



# FRONTIERS OF HUMANITY AND BEYOND

TOWARDS NEW CRITICAL  
UNDERSTANDINGS OF BORDERS

## P15 - IBERIAN FRONTIERS IN COLONIAL AMAZONIA: CIRCULATIONS, CONNECTIONS AND CONFLICTS

### ORGANISER

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### ABSTRACT

Throughout the colonial period, Iberian frontiers in South America were poorly explored and largely undetected. Official delimitations and demarcations had been attempted during the second half of the 18th century, but litigations over frontiers were to linger long after the independence of the former colonies. For centuries, thus, these borderland regions were little-known both to the Portuguese and the Spanish crowns and to their representatives at the colonial capitals. This peripheral situation was especially severe in the Amazonian frontiers, and their remoteness has led to mistaken assumptions of perennial isolation. However, research conducted in the last decades has demonstrated connections between such regions to the colonial cores and the existence of multiple patterns of sociability; including religious missions, villages, military quarters, free native societies and maroon communities. All of these social unities interacted at each side of the imperial frontiers, but also across the theoretical political borders. Therefore, Amazonian frontiers are seen today as spaces of transnational interactions and interethnic dialogues, where cultural mediators played a central role in the management of social relations. The circulation of peoples and products, the competition for natural resources and the defense of imperial aspirations are also themes of the newest studies of these frontiers. This panel aims to discuss these multiple dimensions of the Iberian frontiers in Colonial Amazonia by exploring issues such as trade, race, ethnohistory, demography, pandemics and missions.

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