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# Boundaries, peoples and the cultural landscape on the upper Amazon

ANNEMARIE SEILER-BALDINGER

## 1 The boundaries on the upper Amazon and their history

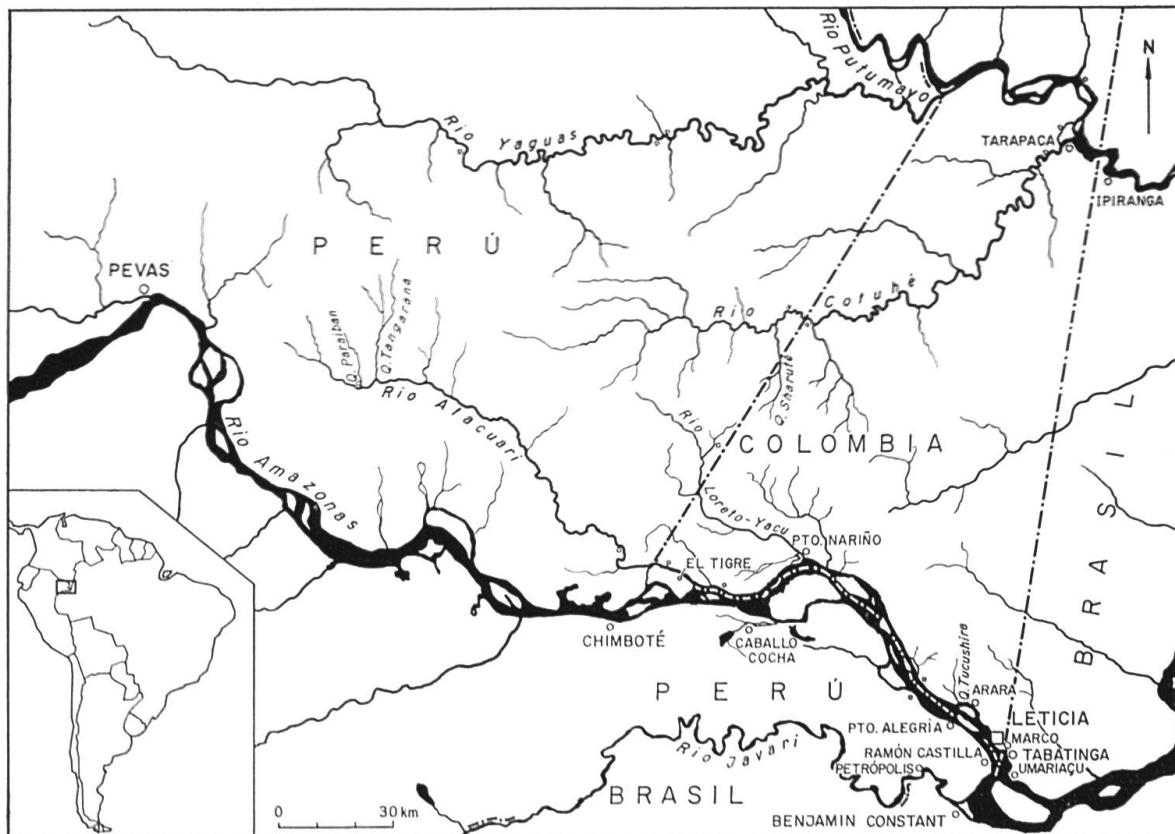
A glance at the boundaries in northwestern South America attracts one's attention to their somewhat peculiar course, especially to Colombia's narrow corridor to the Amazon, the so called «trapecio». The border between Peru and Colombia follows the Putumayo river in the west, until its confluence with the Rio Yaguas. From there it runs in a straight line southwest to the Atacuari river, continuing down to its mouth and is then formed by the thalweg of the Amazon. Where the latter receives the waters of the Rio Yavari, 3 borders meet in the «estrecho de Tabatinga» (a narrows in the Amazon, about 2 kms wide), the Yavari being the frontier between Brazil and Peru. From there the boundary between Colombia and Brazil is formed by another geodesical line, leading NNE back to the Rio Putumayo which it crosses just below the Colombian settlement of Tarapacá. Both the «artificial» and the «natural» boundaries of the «trapecio» have been the subject of political dispute. The geodesical lines are problematic because there is no way of recognizing them in the dense tropical forest, which covers the whole area, and the natural boundaries, the waterways, gradually change their beds by sedimentation and erosion, which may even wash away landmarks. Every new island emerging in the Amazon or in the Yavari leads to disputes about its association <sup>1</sup>.

In order to understand the actual situation in the border area we have to take a brief look at it's origins. As early as the 17th century the two Iberian powers began to struggle for sovereignty over the upper Amazon. Portugals «bandeirantes», looking for Indian slaves and an access to the mineral wealth of the Andes (mainly Potosí) found no hindrance on their way to the west. But the Spanish Jesuits, who had established «reducciones» all along this part of the river, were completely cut off from their centers of administration and supplies by the Andes and the rugged Montaña. These topographical facts set a pattern for the integration of the Amazon basin by the different nations which still can be felt today, despite modern means of transportation. In the treaty of San Ildefonso (1. X. 1777) Portugal's claim over this vast region was confirmed by establishing the Yavari – Amazonas – Japura as the border between the two colonies and sending out a demarcation commission (*Ferreira Reis* 1959: 48 ff.).

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Fig. 1 Map of the upper Amazon region



After the independence of the Andean states and the failure of Bolívar's Gran Colombia (1830) the boundary disputes reached a new climax. Since the former *Gobernación y Comandancia General de Maynas*<sup>2</sup> had been shifted back and forth between the viceroalties of Peru and Nueva Granada in the 18th century, each of the new nations claimed rights over the territory<sup>3</sup>. In 1851 Peru and Brazil agreed to accept the geodesical line from the fortress of Tabatinga (Brazil) to the Rio Apaporis as their new boundary, against which Colombia protested with a delay of 2 years after the fact (*Saboya de Medeiros* 1938: 51 ff.)<sup>4</sup>. Some 20 years later the demand for rubber on the US and European market triggered the rubber boom (1880–1914), which intensified the struggle between Peruvians and Colombians in the Putumayo border region and led to the annihilation and deportation of thousands of Indians by the Casa Arana or Peruvian Amazon Company<sup>5</sup>.

After the price collapse for raw rubber on the world market, Colombia and Peru settled their border dispute in the treaty of 1922 (*Tratado Lozano-Salomon*), which established the actual boundaries and granted Colombia's access to the Amazon through the «trapezio»<sup>6</sup>. The small Peruvian custom settlement of Leticia (which at that time had about 100 inhabitants) became thus Colombian, a fact which is still resented by many Peruvians. The treaty highly upset the Loretanos (inhabitants of the Departamento de Loreto, Peru), who had always felt abandoned and betrayed by their government in Lima. After the fall of

president Leguia they took revenge and invaded Leticia in the first night of September 1932. This attack started a one year war over the Trapecio known as *the* «conflicto». In 1935 a peace treaty was signed reconfirming the borders of 1922. Thus the boundaries in this region are quite young and, therefore, not as well established as one would expect by European standards.

Another factor contributing to an «unstable equilibrium» is the increase of geopolitical interests over the last 10 years<sup>7</sup>, mainly triggered by Brazil's huge efforts to integrate and occupy its Amazonian territory<sup>8</sup>. Brazil's attempt to establishing self-sustaining settlements in the border area has been quite successful. The militaries at Tabatinga-Marco (the only military colony on the upper Amazon) offer tempting facilities for soldiers who are willing to settle the frontier. They get a house, land titles and financial support, are freed from taxes and can stay for 30 years (personal communication by the commander of the «Comando de fronteira de Solimões», Comandante Borba, August 1981). The army provides them with the necessary infrastructure, such as cheap transport, good schools, health service etc.

In this way Brazil manages to assure sovereignty over the supposed natural resources for future use and at the same time demonstrates its alertness and presence. This strategy shows a big impact on its Colombian and Peruvian neighbours, who view the Brazilians with awe and envy and openly complain about the neglect by their own governments. Although Peru reacted almost immediately to the Brazilian challenge, using the same policy (i.e. road construction, colonisation program), it first had to concentrate on the most vulnerable border zones, like the «Selva Central». Since Belaúnde, who initiated this strategy (1963–1969) is now back in power (1980), the concept of the «fronteras vivas» (living borders) is again very fashionable (cf. Morey 1980). Ordeloreto (Organismo Regional de Desarrollo de Loreto), created under military rule in 1977, has therefore turned its attention to the development of the northeastern border region, where it has been very active since spring 1981.

A serious hindrance for Peru in carrying out its policy in the tripoint area is of topographical nature. Since the Peruvian shore of the Amazon consists of very low, even swampy ground («bajéal»), it makes the establishment of border settlements extremely difficult.

Ramon Castilla, which was supposed to compensate for the loss of Leticia, had to be moved so many times because of flooding (*Faura Gaig* 1964: 91 f.), that Peru is now giving it up. It will be incorporated in the police station of Puerto Alegría a little further upstream, which does not offer a much better alternative<sup>9</sup>. Because of the unfavorable natural conditions, the Peruvians confine themselves to suspiciously control the waterways<sup>10</sup> and otherwise to strengthen the position of Caballo Cocha the nearest bigger settlement, about 90 km by air from the tripoint (since 1979 «Capital de Provincia»).

After its nationalistic enthusiasm over the conflict with Peru had worn off, Colombia lost interest in the «trapecio». The growing interest of her two mighty neighbours in the area has recently been the cause of some concern. As a result the military authorities made an attempt to coordinate the efforts of

the army, the navy and the air force under one united command in 1980 (Comando Unificado del Sur = CUS), with its headquarters in Leticia. In all three countries the omnipresence of the armed forces is evident and the geopolitical importance of the region is almost daily demonstrated.

## 2 Population and boundaries

### 21 The Indian Population

For thousands of years not only the shores and islands of the main river but also the hinterland have been inhabited by Indians (*Roosevelt* 1980: 9 ff.). Archaeological data show that the tripoint region was continuously settled from the beginning of the Christian era (*Bolian* 1972: 2 ff., 1975: 255 ff.) up to the first expedition down the Amazon by Orellana in 1542 (Carvajal's account in *Medina* 1934). Today the former riverside agriculturalists, the Omagua and Cocama, have disappeared (due to the Portuguese slave raids and the diseases introduced by Europeans) or melted into the mestizo-population. In the meantime, their place has been taken by tribes originally living in the hinterland, e. g. in this region mainly by Ticuna (Tikuna)-Indians and some other smaller groups of Yaguas and Witotos. Due to the increase in attention to the area and the governmental development and colonization programs there is a lot of pressure on the indigenous population. The situation of the 15 000 Ticunas in the tripoint is the most prominent one, due to their distribution over the three countries (approximately 5000 in Peru, 2000 in Colombia and 8000 in Brazil<sup>9</sup>, *A. Seiler-Baldinger* 1979: 70). The Ticunas used to move freely across the borders in search of cultivable land and good fishing and hunting grounds<sup>11</sup>. Not only do the different governments try to restrict their mobility for various reasons (loss of labour, integration policy, border security), but they are forced to settle down in order to obtain land titles of what little is left over of their territory. This also means that they have to decide immediately whether to become Colombians, Brazilians or Peruvians, if they want to get some land rights. Thus the Ticunas who despite their affiliation to different clans consider themselves to be one people will gradually grow apart and develop dissimilar attitudes and behavioural patterns<sup>12</sup>. In Brazil, where the majority of the Ticunas is located along the Amazon (Solimões) and its small tributaries (Igarapés), only those living on the reservation of Umariçu<sup>13</sup> (about 10 km from Tabatinga) are protected from squatters, not so much by the Indian Agency FUNAI, but rather by their own organisation. Contrary to the Ticunas living on the Colombian side (Los Lagos, Arára, Kilometro 6, Tacána), they are proud and self assured, open and friendly, but firm while dealing with «colonos» and whites, whereas the former seem extremely self-conscious, shy and suspicious. This reflects somewhat the attitude of the two countries towards their indigenous population. Despite the controversy over FUNAI's policy<sup>14</sup>, there is no doubt that, within South-America, Brazil has shown more concern for its Indian

groups than any other country. Although in 1976 official and semi-official institutions (INCORA et al 1976: 10; Proradam 1979: XIII, 424, 440) recommended that the Colombian government should take immediate steps to transfer 8000 ha to the 300 Indians (mostly Ticunas and a few Witoto refugees from the time of the rubber boom) living in the neighbourhood of Leticia with its rapidly growing «colono» population, so far no land titles have been granted to them. In Peru the situation of the Indians is only slightly better. Due to the social policy of the former military regime (Decreto ley No 22 175 of May 9th, 1978) 2791 Ticuna and 520 Yagua got land titles for 16 000 ha and 3500 ha respectively <sup>15</sup>. It is very questionable though whether the new government under Belaúnde will continue to allot already demarcated land to the rest of the indigenous population. There are alarming signs that the law will not be implemented any more <sup>16</sup>. For the Indians rights to their land has become a matter of survival. They are less and less willing to endure oppression by squatters and extractive enterprises (lumber, fishing, industries) who take advantage of the governments mute consent or incapability to cope with the land problem.

## 22 The pioneer front

The vast majority of the border population belongs to the «colono»<sup>17</sup> pioneer front, mainly mestizos of different origins and nationalities, but also physically «pure» Indians, who consider themselves as «rationales» or «cristianos» (rational and christian as opposed to Indian) <sup>18</sup>. A few years ago the average population density in the tripoint region was below 1 person per km<sup>2</sup> (Proradam 1979: 21). This has changed drastically in the last two years. The reason for the population growth by immigration lies in the special attraction of Leticia not merely as the only urban center in the area, but also as a trading center for cocaine. This development has been especially favoured by the virtually uncontrollable nature of the border district. Leticia is not only a lure to the poor Colombian peasants from the interior <sup>19</sup> but also and in larger measure to the rural population of the neighbouring countries. About half of the city's inhabitants are Brazilians, the rest is made up of Colombians and Peruvians. What one could call the «brazilianisation» of Leticia is reinforced by the Brazilians' easy access to the region (by way of the Amazon) and the governmental encouragement in settling the frontier, and above all by unemployment in their own country. The Brazilian border town Marco has become a suburb of the booming Colombian city, to which the people of Marco commute. The advantages are obvious: the cost of living and housing is lowest in Brazil, the infrastructure of Marco-Tabatinga is excellent by comparison to Colombia and Peru (functioning power plant, efficient supply of goods for daily usage, enough schools, cheap travel and transportation facilities). On the other hand there is a lot of capital turnover in Leticia, where the Colombians are either involved in drug dealing, commerce or administration <sup>20</sup>, thus having need of menial labour – a gap filled by the commuters. In addition to and as a result of these circumstances the Colombian

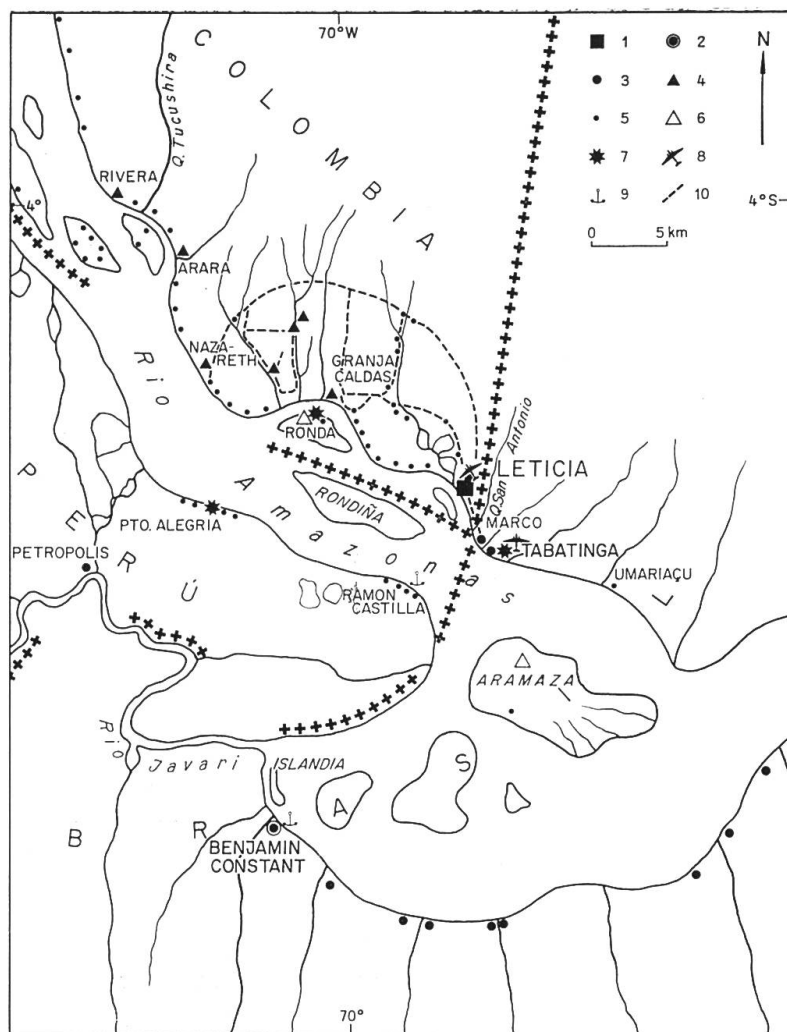


Fig. 2  
Colombia's Amazon  
«trapecio»

- 1 Capital of the Comisaria Especial del Amazonas
- 2 Corregimiento
- 3 Village
- 4 Hacienda
- 5 Small farm
- 6 School
- 7 Military Post
- 8 Aerial base
- 9 Naval base
- 10 Footpath

peso has become the strongest currency in the region. No wonder Colombian officials fear that if there were selfdetermination in Leticia, the city would become Brazilian (*Londoño* 1975: 82, *Mejia Guiterrez* 1979: 133).

Leticia's Peruvian population has been fluctuating in the past (*Alvar* 1977: 385 f). According to the possibilities of employment offered by the extractive enterprises with their seat in Iquitos (the biggest town on the upper Amazon), the Loretanos move back and forth between the two urban centers. Due to the retrograde petroleum exploitation in northern Loreto many unemployed Peruvians seek labour in Leticia as cab drivers and mechanics. They too fill a gap, since the Colombian businessmen and «dealers» promoted themselves from canoes with small outboard motors or «pequi-pequi» (*Brix and Stratton*) to speedboats propelled by 200–400 hps. They can also afford private waterplanes and cars (imported from the free port of Manaus, Brazil), although there are no roads for the latter (the «carretera internacional»<sup>21</sup> from Leticia to Tabatinga is only 6 km long and the road, which one day in a remote future should connect Leticia with Tarapacá is only practicable in the dry season for a few kilometers)<sup>22</sup>.

The special situation of Leticia as a pivot for trade and smuggling (drugs, skins, gasoline and ammunition from Peru; electronic equipment, cars, motorcycles and any kind of food from Brazil; jewelry, textiles, cigarettes and lumber from Colombia) is responsible for the concentration and the afflux of the rural population in the border area. Although more people can make easy money than ever before<sup>23</sup> the quick gain is outbalanced by soaring prices for consumer goods and basic needs (due to inflation, high transportation costs). Food is so scarce and so expensive that the people at the bottom of the social ladder are forced to cultivate some land in order to keep their families alive. According to INCORA 79% of the colonos lead, by Colombian standards(!), a marginal or submarginal life (Proradam 1979: 426). So the «colonos» of the pioneer front are forced to compete with the indigenous population over the scarce cultivable land there is, which brings more tension and reinforces the well known vicious circle of more people sharing less land, of soil depletion through quicker field rotation, thus less food, less money, being poor, becoming poorer.

### 3 Boundaries and the cultural landscape

The natural landscape of Várzea – floodplain, Igapó-swamps and Terra firme – is divided by the boundary unequally between the 3 countries. Brazil, which occupies both sides of the Amazon possesses the biggest portion of the Várzea, followed by Peru and Colombia. Peru, on the other side «owns» a vast part of the Igapó, mainly the flooded flats between the Rio Yavari and the Amazon, which it shares with Brazil, whereas Colombia's foothold consists mostly of Terra firme.

The fertile alluvial soils of the Várzea are the most suitable for food production. Both, Peruvians and Brazilians use it to cultivate rice, and to a lesser extent chick-peas and peanuts, but only for local consumption, since here, about 3 500 km from the mouth of the Amazon, the width of the Várzea does not surpass 20 km. The Igapó-flood-forest is mostly used as a forest reserve (reserva forestal) for lumbering and rubber extraction (*Hevea brasiliensis*, *H. guaianensis*).

Peru maintains a big sawmill in Petropolis on the left bank of the Rio Yavari and so does Brazil on the other side of the river in Benjamin Constant. Both sawmills also process hardwood from their Terra firme hinterland, but also from Colombian territory, since Colombia has no wood-processing industry at its disposal. A big portion of the «trapecio» has therefore been declared as «parque nacional» for the preservation of the Amazonian ecosystem (Parque Amacayacu, 170 000 ha). The rest of the Terra firme with its very poor, acid soils (Proradam 1979: 114 f.) is more and more used for cattle raising. The clearings stretch from the North bank of the Amazon inland or flank the road under construction<sup>22</sup>.

In all three countries the biggest contrast exists between the use of the land made by the indigenous population and the pioneer front. Over centuries the former had established a *modus vivendi* with the natural habitat, which allowed them to live off it without destroying it. This meant that relatively few people (e.g. 20 000 persons) had a huge area (e.g. 50 000–80 000 km<sup>2</sup>) at their disposal. They just cleared as much forest as was necessary for survival (not living badly at all, but with plenty of food), cultivating various crops for an average lapse of about four years, then leaving the garden to fallow for 50 years or more <sup>24</sup>.

This practice cannot be maintained any more, because of the population pressure mentioned above and also because of the extractive economy of the pioneer front which abolishes vast parts of the forest (lumbering, cattle raising).

The use made of the land is not only determined by geographical factors, but also very much by the cultural background of the population and the mental attitude of the different governments in developing their Amazonian territory. For the native communities the forest is not a threat which has to be dominated. Treated with due respect it represents a generous source which provides them with food, material for housing and clothing, crafts and art.

The pioneer front in general has a very different attitude towards an environment still foreign to it. Its most significant trait is the need felt to exploit the environment to its maximum for personal profit, to abuse rather than to use the resources. For centuries this tendency has been reinforced by governmental policy, which considered Amazonia an empty space, just good enough for supporting an extractive economy, to enrich a few and for serving as a guinea pig for experimentation with nature and humans in order to release some pressure from overpopulated areas. Needless to say that Indians, if they could not be used as cheap labour, just stood in the way of «progress» and had either to be annihilated or integrated <sup>25</sup>. While the general attitude towards use and development described above is commonly shared by all three countries in the tripoint region, there are striking differences which are of significant geopolitical importance. Whereas the concept of the «*fronteras vivas*» (see p. 279) is a rather recent element in the policy of the Spanish speaking countries, it has always been applied by colonial Portugal and later Brazil, thus reflecting the divergence between the *uti possidetis de facto* (*integrar para não entregar*) and the Spanish interpretation of the *uti possideti de jure* (possessions legally designated had not to be occupied).

The Brazilians cherish Amazonia so obviously as part of their country, that the soldiers, from the humblest infantry man to the commander of Tabatinga (who is from Rio de Janeiro), do not consider their service at the border as a banishment, as do the Colombians. In countries where the occupation of the frontier is a military task, perceptions of this kind can be decisive for successful settlement. It is significant that the Brazilian border population never expresses any bitterness about their government, whereas the Colombians – citizens, colonos and military – constantly complain about the virtual neglect by their very centralistic government with its andean mentality <sup>26</sup>. Peru's position is midway between the Brazilian and the Colombian antipodes. Like the inhabitants of the

«trapecio» the Loretanos always felt abandoned by Lima <sup>27</sup>. There have even been several separatist movements since 1896 which have alarmed the central government. In the past 10 years the Peruvian government has made an effort to improve this situation by giving more autonomy to Loreto (see ORDELORETO 1980: 12 f., 72 f.) and offering additional facilities (exemption from taxes, zona franca de Iquitos, state subsidies for basic goods, cheap transportation by FAP-waterplanes). The long indifference of the state helped to provide the Loretanos with a feeling of solidarity, which is also expressed in their language (called «charrapa» = «river turtle» dialect). Unlike the Colombians in the «trapecio», who only immigrated after 1935, the Peruvians share with the Brazilians a long history of close contact with the Amazonian environment which extends over many generations giving them a cultural base for adapting to it. The fact that the Peruvian «riberños» plant rice as soon as a new island emerges in the Amazon, whereas the Colombian «colonos» arrive with cattle (which unfortunately graze on the Peruvian rice, thus increasing international tension over the island's association <sup>1</sup>, illustrates both the difference in adaption and in cultural attitudes. The «vaquero» mentality is so deeply rooted in rural Colombia that only «colonos» with cattle get credit from the Caja Agraria (bank). Therefore the CUS (see p.280) which tries to convince the Ticunas from Arara to move to the end of the road under construction (carretera Leticia-Tarapacá) as vanguard settlers, has to provide the Indians with cattle (although the Ticunas dislike and do not know how to manage them) in order to get the necessary financial support (personal communication from the brigadier general *Alfonso Amaya Maldonado*, August 1981).

Despite the similarities between Peru and Brazil in making use of their Amazonian territory, there is a striking entente cordiale between Brazil and Colombia (expressed by common people as well as officials), whereas there seems to be a distance between both peoples and the Peruvians. Or to put it in Comandante Borba's (Comando de Fronteira do Solimões) words: «siempre hay el rio entre nosotros» (there is always the river between us, meaning between Peru on one side of the Amazon and Brazil/Colombia on the other). In this respect it is also interesting to note that the Colombians of the «trapecio» do welcome the «Pacto Amazonico» <sup>28</sup> (Amazon pact) promoted in 1978 by Brazil, from which they hope to profit because of their big neighbours' better infrastructure, whereas the Peruvians (and also the Venezuelans <sup>28</sup>) fear Brazil's hegemony and therefore are deeply suspicious of the treaty.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> This was the case of Isla Campiña, which was claimed by Peru and Colombia in 1945, or the splitting of the island of Petrópolis and Islandia, claimed by both Peru and Brazil in 1955 (Faura Gaig 1964: 89, 510 f.). The latest problem between Peru and Colombia is caused by the formation of the island Vámos in 1975; it has not been settled yet (personal communication by the Peruvian consul in Leticia, June 1981)

<sup>2</sup> It comprised the former Peruvian Departamento de Loreto and the adjacent Ecuadorian and Colombian territory

<sup>3</sup> The border clash between Peru and Ecuador in spring 1981 had its historical roots in the fact that the Audiencia de Quito was responsible for Maynas from 1717–1722 and again from 1739–1802, while being ruled by the Viceroyalty of New Granada (Eguiguren 1941: 61 ff., Alvarado 1961)

<sup>4</sup> The treaty also regulated the navigation on the Amazon and its tributaries and the trade between the two countries. For the original text see Larraburre i Correa 3, 1905: 100 ff.

<sup>5</sup> The literature on the rubber boom is impressive. There are good summaries in Furneaux (1969: 147 ff.), Bourne (1978: 29 f.) and Bonilla (1974). The most detailed information is provided by the minutes of the Putumayo process in London from 1913 (Report and Special report... on Putumayo)

<sup>6</sup> Colombia ceded the so called «triángulo de San Miguel o Sucumbios» to Peru, which simultaneously was claimed by Ecuador (Londoño Paredes 1975: 51). It was strongly supported by the US, who had just «freed» Panama from Colombia

<sup>7</sup> There is an extensive literature on the border conflicts, but the upturn of publications concerning this subject in the seventies clearly demonstrates the tendency (Araujo Arana 1972, Cajiao Candía 1970, Izquierdo 1976, Lescano 1965, Londoño Londoño 1977, 1978, Lodoño Paredes 1973, 1975, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Colombia 1978, Morey 1980, Ramos 1971, Rivière d'Arc 1980: 219 f., Salamanca 1978)

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of the various Brazilian development programs see Bourne 1978 and Mahar 1979

<sup>9</sup> The subject triggered some discussions in Peruvian newspapers, e. g. see the interview with the head of ORDELORETO: «El piloto de Ordelloreto» in *Proceso* (enero-febrero 1979: 9) and the article «Que triste! Desaparece Ramón Castilla» in the same magazine (p. 24 f.)

<sup>10</sup> Although theoretically there are no restrictions to navigation, one needs an authorization by the Peruvian consul in Leticia for travelling in Peruvian waters. Every vessel has to stop at the garrison of Chimbote overlooking the narrowest part of the Amazon on the Peruvian border with Colombia

<sup>11</sup> When Peru and Colombia signed the treaty of 1935 the free mobility of the population was granted in article 18 d

<sup>12</sup> As an Indian stated it: «Es malo que los indígenas estén esperecidos por diversos países, porque así pierden su propia cultura» (Alvar 1977: 238)

<sup>13</sup> In 1974 Cardoso de Oliveira counted 1117 inhabitants (1977: 148). Now there must be over 2000 Ticunas living on the reservation (June 1981)

<sup>14</sup> e. g. Ramos 1980: 223 ff., Moser 1979: 13 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Information kindly provided by A. Chirif from Dirección regional de agricultura y alimentación Ordelloreto, Iquitos, August 1981

<sup>16</sup> See article in *El Diáριο*: «Por presión de madereros paralizan titulación a comunidades nativas» (22. 8. 81: 7) and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*: «Auslandinvestitionen in Peru» (Nr. 227, 1. 10. 81: 23)

<sup>17</sup> Colombian term equivalent to the Brazilian «caboclo» or the Peruvian «ribereño»

<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately no statistical data are available as to the composition of the population, its demographic structure or even its size, since the results of the national censuses in this area are rated unreliable (personal communication by the head of the Comisaría Especial del Amazonas, C. Moreno, June 1981, Departamento Nacional de Planeación 1980: 30, Incora et al. 1976: 11). Peru is just carrying out a census in the border area (June–August 1981), Colombia's last census dates back to 1973

<sup>19</sup> According to the Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria (INCORA) 80% of the colonos are emigrants from andean minifundios (Proradam 1979: 375)

<sup>20</sup> 40% of the Leticianos (20 000–30 000 inhabitants) are occupied with commerce, 30% within the administration (Leticia is the capital of the Comisaria Especial), 20% with fishing and only 10% with agriculture (Proradam 1979: 378). From my knowledge of Leticia since 1973 and especially from my experiences in 1980 and 1981 I would say that 90% of the Leticianos are now involved in one way or the other in drug traffic

<sup>21</sup> The «carretera internacional» is not an extraterritorial road, since the border is clearly marked by a «hito» (landmark), but there are no customs and one can freely travel between the two towns. The Leticianos go there daily for shopping in the Brazilian «supermercados» which flank the road in Marco and there is no restriction to the amount of goods they bring back to Colombia. On the other hand it is interesting to note that the custom control within Colombia (i. e. leaving Leticia for Bogotá or vice versa) is extremely severe

<sup>22</sup> Colombia started its construction after the shock of the «conflicto» in 1933 in order to secure communication between the «trapecio» and the rest of the country. Due to lack of money and infrastructure they were working at km 23 in 1981!

<sup>23</sup> Even the Indians are profiting from the drug boom by serving as «mulas» (mules, i. e. carriers or go-betweens) payed cash in dollar bills

<sup>24</sup> Very much has been published on Indian land use and swidden cultivation. For further references see Centlivres et al. 1975, Barbira-Scazzocchio 1980, Roosevelt 1980

<sup>25</sup> To the aspect of integration see Davis 1977 for Brazil, Davies 1974 for Peru and Departamento de Planeación 1980 for Colombia

<sup>26</sup> Even Colombian officials are quite open about it as is shown by the following statements: «... sigue primando en nuestro país andino y montanés el criterio banal de que esas tierras tan lejanas no sirven para nada...» (Salamanca 1973: 7) or «... nuestra ausencia va adquiriendo proporciones verdaderamente alarmantes» (Salamanca 1978: 10)

<sup>27</sup> As expressed in a newspaper article by R. Rumrill: «Más de cien años de soledad» (Participación 5, Lima 1974)

<sup>28</sup> For a political analysis of the treaty see Medina (1980: 58 ff.); Rumrill (1981: 45 ff.) and Thery (1980: 216 f.)

#### DIFFÉRENCES ENTRE LES PAYSAGES HUMANISÉS DANS LA RÉGION DE L'AMAZONAS SUPÉRIEUR (BRÉSIL, COLOMBIE, PÉROU)

L'impact des divers systèmes administratifs et des projets de mise en valeur sur la population indienne installée dans la région depuis plusieurs siècles a été observé au cours d'une étude ethnologique sur le terrain. Parmi cette population, les quelque 15 000 Ticunas, qui vivent dans un territoire chevauchant les frontières séparant les trois Etats, sont particulièrement concernés.

Lors de la définition des frontières dans cette région que se disputaient, depuis le 17<sup>e</sup> siècle, les puissances ibériques et, plus tard, les nouveaux Etats indépendants, le Brésil fut le plus fort. Alors que l'Ecuador n'obtenait rien, la Colombie parvint, au prix de mille difficultés avec le Pérou, à s'assurer un étroit couloir (Trapezio) menant vers l'Amazonas. Ce déséquilibre des forces caractérise toujours la situation et définit essentiellement l'utilisation de l'espace vital. Malgré l'éloignement considérable du centre administratif du Brésil, la présence de ce pays se fait sentir jusque bien au-delà de ses frontières. Elle se manifeste non seulement par l'aménagement d'un réseau de communications (routes, liaison aérienne régulière Manaus–Tabatinga–Iquitos, navigation sur l'Amazonas), mais encore par une politique de peuplement et une politique agricole strictement organisées, que l'armée soutient et contrôle, et par l'intervention de la radio et de la télévision. La Colombie cherche à contrer cette pression par le développement de son administration centrale, sise à Leticia (quartier général, école supérieure, grand hôpital), mais elle a de la peine à motiver les Colombiens à s'établir dans le Trapezio, de sorte que paradoxalement, 50% des habitants de Leticia sont des «étrangers». En outre, la ville est approvisionnée presque entièrement par son arrière-pays brésiliano-péruvien.

Du côté péruvien, dans ce coin à l'extrémité du pays, la pression démographique des hautes terres ne se fait pas encore sentir. Le Pérou exploite les forêts et les terres labourables de cette région, en activant la culture du jute et du riz dans les dépressions de Varzea, et se borne à contrôler les voies navigables.

Les trois Etats ont cela en commun qu'ils restreignent, pour des raisons économiques, et de manière draconienne, la liberté de mouvement de la population indienne qu'ils veulent à tout prix intégrer.

#### GRENZEN, VÖLKER UND KULTURLANDSCHAFT AM OBEREN AMAZONAS

Aufgrund mehrerer ethnologischer Feldforschungen im Grenzgebiet Brasiliens, Kolumbiens und Perus konnte die Wirkung der verschiedenen Verwaltungssysteme und Erschliessungsprojekte auf die dort seit Jahrhunderten ansässige indianische Bevölkerung beobachtet werden. Besonders betroffen sind davon die rund 15 000 Ticuna, die grenzübergreifend in allen 3 Hoheitsgebieten siedeln.

Bei der Konsolidierung der Grenzen des seit dem 17. Jh. von den iberischen Mächten und später den neuen unabhängigen Staaten umstrittenen Gebietes zeigte sich das geeinte Brasilien sehr bald als seinen Nachbarn überlegen. Während Ecuador leer ausging, gelang es Kolumbien, sich unter grössten Schwierigkeiten mit Peru wenigstens einen schmalen Korridor (Trapezio) zum Amazonas zu sichern. Dieses ungleiche Kräfteverhältnis kennzeichnet auch heute noch die Situation und bestimmt wesentlich die Nutzung des Lebensraumes. Brasiliens Präsenz ist, trotz grosser Entfernung des Verwaltungszentrums, bis weit über seine Landesgrenzen spürbar. Sie manifestiert sich nicht nur im Aufbau des Verkehrsnetzes (Strassenbau, regelmässige Flugverbindung Manaus-Tabatinga-Iquitos, Amazonasschiffahrt), sondern auch in einer straff organisierten, von der Armee unterstützten und kontrollierten Besiedlungs- und Agrarpolitik und einem gezielten Einsatz der Medien Radio und Fernsehen. Kolumbien versucht zwar diesem Druck durch den Ausbau der Zentralverwaltung in Leticia entgegenzuwirken (Militärkommando, höhere Schule, grosses Spital), hat aber Mühe Kolumbianer zum Siedeln und Investieren im Trapecio zu bewegen, so dass paradoxerweise über 50% der Einwohner Leticias «Ausländer» sind. Die Stadt wird zudem fast völlig vom brasilianisch-peruanischen Hinterland versorgt.

Auf der peruanischen Seite ist vom Bevölkerungsdruck aus dem Hochland in diesem äussersten Winkel des Landes vorläufig noch wenig zu bemerken. Peru nutzt das Gebiet vor allem forst- und landwirtschaftlich, wobei in den Varzea-Niederungen der Jute- und Reisanbau intensiv vorangetrieben wird, und beschränkt sich im übrigen auf die misstrauische Kontrolle der Wasserwege.

Gemeinsam ist allen drei Ländern, dass sie die Freizügigkeit der indianischen Bevölkerung aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen drastisch einschränken und sie mit allen Mitteln national integrieren wollen.

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