingly being argued that the concept of Atlantic world is actually too limited as an analytic framework because it downplays a global sphere of interaction.[28] Commodities like rice, tobacco and tea, as well as textiles and silver were transported between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. Peter Coclanis argued that the concept of articulation of modes of production can be borrowed from Marxist historiography to discuss how different systems of production, trade and consumption were interrelated. For example, by connecting the rise of the second serfdom in Europe to the industrious revolution on the Caribbean plantations using enslaved labour.[29] When distinguishing hard from soft globalization, a debate can be had to what extent places such as eighteenth-century Suriname were integrated in a global system of cultural en economic exchange, but that it was interconnected is beyond doubt. Within this globally interconnected world, the Atlantic circuits take precedence, warranting the use of the concept of Atlantic world. Throughout the book this concept is used to refer to the web of economic, cultural and social interactions between societies on the four continents bordering the Atlantic Ocean. The apprehensions about the impact of the Atlantic circuits on the connected regions as well as the point about global interactions serve as a clear warning to take seriously both the local self-sufficiency of any of the Atlantic regions and sub-systems, or global connections that helped to shape its history.

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Suriname and the Atlantic World takes as its primary unit of analysis the shipping routes to and from Paramaribo between 1650 and 1800 to measure Suriname's economic integration in the Atlantic world. The data on shipping has been gathered from tax records, most of which have been digitised by Johannes Postma and are available through the website of the Data Archiving and Networked Services of the Royal Dutch Academy of Science (www.dans.knaw.nl). The ships and their cargo have been counted and I have turned these into data per year. The result of this counting can be found in the graphs (See pages 233 to 238). These figures provide clarity: for any given year one can see how many ships sailed in, how many enslaved

[28] Peter A. Coclanis, "Beyond Atlantic History," in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 337–356.

[29] Ibid.; Richard Drayton, "The Collaboration of Labour: Slaves, Empire, and Globalizations in the Atlantic World, c. 1600-1850," in *Globalization in World History*, ed. A.G. Hopkins (London: Pimlico, 2003), 98–114; C. A Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

Africans arrived, how long ships waited before they sailed out again, and how much cargo they loaded. What is not found in the appendix is the exact origin and destination of the ships. Such information can be found in tables throughout the text, but predominantly in the chapters that deal with the shifts in the network throughout the eighteenth century. To gain a sharper picture of what is going on in Paramaribo's Atlantic connection it has been necessary to look "below deck" at the shipping papers, letters, goods and people carried on board the many ships. Together the data of ship movements, cargo loads, letters and shipping papers form the basic fabric of this research.

Shipping routes are also at the centre of the triangular model of Atlantic trade, but that is a model that is not followed in the present study. As a level of analysis the triangle is well-known and illustrates an important circuit to which Paramaribo´s history is connected. That trade circuit, sometimes known as the South Atlantic System, created the early modern Atlantic world by tying together the regions bordering the Atlantic Ocean. On the first leg of the triangle textiles, arms, metals and alcohol were shipped from Europe to Africa where they were exchanged for enslaved Africans.[30] The second leg was the transport of Africans to the Americas. That voyage could increase the monetary value of enslaved Africans up to four times their price on the West African coast.[31] The third arm of the triangle was the shipment of plantation products to Europe. The triangular model highlights that at the core of the Atlantic integration were Africans who were transported for their labour to the plantation colonies in the Americas to produce the ingredients for the increasingly popular European breakfast.[32] But, as mentioned earlier, the triangular system does gloss over the many smaller circuits and connections that were part of the Atlantic world. To give just one of the many possible examples, the commodity chain connected to the making of a slave stretched far beyond the European and African corners of that triangle, and can be traced into European hinterland and the Indian Ocean.[33] The present study tries to go beyond the circuit of the "big wheel" that was determined by the Canary Current from Eurafrica to the Americas and from the Americas by the Gulf Stream to Europe, and

[30] Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade; a Census,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 3.

[31] Johannes Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) appendix 24 and 25.

[32] Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, 52.

[33] Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 87, 113–116; Postma, *The Dutch*, 103–105.

include the entire web of durable shipping connections to and from Paramaribo.

Shipping routes provide a tool to measure the extent of economic inter-city integration more carefully and note the shifts in Paramaribo's network of connected cities in a way that nationally oriented historians, or those primarily interested in the triangular trade, have been unable to do. Historically, cities have been shaped by their network of economic relations to other cities, rather than only the relation between a singular core and a periphery.[34] Ship movements are in the last instance the most concrete unit of analysis to measure the movement of goods and people. The interconnected economies foreshadowed modern globalization in which production processes of a single commodity can be stretched across continents. One glance at the many activities taking place in eighteenth-century Paramaribo reveals that the triangular model is able to explain only part of the activities taking place in the city, and that many of the circuits by which goods, people and ideas passed through its star shaped network of connections are missed.[35] Despite its immense explanatory power, the triangular model of the South Atlantic System leaves little room to explore the colonisation and exploitation process beyond the relationships of a colony to the metropolitan core. Instead Paramaribo´s shipping routes show the city to be the centre of a star-shaped network connecting multiple Atlantic regions.

[34] Taylor discusses the broad trends in urban network research from Braudel to the more recent emphasis on "spaces of flows" by Castells. Taylor, *World City Network*, 7–27, 55–70.

[35] Pieter Emmer integrated the development of Suriname into a larger comparative study of the Atlantic, using the divergence in Atlantic activities as a way to deepen the understanding of the differences between the British and Dutch economies as discussed above. P.C. Emmer, "The Dutch and the Atlantic Challenge," in *A Deus Ex Machina Revisited. Atlantic Colonial Trade and European Economic Development*, vol. 8, The Atlantic World. Europe, Africa and the Americas, 1500-1830 (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2006), 151–177; There were also other, more comparative questions, such as Wim Klooster's investigation of the Dutch Atlantic as one cultural-juridical space, making a survey of how the States General and WIC dealt with the problem of overseas metropolitan control. Wim Klooster, "Other Netherlands Beyond the Sea; Dutch America Between Metropolitan Control and Divergence, 1600-1795," in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (London New York: Routledge, 2002), 171–192; Some works have discussed Suriname and its connections beyond the ones to the Dutch republic. Most notably: Richard Pares, *Yankees and Creoles. The Trade Between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution* (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co, 1956); Postma, "Suriname and Its Atlantic Connections"; Claudia Schnurmann, "Atlantic Commerce and Nieuw Amsterdam/New York Merchants," in *Jacob Leisler's Atlantic World in the Later Seventeenth Century*, ed. Hermann Wellenreuther (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009).

This study seeks to demonstrate how Paramaribo's development was connected to the grander scheme of Atlantic developments, as well as the Dutch operations in the Atlantic. The five main connected regions of Paramaribo are the immediate hinterland, the Caribbean, North America, Africa and Europa. On a state level Paramaribo's shipping routes can be divided into roughly two types of connections: the direct connections to places under the sovereignty of the Dutch States General, and a wider network connecting the colony to non-Dutch regions.[36] Dutch Atlantic connections can be defined as ones where (cities, companies, admiralties, or provinces united under) the States General sanctioned the military protection of its furthest outlying points. Paramaribo's Dutch Atlantic connections were with the cities in the Dutch Republic, mainly Amsterdam, Middelburg, Rotterdam and Vlissingen, the African fortress Elmina, the Caribbean islands Curaçao, St. Eustatius, and the nearby colonies Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo. The Dutch Atlantic network also encompassed the connections where only one side was under the protection of the States General. For Suriname this was the regional network of connections in the Caribbean and North America with places such as Barbados, New York, Boston and Rhode Island. The Dutch connections and the wider network linked Suriname to these five broadly defined regions with Paramaribo as its nexus. The connections to these areas were the colony's lifelines.[37]

Departing from an Atlantic perspective this book shows how non-Dutch connections bundled in the city of Paramaribo were essential to the colonisation of Suriname. The economic function and the growth of port cities in American colonies has been determined by the role they played as centres of administration, the importation and distribution of enslaved Africans and consumer goods and the exportation of plantation crops and raw materials.[38] Not every Atlantic connection was of equal importance at any time. A substantial amount of Atlantic trade and production did not depend on trans-Atlantic connections and some hinterlands were relatively independent of their (Atlantic) hubs, bypassing them completely in these exchanges.[39] David Eltis pointed out that even in the Caribbean plantation colonies a great part of production was for reproducing the colony itself and

[36] Beyond those connections there were also Dutch Atlantic merchants and companies based in the Republic which catered to connections between places that were non-Dutch, but these are beyond the scope of this research.

[37] Postma, "Suriname and Its Atlantic Connections."

[38] Price, "Economic Function and Growth."

[39] B. W. Higman, "Jamaican Port Towns in the Early Nineteenth Century," in *Atlantic Port Cities. Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*, ed. Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 117–148.

was not exported.[40] Part of the cash crops regarded as export products would be consumed locally.[41] This separation of local production and consumption from the Atlantic trade system increased during the eighteenth century. This side of the colonial economy is often neglected, and the demand for goods in colonies may therefore be labelled the "great unexplored frontier" of port city research.[42]

There are further limits to the "Atlantic" integration that need to be taken into account. In some respects Suriname was really dependent on the Dutch Republic. Suriname relied on expensive military defences on the seaside and inland. The financing of this coercive apparatus greatly determined the relationship between plantation owners, the directors of the SC, the States General and the main belligerents of the colony, being primarily the Saamaca, Okanisi, and Boni Maroons and to a lesser extent the rival European states.[43] Suriname's importance to the Dutch Republic was considerable during the eighteenth century, as can be seen in the value of Surinamese products on the market of Amsterdam, as well as the share Suriname took in of the Dutch Atlantic slave trade (see Table 1). But while

[40] Eltis, "The Slave Economies of the Caribbean"; In a Caribbean plantation colony like Barbados less than half of the freemen were employed in the export sector (even if services facilitating the export trade are included). For slaves this was more, but out of the 313.000 slaves on the island still only less than two thirds, 199.205, worked for export production. Eltis, "The Total Product of Barbados, 1664-1701."

[41] Sugar consumption on Barbados in 1740 21 per cent, in 1760 it was a staggering 30 per cent. John J. McCusker, *Rum and the American Revolution. The Rum Trade and the Balance of Payments of the Thirteen Continental Colonies*, vol. 1 (New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1989), 215.

[42] Linda K. Salvucci, "Supply, Demand, and the Making of a Market: Philadelphia and Havana at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century," in *Atlantic Port Cities. Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*, ed. Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 40–47.

[43] The European attacks on the colony were minor. Their destructive force, frequency and threat was dwarfed by that of the Maroons. Also the defence works against European assaults (primarily the fort Zeelandia, and later the fort Nieuw Amsterdam together with the smaller outposts near the rivermouth) were not as extensive as the inland system of the "cordon" border. Frank Dragtenstein, *"De ondraaglijke stoutheid der wegloopers": marronage en koloniaal beleid in Suriname, 1667-1768 / Frank Dragtenstein* (Utrecht, 2002); H. Thoden van Velzen and Wim Hoogbergen, *Een zwarte vrijstaat in Suriname: de Okaanse samenleving in de achttiende eeuw* (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2011); Stedman, *Narrative*; For detailed maps of the defences see: Karwan Fatah-Black, "Suriname, 1650-1816 / Surinam, 1650-1816," in *Grote Atlas van de West-Indische Compagnie / Comprehensive Atlas of the Dutch West India Company*, ed. P.C. Emmer and H.J. den Heijer (Asia Maior, 2012); Detailed descriptions of the fortifications, including the inland forts Sommelsdijck and Para can be found in Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770.

Suriname became the single most important destination in the Dutch slave trade, its tropical products competed heavily with imports from other Dutch colonies as well as sugar imported from a range of European ports (see Table 2). Amsterdam, Paramaribo's most important connected city, did not solely rely on the triangular system and production in Dutch colonies to acquire tropical produce. The Dutch trade in Atlantic commodities tied Amsterdam to a host of other ports and regions. These connections impacted the market price of goods shipped from Paramaribo. Table 2 gives figures for the sugar imports into the Dutch Republic. Sugar was one of the key export crops of Suriname, but the price and demand of the product in the Netherlands were directly formed in relation with a host of other places, many of these similar plantation colonies in the Caribbean, formally under the sovereignty of other empires, but others even in Asia. During the second half of the eighteenth century Surinamese sugar was produced in competition with the rise of the EDB-colonies (Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice), and enormous imports through European ports, mainly in France.

Table 1 The Dutch Guianas and Dutch Caribbean islands as a share of the Dutch slave trade

	Dutch Caribbean	Dutch Guianas
1651-1675	44.4 per cent	10.2 per cent
1676-1700	60.6	33.3
1701-1725	47.0	38.7
1726-1750	14.0	85.3
1751-1775	12.8	85.9
1776-1800	11.2	80.6

Source: TASTD 12-Nov-2012

Table 2 Sources of sugar on the Dutch market in pounds, 1753-1790

	1753	1775	1780	1790
	Sugar	Sugar	Sugar	Sugar
Suriname	11,461,600	17,782,696	8,296,816	20,429,640
EDB	unknown	2,350,000	4,350,000	4,501,200
St. Eustatius	unknown	4,802,400	30,433,600	unknown
Curaçao	unknown	400,000	400,000	unknown
East Indies	997,877	340,657	422,648	369,976
Europe	21,831,000	34,400,000	256,000	38,730,340

Source: Van der Voort, *Westindische Plantages*, 260-263. The data for Suriname is from the PSDC. Sugars imported from tropical destinations through European ports outside the Dutch Republic. The European ports are primarily French.

* * *

The Atlanticist literature regards Dutch expansion in the Atlantic as a commercial affair rather than a territorial one, and the import figures for sugar cited above justify that approach. In the historiography the emphasis has understandably been on the Republic's role in trade rather than in production.[44] Historically, however, there has always been an understanding by the Dutch that they needed territories in tropical regions to further their trade and not solely rely on shipping, and the decision to develop Suriname after the loss of Brazil is testimony to this. Furthermore, their reputation as middlemen might be overstated. This book will show that despite their reputation as middlemen, the Dutch were not able to organise competitive shipping on the regional circuits connected to Paramaribo. Instead, and again contrary to their middlemen reputation, they were interested in conquering, occupying and maintaining territories on the Guiana Coast and in developing plantation production.

The Dutch were not a singular exception in the Atlantic world. Other Atlantic powers also used both strategies of trading and territorial expansion when developing their Atlantic reach. Taken together, there appears to have been a European-Atlantic dynamism first towards integration followed by a disintegration of the Atlantic world. This trajectory has been summed up by Bernard Bailyn in a threefold periodization of marchland, production, and

[44] See for example Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, World Economic History (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 176–193.

independence.[45] The term marchland was used by Bailyn to describe the period of barbarous invasion, conquest, and reconquest. It was a time of brutal occupations in which lands, territories and colonies changed hands between the different European states or individual cities and companies until the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1713). The following phase was characterised by growing production in the Atlantic colonies, and the rapid expansion of the plantation system. This production phase lasted roughly until 1776, when, following the struggle for independence of the North American states and the Haitian Revolution, the relation between the metropolis and the colonies changed drastically. The Age of Revolution heralded the terminal phase for the Atlantic world as an integrated whole. The end of the slave trade disconnected the entire African continent, and the remaining connections between the continents became parallel and separated along national borders, more than they had been.[46]

For the Dutch case the trajectory is seen to have been very similar. When the Dutch Republic was formed and rose to prominence during the struggle for independence against the Habsburgs (1568-1648), the Dutch States General executed plans to hinder the Atlantic power of its adversary and even to take over part of Iberian overseas domains. Dutch trade along the entire European coast had grown so substantially that it could now venture into the Atlantic.[47] Jan de Vries distinguished four different phases of Dutch economic activities in the Atlantic (of which three are situated in the early modern period).[48] Before the founding of the WIC the Dutch trade in the Atlantic was driven by small private shipping companies. During the first Dutch Atlantic economy (1621-1654) the WIC conquered north-east Brazil and several Portuguese trading posts in West Africa as part of a grand design. The loss of Brazil also meant the abandonment of this grand plan, and instead they turned to shipping and supplying the other colonial powers in what De Vries sees as the second Dutch Atlantic economy (1654-1713). A blow to the 'middleman' position came with the loss of the Spanish *asiento*, the large contracts for the trading of enslaved Africans between the Spanish King and Dutch traders. The third Dutch Atlantic economy (1713-1776) – which lasted until the American War for Independence and the closely related Fourth Anglo-Dutch War – was the period in which the Dutch

[45] Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 62–111.

[46] Ibid., 108–110; The problem of deciding when this integrated Atlantic world ended is treated more extensively in Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*.

[47] Henk den Heijer, *De geschiedenis van de WIC* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2002), 13–20.

[48] Jan de Vries, "The Dutch Atlantic Economies," in *The Atlantic Economy During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*, ed. Peter A. Coclanis (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 1–29.

strongly developed their own plantations in the Guiana region. According to De Vries the fourth phase started at the end of the eighteenth century and lasts until today, consisting of a shift from trade and shipping to finance.

Suriname diverges slightly from the periodization of Jan de Vries, as has been observed for the entire Dutch Atlantic.[49] I argue that the conquest of Suriname (1667) not long after the loss of Brazil (1654) indicates that the attempts to make territorial advances show the continuity between the first, second and third period. While the assault on Iberian-Atlantic power was initially successful, the loss of Brazil (1654) forced the Dutch to tone down their plans; expanding their Atlantic reach in a less confrontational manner. The revival of the idea to create colonies in the Guianas – an area largely untouched by the Iberians – was one of the results.[50] Already in the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667) efforts were made to capture and set up plantation colonies, with the capture of Suriname being the greatest territorial gain of the Dutch in the Atlantic. This makes the years between the beginning of that war and the end of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713 an overlap of the two strategies. On the one hand the Dutch were middlemen, with the *asiento* trade from Curaçao, while they simultaneously captured and investing in plantation colonies.

When looking at the grand sweep of Suriname's history, the period between 1650 and 1800 built upon a previous phase in which traders from Europe were working on the Guiana Coast, sometimes founding a trading post or temporary trading stations. The transition into an Atlantic world came when sugar production was introduced and made successful along the Suriname River by colonists from English Barbados. They founded a colony there after 1651 and their colonisation efforts determined Suriname's strong connection to Barbados, as well as its integration into Jewish Atlantic networks. By this time the network of shipping started to have a more direct connection to production. Key people in Suriname were overseeing slave-based plantation production, settlement, state formation, shipping and trade. A striking case is that of Samuel Cohen Nassy, who owned plantations, settled Jodensavanne, was jurator and whose ships sailed between Amsterdam, West Africa, Paramaribo and the North American coast to provide the colony with enslaved Africans and provisions. His ships crossed several imperial borders, but stayed neatly within the city-network that would determine much of the colony's future. Inter-colonial exchange was at the heart of the colonial project on the Wild Coast. And so wood from

[49] Oostindie and Roitman, "Repositioning the Dutch."

[50] The argument that the Dutch need colonies in warm climates to compensate for the loss of Brazil is explicitely made in: Otto Keye, *Het waere onderscheyt tusschen koude en warme landen* ('s Gravenhage: Henricus Hondius, 1659).

Suriname was brought to Barbados, and horses from New York found their way to Suriname. Interimperial connection did not only provide a source for goods, but also a way to acquire experienced colonists. Refugees from failed or failing projects provided the basis of health and experience needed to survive in the deadly disease environment of the humid tropics. The scattered survivors of failed colonies were highly sought after by the expanding French, Dutch and English, and also shared mutual contacts that could help supply one colony with what was lacking in another.

The tension in the Dutch colonisation between mercantilist control and Atlantic cross-imperial connections of Paramaribo's economic function came to light as a process of permanent transcending of "artificial imperial geographies."[51] The city of Paramaribo was a nodal point in a city network. Merchant activities are traditionally understood as the central actors creating inter-city connections. Given the specificity of the Surinamese plantation system, this understanding of connections does not hold. Most plantation products were *shipped* without an active role for merchants connecting production in the colony to markets in the Dutch Republic. Only small amounts of plantation products were actually *traded* between Paramaribo and cities in the Dutch Republic. Merchants did play a role in the other circuits; this study used shipping routes as a basic unit of analysis that encompasses not only Paramaribo's merchant network, but also the control over the freight route to and from the Dutch Republic. The shipping routes provide an important lead to study not only the economic arrangements but also the development of institutions and especially the attempts to either include or exclude actors from the city network that helped to shape the city.[52]

* * *

The field of Atlantic history provides the opportunity to overcome national perspectives on history. Both in Suriname and in the Netherlands historians cling to national interpretations of history, and that has created distorted understandings of the past. There are of course Dutch historians who have studied colonial projects overseas, but they often limited their scope to a Dutch empire.[53] In Suriname the situation has not been much better. Historians working in Suriname have only slowly adopted an autonomous

[51] Oostindie and Roitman, "Repositioning the Dutch."

[52] Price, "Economic Function and Growth."

[53] There are countless examples, but a recent one would be the special issue of the Low Countries Historical Review dedicated to the application of New Imperial History to the case of the Dutch Empire. Remco Raben, "A New Dutch Imperial History?: Perambulations in a Prospective Field," *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 128, no. 1 (March 19, 2013): 5–30.

position in historical research. To this day knowledge production on the former colony takes place primarily in the Netherlands. This book is an attempt to take a different approach. Inspired by the notion that nation states are of fairly recent vintage, and that human societies through the ages have always been interconnected through migration, trade and war, the history of Suriname deserves to be treated in its global context.

Nineteenth century Dutch historians – inspired by the Abolitionist movement and the rise of national and empire-centred research – chose to emphasise the importance of the Dutch and their state in shaping every aspect of Suriname's history. Once an Atlantic perspective is taken, it becomes obvious how single-mindedly historians have understood Suriname's history as an appendix of Dutch national history. Through their publications Postma, Zemon Davis, Mann and Carney (all four neither Dutch nor Surinamese) have recently emphasised the place of Suriname within the Atlantic world, and their approach highlights the alternatives on offer to the Dutch-Surinamese debate.[54] By treating issues that concern the entirety of the Atlantic world, Suriname is given a place within a context that is less plagued by national or ethnocentric narratives on either side of the ocean.

The Dutch perspective on the colonisation of Suriname turned around completely between the seventeenth century and the late eighteenth century. Initially the Dutch were overly optimistic. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century this optimism had given way to a very pessimistic view of the opportunities provided by the colony. Both these views seem to have been exaggerated. Seventeenth-century proponents of Dutch colonisation in the Guianas – some without any personal experience in the tropics – highlighted the boons of warm climates, as opposed to colonisation of colder areas of the Americas.[55] The actual colonisation of the Guianas was more difficult than many were first led to believe. George Warren had experienced life in Suriname first hand during English rule and wrote that "the delights of Warm Countries are mingled with sharp Sawces [sic]."[56] In the last quarter

[54] Postma, "Suriname and Its Atlantic Connections"; Natalie Zemon Davis, "Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a Global World," *History and Theory* 50, no. 2 (2011): 188–202, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2011.00576.x; Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* (New York: Knopf, 2011); J. Carney, "Rice and Memory in the Age of Enslavement: Atlantic Passages to Suriname," *Slavery & Abolition* 26, no. 3 (2005): 325–348; Judith Ann Carney and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa's Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World* (University of California Press, 2011).

[55] G. van Alphen, *Jan Reeps en zijn onbekende kolonisatiepoging in Zuid-Amerika, 1692* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1960); Otto Keye, *Beschryvinge van het heerlijcke ende gezegende landt Guajana, waer inne gelegen is de seer voorname lantstreke genaemt Serrenamme* ('s Gravenhage: Henricus Hondius boekverkooper in de Hofstraet, 1667).

[56] Warren, *An Impartial Description*, 1.

of the eighteenth century the Dutch were trying to come to terms with the long drawn-out decline of their republic after the so-called Gilded Age had ended. The pessimism was echoed in their assessments of Suriname, especially after the stock market crash in 1773 which exposed the inability of the plantation owners in Suriname to repay their debts.[57]

In the late seventeenth and much of the eighteenth century, colonial authors were optimistic about the possibilities in the colony. Many of them were French, German or English, and described Suriname's colonial production and local government, as well as the wondrous facts about the flora, fauna and ethnography of this faraway place. At the time the colony was far from only a Dutch concern. Many books were written either in German, French or English, and most of those written in Dutch were translated into those languages, and vice versa. In the two centuries of writing on the colony that preceded the shift to an empire-centred view; the Europeans who played a central part in the colonisation of Suriname left their mark in libraries and book collections.[58] The contrast with the books

[57] Nassy et al., *Essai historique*.

[58] In the period between 1683 and 1795 most books that gave detailed descriptions of different aspects of the colony were either written in, or translated to, languages other than Dutch. Adriaan van Berkel, *Amerikaansche voyagien, behelzende een reis na Rio de Berbice, gelegen op het vaste land van Guiana aande wilde-kust van America, mitsgaders een andere na de colonie van Suriname, gelegen in het noorder deel van het gemelde landschap Guiana : ondermengd met alle de byzonderheden noopende de zeden, gewoonten en levenswijs der inboorlingen, boom- en aardgewassen, waaren en koopmanschappen, en andere aanmerkelijke zaaken* (Amsterdam: Johan ten Hoorn, 1695) was translated to German in 1789. Philip Fermin was German-born of French origin, the book was originally French, and translated to German, English and Dutch. Philipe Fermin, *Nieuwe algemeene beschryving van de colonie van Suriname* (Harlingen, 1770); He later also published Philippe Fermin, *Tableau historique et politique de l'état ancien et actuel de la Colonie de Surinam et des causes de sa décadense* (Maestricht: Chez Jean-Edme Dufour of Philippe, 1778); was published in German that same year, and in Dutch in 1794. The physician discussed the Dutch Guianas since they were the only ones accessible to him. Despite the title he also included a discussion of plantations and political history. Edward Bancroft, *An Essay on the Natural History of Guiana in South America Containing a Description of Many Curious Productions in the Animal and Vegetable Systems of That Country: Together with an Account of the Religion, Manners, and Customs of Several Tribes of Its Indian Inhabitants : Interspersed with a Variety of Literary and Medical Observations* (London: Printed for T. Becket and P.A. DeHondt, 1769); Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770 was published in German in 1784. Johann Friedrich Ludwig, *Neueste Nachrichten von Surinam. Als Handbuch für Reisende und Beytrag zur Länderkunde herausgegeben*, ed. Philipp Friedrich Binder (Jena: in der akademischen Buchhandlung, 1789) Ludwig was a German physician who lived in the colony for twenty years. His book was never translated to Dutch. Stedman, *Narrative* was translated into many languages including Dutch, French, Italian and Swedish. The book written by David Nassy traces the origin and contribution of the Jewish community of the colony, and comments on the way to continue

written on the colony during the rule of the Suriname Company (1683-1795) and the nineteenth century is striking. The empire-centred approach to Suriname's history can be traced to the nineteenth century and the transformation of the Dutch Republic into a unified nation state, first under King Louis Napoleon. The interest in the question of abolition in the late 1840s (and connected to this, the concerns about the question of the christening of black inhabitants of the colony) was shaped by the increasingly national-oriented societies in the Dutch Republic who chose to emphasise their Dutchness.[59] The abolitionists linked the image of decline and corruption to the use of enslaved labour and absenteeism, suggesting that the combination of unfree labour and irresponsible owners were to blame for the bad state of the colony. The abolitionists framed Suriname as a Dutch responsibility which deserved compassion.[60] They also framed their cause as Dutch, and emphasised their Dutchness to forgo association with the more radical British abolitionists.[61] These two sides of their strategy inadvertently contributed to making the history of Suriname appear to be more exclusively Dutch than it had been in the eighteenth century. Suriname's past of connections to the entire Atlantic world beyond the Dutch Republic faded into the background. The main work on Suriname from this period is Julius Wolbers' *Geschiedenis van Suriname*.[62] Wolbers'

Suriname successfully. Nassy was the foremost intellectual of the colony in the eighteenth century. Nassy et al., *Essai historique*; After the SC had been dissolved, non-Dutch publication continued: Christlieb Quandt, *Nachricht von Suriname und seinen Einwohnern sonderlich den Arawacken, Warauen und Karaiben, von den nüzlichsten Gewächsen und Thieren des Landes, den Geschäften der dortigen Missionarien der Brüderunität und der Sprache der Arawacken* (Goerlitz: J.G. Burghart, 1807); J. D. Kunitz, *Surinam und seine Bewohner oder, Nachrichten über die geographischen, physischen, statistischen, moralischen und politischen Verhältnisse dieser Insel während eines zwanzigjährigen Aufenthalts daselbst* (Beyer und Maring, 1805); P Benoit, *Voyage à Surinam description des possessions néerlandaises dans la Guyane* (Bruxelles: Société des beaux-arts (De Wasme et Laurent), 1839); The three eighteenth century descriptions of the colony which remained untranslated were: Herlein, *Beschryvinge*; The earliest book by a born Surinamese: Pistorius, *Korte en zakelijke beschrijvinge*; Anthony Blom, *Verhandeling van den landbouw in de Colonie Suriname* (Amsterdam, 1787) also remained untranslated in the eighteenth century.

[59] Maartje Janse, *De afschaffers: publieke opinie, organisatie en politiek in Nederland 1840-1880* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2007), 295.

[60] Julien Wolbers, *Geschiedenis van Suriname* (Amsterdam: Emmering, 1970); Julien Wolbers, *De slavernij in Suriname of dezelfde gruwelen der slavernij, die in de "Negerhut" geschetst zijn, bestaan ook in onze West-Indische koloniën!* (Amsterdam: H. de Hoogh, 1853), http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/wolb002slav01_01/.

[61] Janse, *De afschaffers*, 295.

[62] The book did not get an international readership. It is mainly concerned with the formal political changes in the colony, the governing of the colony, questions of credit and

stated motivation for his work was to popularize the history of Suriname, in order to raise interest for the suffering slaves. He also stressed that the Netherlands owned Suriname, which morally obligated the Dutch to be aware of their plight. Looking back at this body of work since the eighteenth century one can see first, a substantial increase in the number of publications and second, a shift towards Dutch publications from the 1840s onwards. In the eighteenth century English, French and German physicians took a considerable share of the publications, translations and reprints, making the colony a topic for a European wide public.

After the British interregnum that lasted until 1815, books on the colony were written more and more in Dutch, by Dutch authors conceptualising the colony as a Dutch responsibility. The academic literature on Suriname that followed also focused on the colony's relationship with the Dutch Republic and local dynamics of slave-based plantation production, rather than integrating the multiple Atlantic circuits and connections into the development of the colony.[63] After the large Surinamese migration to the Netherlands in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the focus remained primarily on the direct relations between Suriname and the Netherlands. The incorporation on the multiple circuits that were connected to Suriname will result in a more complete history of the colonisation process.

This book was not only written to decentre the history of an episode of early modern global history, but should also be seen against the backdrop of an on-going Dutch-Surinamese debate on the decolonization of historical knowledge.[64] A recurring issue for Atlantic historians in general has been to

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production, and for the late eighteenth century the ascendency of civil societies. Wolbers, *Geschiedenis van Suriname*.

[63] The colony is treated as a world in itself, or as a Dutch province overseas. Suriname's history mostly saw different foreign academic approaches being applied to it. Post World War II this can be summed up as frontier, dependency, Caribbean, post-colonial and now Atlantic. The historiography on Suriname has historically been very open to international academic trends. History writing on Suriname's early-modern period has not engendered new academic schools or approaches; the exception to that rule is the study of Maroon societies. R.A.J. van Lier, *Frontier Society: a Social Analysis of the History of Surinam* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971); was originally published in 1949, and served as a standard text-book up until the publication of various plantation centered monographs, most notably Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast*.

[64] Gert Oostindie, "De onvoltooide dekolonisatie en de geschiedschrijving van Suriname," *Leidschrift* 6 (1990): 5–26; Sandew Hira, "An Alternative Framework for the Study of Slavery and the Colonial Society in Suriname," ed. Stephen Small and J. Marten W. Schalkwijk, *New Perspectives on Slavery and Colonialism in the Caribbean* (2012): 246–261; Armand Zunder, *Herstelbetalingen : de "Wiedergutmachung" voor de schade die Suriname en haar bevolking hebben geleden onder het Nederlands kolonialisme* (Den Haag: Amrit, 2010); Maurits S.

write the histories of an integrated world while the institutional and archival context they work in is based on that of the former Atlantic empires.[65] This is especially pertinent in a *cis*-Atlantic account of Paramaribo's Atlantic connections based on Dutch and British colonial primary source material. The mainstay of the debate on decolonisation of history starts explicitly from the present-day legacy of slavery and centres on demands put forward by claimants of the (moral) debt owed to those who were wronged by transatlantic enslavement. It has on occasion been argued that the legacy of slavery, colonialism and decolonization has resulted in an epistemological rift between "colonial" and "black" discourses.[66]

Because the recognition and reparations are thought to be owed by present-day nation states, the attention has focussed explicitly on historical lineage from present-day actors back into the past.[67] This has resulted in two basic claims about the direction historical research should take. One is the claim that African slavery was not an incidental aspect of the Atlantic world but a foundational element, and that the Atlantic world shaped European state formation with the Peace of Westphalia as a key moment.[68] The second has been that historians should amend past injustices by "breaking silences" or give a voice to those who lack one in historical accounts, museums and the like.[69] What is troubeling about both claims is that those actors who are not recognised as having left obvious present-day heirs are excluded from the historical interest. The Dutch book on *herstelbetalingen* (reparations) is a good case in point.[70] In its historical account, which centres on the Dutch state, it fails to include thousands of slaves transported by the Dutch into the Spanish territories, or the enslaved Africans who produced sugar shipped to the Netherlands from other destinations (see Table 2), to name but a few omissions caused by the teleological account keeping. On the Surinamese side of the history the thousands of enslaved Africans forced to Suriname by the North Americans and British captains in the 1790s have also gone missing in the account. In the debate on Dutch slavery and the

Hassankhan, "Historiography in Suriname: a Difficult Path to Decolonization" (presented at the Symposium Geschiedschrijving Suriname, Paramaribo, 2012).

[65] Oostindie and Roitman, "Repositioning the Dutch."

[66] See for example Hira, "An Alternative Framework for the Study of Slavery and the Colonial Society in Suriname."

[67] Zunder, *Herstelbetalingen*.

[68] Kwame Nimako and Glenn Willemsen, *The Dutch Atlantic: Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation* (London; New York: Pluto Press, 2011).

[69] Alex van Stipriaan et al., *Op zoek naar de stilte: sporen van het slavernijverleden in Nederland* (KITLV Uitgeverij, 2007).

[70] Zunder, *Herstelbetalingen*.

decolonisation of historical knowledge the heavy handed emphasis on epistemological differences has become a fig leaf argument to avoid heuristic challenges and empirical research.[71] A basic tenant of colonial thought – that the Dutch were the begin all and end all of Surinamese history – has largely been left untouched.

To approach histories from an Atlantic perspective has proven to be a way to overcome the national biases that have crept into many historical narratives since the nineteenth century. Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* deconstructs various forms of "ethnic absolutism" and emphasises that the Atlantic history of enslavement has left a cultural legacy that was a hybrid of both African and European origin.[72] On an economic level, that same dynamic applies. Rather than a European expansion into the Americas, the ventures in the Atlantic created a world that was neither European, African nor American. The emergence of the field of Atlantic history has provided a framework to reconstruct this Atlantic world by reintegrating the multiple Atlantic connections that existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century into one narrative. An Atlantic approach does not gloss over the fact that the main connections of a colony were with its 'motherland', but includes the entire transnational system of connected ports and hinterlands in this history.[73]

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The three parts of this book seek to integrate the development of Suriname back into the Atlantic context that shaped it in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The highly developed historiographies on Suriname's economic history in the era of slavery, and the maturity of the discussions on the Atlantic world and globalization are the basis for research into the Atlantic connections beyond the common nationally oriented approach in the historiography on Suriname's early modern period. The historiography of globalization – of which the history of Atlantic integration is an integral part – shifts its focus to the multiple origins of globalization. The experiment carried out here is to assess the multiple origins of Atlantic integration for

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[71] Gert Oostindie, "History Brought Home: Postcolonial Migrations and the Dutch Rediscovery of Slavery," in *Migration, Trade, and Slavery in an Expanding World: Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 305–328.

[72] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2002), 2–4.

[73] The edited volume Atlantic Port Cities is entirely dedicated to studying these ports and the relation to their respective American hinterlands. Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Bailyn tried to explain the massive German migration to the Americas from socio-political tensions in the German hinterland. Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 36–37.

the development of Suriname. Every chapter deals with the balance between metropolitan interests, local development and interaction with the rest of the Atlantic world.

Part one examines the initial colonisation and the transition to plantation production. The chronologically ordered chapters deal with the foundation of the colonial project in Suriname. Firstly, the way in which the colonising efforts have been embedded in pre-existing regional connections of exchange and migration. Secondly, how the mercantilist vision of the directors of the Suriname Company clashed with the local dynamics of setting up plantation production based on enslaved labour.

The second part of the book deals with three specific circuits of connections: First the migration of Europeans and secondly that of locally consumed provision and a third chapter on the slave trade. The chapters lay bare a pattern of interconnections that stretch deep into the Atlantic hinterlands and cross imperial boundaries and the nodal functions of Paramaribo.

Part three describes the collapse of the Dutch power in the Atlantic and the economic shift towards the British and North American cities on the Atlantic Coast. After the independence of the Thirteen Colonies in North America and the defeat of the Dutch navy in the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-1784), the Atlantic connections changed drastically. But far from collapsing, Suriname remained a productive colony, and Paramaribo did not wither away. Rather, its non-Dutch connections became more pronounced than they had been as economic power shifted towards North America. The chapter in this part emphasizes the impact of the rise of North American Atlantic and global reach on Suriname and Paramaribo. Lastly the conclusion presents an overview of the findings and reflects upon the development of Paramaribo's city network and the Atlantic world.