
Doctoral Dissertation Research Proposal¹

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1. Introduction

Throughout the 18th century, the French colony of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti) on the western half of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola was one of Europe's most productive and profitable colonies (Tomich 2004). When, in 1804, the Haitian Revolution cut off France's access to this source of wealth and raw materials, the reverberations were felt across the western hemisphere. Besides disrupting French trade and creating an economic space for an ascendant British colonialism, the Revolution shifted the very ways that slavery and freedom were discussed in the Americas and Europe. At the time, much international attention to the Haitian Revolution focused on its causes and the dynamics which gave rise to the only successful slave revolt in modern history (Davis 2001). At the center of these discussions were speculations about the role played by maroons—formerly enslaved Africans who fled plantations in the Americas and reorganized in surrounding mountains and swamps. Some reports identified maroons in the northeast of the colony as the revolt’s primary organizers. Others saw the role of these groups as more ambiguous, warning instead about the subversive effects that armed maroons had on the imaginations of Africans still held in bondage. From any perspective, however, addressing problems of marronage and insurrection came to be seen as central to the maintenance of colonial authority across the region, and to the viability of colonial plantations. French, British, and Spanish colonists, it was felt, should heed the lessons learned in Haiti and steer their own territories in a more stable and profitable direction.

Much has been written about the impacts of the Haitian Revolution on other plantation societies (Geggus 2001; Dubois 2004) and on changing European ideas about freedom, slavery, and race (Buck-Morss 2009; Schuller 2001). Little, however, has been said about the place of maroons themselves in how the Revolution unfolded and why reports of marronage gained such traction and attention across the hemisphere in the 19th century. Given how central marronage was to discussions of and responses to the Haitian Revolution well into the 19th century, understanding the place of marronage in the Revolution—a pivotal moment in the historical geographies of colonialism—is key to understanding how ideas about race were transformed, and how strategies for controlling colonial territory took shape in the Americas and beyond. The project described here will analyze how ideas about marronage travelled in and across the French Caribbean and
how governance practices aimed at the destruction of marronage and the securing of territorial control changed around the turn of the nineteenth century. A critical study of the struggle between maroons and French colonialism can reframe debates about how place-specific ideas of race were produced through colonial practices and how forms of colonial governance took shape during this period. This study will address three sets of questions about the relationship between strategies of French colonial governance and resistance practices of maroons just after the Haitian Revolution through archival research in Aix-en-Provence, France, New Orleans, Louisiana and Guadeloupe:

1. How did colonial administrators and planters at the turn of the nineteenth century understand marronage across the French Caribbean? To what extent were maroons seen as an obstacle or impediment to plantation operations in different geographical locations? In what ways were maroons discussed in a language of race /ethnicity and how did colonial ideas about race and territorial sovereignty shift in response to the Haitian Revolution?

2. What specific institutional actions did the French take in response to the real or imagined threat of marronage after the Haitian Revolution? In what ways and to what extent were laws and military strategies changed after the defeat of French troops in Haiti? How were these changes implemented in geographically even or uneven ways across the French Caribbean?

3. How did maroons throughout the French Caribbean respond to these changes in governance practices? To what extent were they influenced by events surrounding the Haitian Revolution? How did practices of marronage vary spatially across the French Caribbean, before and after the Revolution?

Building on preliminary research in Summer 2012, this study will answer these questions through an archival analysis grounded in a theoretical framework of critical race theories, political geography, and Atlantic studies. Methodologically, it will hinge upon case studies of three key colonial sites in the French Caribbean: Guadeloupe, Louisiana, and French Guiana.
These sites were selected because each presented colonial authorities with different levels of economic development and different patterns of slave resistance. While plantation agriculture was fully developed on Guadeloupe by 1720 (Boucher 2011), it remained haphazard and sporadic in French Guiana throughout the 19th century (Kobben 1979). Similarly, long-term maroon settlements in Guadeloupe had been completely eliminated by 1820 (Debien 1966), but in French Guiana large swaths of territory were permanently ceded to maroon activity (Price 1972). Louisiana sat somewhere between these two sites; plantations there did not become economically viable until the 1760s (Ingersoll 1999) and intense maroon activity continued well into the 1850s (Hall 1992). These three case studies offer the opportunity to trace how impacts of the Haitian Revolution, especially responses to marronage, played out in place-specific ways across the French Caribbean and how knowledges of the subversive potential of maroons were taken up at different sites of colonial settlement. This study will investigate if and how different governance practices corresponded across the three sites and impacted broader processes of racialization and territorial control in the Americas and Europe. To address these questions, I will conduct 6 weeks of fieldwork in Louisiana and 4 weeks of field work in Guadeloupe. A final 3 weeks of fieldwork will be conducted in France to build upon 4 weeks of research carried out in Summer 2012. This archival work will be followed by 5 months of data analysis in Syracuse, NY. Archival research will focus on correspondence between colonial administrators and planters; court documents pertaining to fugitive slaves and maroons; and military reports and militia memoranda. The study will also examine oral histories of maroons, diaries of French colonists, travel narratives, and newspapers, though these items were less abundant in French colonial territories than in British colonies (Hall 1992). Most evidence obtained in this study will come from the Archives nationales d’outre-mer in Aix-en-Provence, France. Materials housed here cover the Caribbean, especially French Guiana and Guadeloupe. Because Louisiana was brought under Spanish control in 1763 and the U.S. in 1803 (Bond 2005), further research will be necessary at the Louisiana State Museum archives in New Orleans to find relevant documents from 1763 onward. An additional visit to the municipal archives in Guadeloupe will provide access to documents unavailable in the Archives nationales d’outre-mer.

Collectively, this archival research will focus on empirical evidence in the documents described above of French colonial struggles with local groups of maroons. Historical GIS techniques will
be utilized to map these site-specific struggles and evaluate how they were implicated in broader social processes of transformation in the Caribbean. Specifically, the study will seek evidence of how maroons were viewed by various French authorities in terms of race/ethnicity and how these understandings of maroons corresponded to or undermined wider debates about racial difference in the 19th century. The study will also seek evidence of how important the struggle against maroons was for early attempts to secure the economic and political stability of different colonized territories and populations in the Americas. This research, thus, views maroons not merely as relics of early colonialism in the Americas, as do most studies, but examines the extent to which the French struggle to defeat maroons shaped wider ideas about race and broader strategies for securing economic and political control over territories. This approach has the potential to advance theory and basic understanding of the ways that the French colonial struggle against marronage shaped historical geographies of the Caribbean and the Atlantic.

2. **Historical and geographical context**

From the earliest phases of European colonization in the Americas, marronage presented a challenge to the successful establishment of plantation production (Price 1996). Like the Portuguese and Dutch before them, the French were forced to deal with the flight of enslaved laborers from settlements and trading posts in which they were held in bondage. During early French attempts at colonization in places like St. Christopher (present-day St. Kitts), runaway laborers were often indentured Europeans, incarcerated convicts, or captured indigenous people (Sued-Badillo 2011). As the Atlantic slave trade intensified and the institution of chattel slavery developed, however, the labor force on Caribbean plantations became increasingly “Africanized.” Africans who resisted enslavement through flight were the first to whom the terms ‘maroon’ and ‘marronage,’ from the Spanish term *cimarrón* (escaped cattle), were applied (Parry and Sherlock 1988). French colonial authorities sought to control marronage not only because it increased labor costs but also because maroons were often involved in raiding the homes and farms of their former masters (Price 1996). They were also widely associated with inciting revolt within the ranks of “field” slaves and transmitting subversive messages between plantations (Franklin and Schweninger 1999).
The disciplinary and marshal regimes employed by French colonists to control or eliminate maroon communities were as diverse as they were brutal. They ranged from branding captured fugitives to “hamstringing” repeat offenders to organizing armed militias to destroy long-term encampments (Debien 1966). While historians have documented the historical variability of disciplinary practices aimed at marronage (Heuman 1986), they have largely failed to engage in research that identifies the Haitian Revolution as a pivotal moment for colonial French governance itself. Relatively little work, for example, has examined the place of maroons within the tectonic shifts that followed the insurrection in Haiti: the abolition and subsequent re-establishment of French slavery (Jennings 2000), major modifications to European codes of economic and judicial conduct (Kadish 2000), and the formation of new agreements about trade and territorial possessions among European powers (Garraway 2008). There have been references to a renewed French assault against maroons at the turn of the 19th century (Debien 1996) and mention that this effort led to an almost-complete elimination of maroon communities by the 1860s (Weik 1997). Research has not, however, investigated why different practices of dealing with maroons were adopted by French authorities across sites in the Caribbean or examined the role of shifts in governance strategies aimed at eradicating marronage for securing economic and political control over different territories. Equally important, no scholarship has investigated the extent to which French encounters with maroons mattered for wider European ideas about racial difference.

This neglect of maroons in studies of how the Haitian Revolution impacted French colonial governance practices in the Americas is surprising for two reasons. First, maroons played a key role in the string of smaller revolts which led up to the Revolution. Official accounts put the Revolution’s start in 1791, when an insurrection led by a formerly enslaved African named Bookman swept the northern half of the territory and precipitated a large-scale exodus of European planters (James 1963). Some scholars have pushed this time frame back, however, arguing that the 1791 insurrection was the culmination of 40 years of protracted revolt from maroons (Fouchard 1981; Carruthers 1985). Second, the neglect of maroons in discussions of the Haitian Revolution is surprising because the decrees and guidelines that sought to stabilize the institution of slavery often dealt specifically with maroons and prioritized stopping the flight of enslaved laborers. Debien (1966, 117), for example, observed that in the French Caribbean at the
turn of the 19th century, “particular attention was given to the surveillance of freed slaves […] offering refuge to the maroons and receiving the goods they had stolen; their cooperation with the fugitives was punished by stiff fines, by prison terms, and even by the revocation of their freedom.” Similar changes have been documented for other European colonies in the Caribbean (Nwankwo 2008), and some suggest that colonial responses to marronage were coordinated (Santiago-Valles 2005). Little, however, has been done to investigate the extent to which these geographically separate events were connected; nor have the historical implications for how sovereign control over territory in the region was secured been seriously interrogated.

The neglect of marronage in studies of the French Caribbean is at least partially attributable to the waning power of maroon communities after the turn of the 19th century. Writers have speculated that since maroons were largely defeated and erased from the colonial landscape, interest in them has remained minimal (Price 1996). This proposed research reorients analyses of marronage. Rather than seeing marronage as a vestige of early colonialism in the Americas, it considers if and how the French struggle to defeat maroons was key for subsequent development in the region. While the historical record indicates that there was a groundswell of military and judicial activity aimed at maroons after 1800, the results of this focus differed across the French empire, especially across the sites selected for this study. What is more, not only the results of efforts to eliminate marronage but also the goals of such efforts differed across the French Caribbean. In certain places, the success of plantation operations and the stability of political power were seen to depend on a complete eradication of maroons. In others, simply limiting the maroons’ movement and power was deemed sufficient. The proposed project traces how and why these differences in French colonial approaches to combating maroons existed across the French Caribbean and with what consequences for the region itself. It also investigates the extent to which these struggles mattered in broader strategies for securing political stability in the Caribbean and changing ideas about European superiority and racialized difference.
3. Situating marronage in the French Caribbean

To examine the relationship between marronage and French colonial governance, this research will draw on 3 literatures: (1) critical race theories, (2) political geographies of sovereignty and territory, and (3) Atlantic studies. These literatures guide my analysis of how the struggle between insurgent maroons and French colonialism shaped emerging discourses about European racial superiority and early attempts to secure the economic productivity of colonized territories – key processes in shaping uneven geographies of power and politics across the Americas.

3.1 Critical Race Theories

Race and ethnicity have long been objects of geographical enquiry. From Kant (1999) to the Chicago-School studies of urban sociology (Park et al. 1967) to critical legal studies (Crenshaw et al. 1995), racialized human difference has figured centrally in attempts to understand and explain the spatial organization of societies throughout the world. In recent decades, human geographers have pushed the boundaries of critical work on race by insisting on the importance of place and space to its social construction and workings (Bonnett 1996; Hoelscher 2003; Kobayashi and Peake 1994). Attention has focused on the “racialization” of space and the “spatialization” of race from a variety of perspectives (Delaney 2002; Jackson 1987). Of particular relevance for the proposed research is geographical work that builds upon the concept of ‘racial formations’ (Omi and Winant 1994) to understand how ideas about racialized difference were constructed and reified during particular historical periods and in particular places (Bonnett 1998; Kobayashi et al 2011). Geographers have developed this analytic framework through work on urbanism (Wilson 2007; Winders 2008; Holloway 2000), landscape (Schein 2006), and struggles for social justice (Gilmore 2002; Woods 2002). Although historical geographers have looked at how ideas about racial difference developed in plantation societies, particularly in the US South (Sumpter 2011; Darden 2011), geographers have largely overlooked French colonialism and slavery in the Caribbean. This omission is unfortunate because events in this region, such as the Haitian Revolution and colonial struggles against maroons, mattered profoundly for how race and political stability came to be understood in the Americas more widely (Jackson and Bacon 2010; Nesbitt 2008).
The proposed study will help remedy this oversight by investigating the extent to which French encounters with maroons in the Caribbean corresponded to or undermined 19th-century European debates about the racial inferiority of Africans. Some academic work on maroon communities has touched upon the subject of culture and identity (Carruthers 1985; Dayan 1995), but little attention has focused on the ways maroons were implicated specifically in the production of race. Such an inquiry challenges scholarship that positions the plantation as the primary site where ideas about race and human difference solidified in the Americas (Durant 1999). In contrast, my study investigates how maroons—populations that, by definition, existed beyond the plantation—figured in early racial formations of the Atlantic world. It investigates the extent to which French understandings of race responded to encounters with maroons and examines whether such ideas had a “return effect” on European discourses of racial difference and superiority, as suggested by Foucault (1978) and further theorized by Stoler (1995). It also investigates whether these ideas disrupted or complemented the knowledges and understandings produced within plantations’ territorial limits. Thus, my project redirects attention to the spaces of colonialism which are conventionally treated as marginal but were actually central to the workings of colonialism throughout the Americas. Analysis will draw on the critical theorizations of race and space outlined above and contribute to recent debates about the importance of encounters between Europeans and “liminal” figures in the landscapes of colonialism. Anderson (2007) argues, for example, that early struggles with Aboriginal Australians profoundly disrupted the way British thinkers understood racial difference. A close examination of maroons in the French Caribbean offers the opportunity to explore the extent to which similar processes might have been at work in European encounters with maroon populations in the Americas. It has been observed, for instance, that maroons in Haiti and French Guiana confounded colonial authorities, who had great difficulty in both identifying the ethnic/cultural alliances that held maroons together and devising effective military and governance strategies to control or demolish them (Mulroy 1993). Critical analysis of how these encounters came to matter for early European discourses on human difference will shed light on an ignored dimension of the production of race. Furthermore, a focus on the French Caribbean will add valuable knowledge to studies of race that have over-privileged Anglophone
historiographies through attention to places like Jamaica, Barbados, and the U.S. South (Rediker and Linebaugh 2000; Byrd 2008; Mancke and Shammas 2005).

3.2 Territory and Sovereignty

Analysis of the relationship between maroons and colonial governance also must account for the messy, complex struggles between European powers in the Atlantic world, and in the Caribbean especially (Palmié and Scarano 2011). To navigate this difficult history, my research draws on debates about sovereignty and territory within political geography. It begins with arguments developed in the early 1990s (Agnew 1994) that critiqued the way political scientists framed sovereignty and presumed a straight-forward connection between state power and territory. Political geographers subsequently argued that sovereignty cannot be understood as spatially inscribed within a given territory. Inspired by insights from poststructural theory, geographers built on this critique to reframe sovereign power as something that is historically produced and deeply cultural (Agnew 2007; Steinberg 2009), that involves “non-state actors,” and that is practiced through networks that often extend beyond territorial boundaries (Emel et al. 2011).

This project seeks to apply these insights to identify the implications of French struggles against marronage on broader shifts in governance strategies at the turn of 19th century. Specifically, it investigates the geographically uneven ways that sovereign colonial power was secured across the Caribbean in the wake of the Haitian Revolution and the extent to which French attempts to eradicate maroon communities were seen as necessary for making the colonies governable, politically stable, and economically profitable. Thus, my study views maroons as key actors with whom colonial authorities had to contend as they sought to define and establish sovereign power. The question of territory is key here because it was precisely through the utilization of difficult terrain that maroons undermined the stability and profitability of plantation production. Insofar as securing colonial power entailed the control of how the physical landscapes of colonies were used, marronage presented French authorities with explicitly territorial challenges. In places like Guadeloupe and French Guiana, colonial territory needed to be secured not just against maroons within the colony but also against other European forces that regularly invaded and blockaded rival colonies. Thus, my study draws on political geography to account for the interplay of
European colonial powers and maroon struggles against those powers in the construction of sovereignty across the region. At the same time, it intervenes in political-geographic work focused narrowly on continental European views of sovereignty and on nation-states as interacting from positions of equal power (Benton 2010; Anderson and Bort 1998; Ansell and Di Palma 2004). In contrast, this study questions how the establishment of sovereign power in the Caribbean was inextricably linked to histories of colonialism in complex ways. My research, thus, adds new insights into the applicability, or limitations, of current theorizations to colonial contexts.

3.3 The Atlantic World

To address notions of mobility, exchange, colonial power, and resistance that were central to the workings of marronage, this study draws on debates within the amorphous field of Atlantic studies. In the early 1990s, Paul Gilroy (1993) argued for a new approach to the historiographies of culture and politics between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Identifying a long legacy of Black Radical thought, he encouraged analyses which followed the movement of people and ideas across, between, and beyond the traditional confines of state-centered paradigms. Other scholars have since run with Gilroy’s call for non-nationalist approaches and used the Atlantic, as well as the Caribbean, to reframe the ways that social change, cultural exchange, and struggle are understood and analyzed (Thornton 1992). More recently, this approach has been adopted to re-evaluate exceptionalist narratives of U.S. cultural forms (Goetz 2009; Kaye 2009) and re-place analysis of the U.S. South within a wider-reaching Gulf South (Brown 2008).

That maroons have received little attention in Atlantic Studies is surprising, since their histories illustrate the importance of mobility and refuse nationalist framings. In this sense, my research adds new material to Atlantic Studies by positioning maroons as a major, though diverse, set of actors in the making of the Black Atlantic. My focus on the French Caribbean also helps to correct an over-privileging of Anglophone histories in this literature (Gates 2010). Finally, comparing three study sites allows me to explore the struggle between maroons and French colonialism as a set of processes in which geography mattered profoundly. Thus, my study adds
an important perspective to Atlantic cultural studies, which has remained largely aspatial and has used concepts like scale and network metaphorically but not materially.

4. Research design and methodology

This project will consist of archival research which builds on 4 weeks of fieldwork already conducted at the Archives nationales d’outre-mer in Aix-en-Provence, France in Summer 2012. The proposed study will involve 6 additional weeks of research in New Orleans at the Louisiana State Museum, 4 weeks of research at the Archives départementales de la Guadeloupe in Basse Terre, Guadeloupe, and a final 3-week return visit to the French colonial archives in Aix to gather the remaining maroon-related documents not obtained in Summer 2012. The study will examine how descriptions and understandings of maroons among French colonial authorities changed in the wake of the Haitian Revolution and, in turn, how new strategies for controlling or eradicating maroons were established across the French Caribbean. It will look specifically at how these changes played out across the colonial holdings of Louisiana, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana. While the Haitian Revolution was widely viewed as instructional for plantation societies in general, each of these sites presented colonial authorities with remarkably divergent geographies of control and resistance. My research seeks to explain how and why knowledges of the subversive potential of maroons meant different things at each of these sites of colonial governance. Viewed comparatively and relationally, the sites provide the means for investigating the geographical unevenness of responses to marronage. They also serve as anchors for studying the ways that ideas and people travelled across and simultaneously transformed the French Caribbean. Drawing on the analytical frameworks discussed above, my proposed research seeks to gather a range of archival data to address the complex question of how marronage was implicated in the geographical formations of race and sovereignty in the early-19th century. Below, I discuss my research design in greater detail.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How did colonial administrators and planters at the turn of the nineteenth century understand marronage across the French Caribbean? To what extent were maroons seen as an obstacle or impediment to plantation operations in different geographical
RQ1 seeks to understand how colonial authorities talked and thought about marronage after the Haitian Revolution. Government officials, military officers, and European planters dedicated significant amounts of time and energy to discussions of the problems that maroons posed for the successful operations of plantations (Price 1996). This focus has been documented for the French Caribbean (Debien 1996); but little attention has focused on the implications of European encounters with maroons for understandings of racialized difference, slavery, and freedom more broadly. Historical documents that show how French colonists talked about marronage in the Caribbean are held at the Archives nationales d’outre mer in Aix-en-Provence. In Summer 2012, I reviewed and digitally copied many documents pertaining to marronage in the French Caribbean generally and on Guadeloupe and French Guiana specifically. There remain, however, a number of valuable collections at this location that require further investigation. Historical documents concerning the Louisiana territories, especially those from after 1763, are held at the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans. The Archives départementales de la Guadeloupe in Basse Terre, Guadeloupe also contain a number of key documents – most notably, a collection titled, Le Cahier de marronage du Moule. These documents will provide crucial evidence of marronage in Guadeloupe that is unavailable in the Aix archives. In all 3 locations, I will search the archives, focusing on the period following the Revolution and the turn of the 19th century. I will look for evidence of attitudes and claims about race and ethnicity from official and personal correspondence between colonial officials and published accounts of European settlers and military personnel. I will pay close attention to similarities and divergences in dialogues among these colonial personnel, as they attempted to make sense of African resistance to European control. Also key to this research will be identifying the reasons these diverging opinions existed and the ways that events in Haiti changed how practices of marronage were discussed as something innate or natural for enslaved Africans. Exchanges between French colonial officials in particular will be analyzed in the context of broader debates about European superiority and race, such as those of Enlightenment philosophers discussed by Emmanuel Eze (1997), with which I have already familiarized myself. Of particular interest in this analysis will be the ways that French observations of African resistance informed and/or challenged emerging ideas about
European superiority in the early-19th century. From this perspective, my research investigates how maroons’ actions threatened to destabilize systems of thought that justified colonialism by positioning Africans as “naturally” exploitable. In other words, it explores whether, just as maroons posed an obstacle to the economic success of colonialism, they also posed a problem to the idea of racialized hierarchy of Europeans.

Much evidence of responses to marronage will come from documents that illustrate how individual maroons were viewed vis-à-vis their African origins and ethnic groupings and from documents that detail institutional and individual responses to the acts of maroons themselves. French colonists were keen to distinguish maroons from other enslaved Africans and to identify their proclivity to flight and resistance as something inborn or natural to some, but not all, Africans. Maroons were also often viewed in relation to insurgent indigenous populations with whom they sometimes formed alliances (Mulroy 1993; Sayers et al 2007). Many court proceedings, for example, document and invoke ethnicity and race to explain instances of marronage. This preoccupation with the ethnic and racial composition of maroons has been noted as especially prevalent in the French Caribbean (Hall 1992) but has not been analyzed in the context of the well-documented “hardening” of racialized identities toward the latter half of the 19th century (Gross 2008). Thus, in addition to investigating how encounters with maroons impacted continental European ideas about race, my research also considers how colonial attempts to understand and eliminate marronage may have figured into the formation of specifically American racial identities.

Archival work is not just a type of research method for retrieving historical data. It is an ongoing process that entails the researcher engaging with the ‘voices’ of the past (Harris 2001). The archives, however, do not function as a neutral medium for these voices, especially for a subaltern group like maroons. Rather, archives are constructed through modes of collection, codification, and cataloguing which are always political (Cresswell 2011). The practice of archival research, then, is necessarily part of a complex political process (Derrida 1996; Spivak 1988). The scholar in search of voices of the past must consider whose voices are captured in the archives, how they are mediated, and how they can be accessed (Flinn et al 2008). Stoler’s (2009) theorization of the archive as a register in which powerful ideas about race were not only
codified but also destabilized is particularly instructive for RQ1, situated as it is between the subversive potential of maroons and French attempts to secure control of their empire.

**Research Question 2 (RQ2):** *What specific institutional actions did the French take in response to the real or imagined threat of marronage after the Haitian Revolution? In what ways and to what extent were laws and military strategies changed after the defeat of French troops in Haiti? How were these changes implemented in geographically even or uneven ways across the French Caribbean?*

While RQ1 focused on how marronage was understood and talked about by French colonial authorities, RQ2 looks at the governance strategies established to deal with maroons after the Haitian Revolution. As discussed previously, scholars have documented an array of disciplinary and marshal regimes that prevented the flight of captive laborers and led to the extermination of many maroon communities from the colonial landscape. Little, however, has focused on how attempts to govern maroons fed into broader strategies for securing the economic and political stability of colonial territories and establishing sovereign colonial power. Evidence for how institutional responses to marronage were implemented and changed will be found primarily in the *Archives nationaux d’outre mer*. In this archive, I will continue to search for directives and decrees originating in Paris that specified how fugitive slaves and runaways were to be punished and how these directives were justified, subject to change, and unevenly implemented at the 3 sites considered in this study. Military and militia reports that pertain to the identification and destruction of maroon communities will also be valuable. Insofar as military excursions were organized under the rational that maroon extermination was necessary for profitable plantation economies, I will look for evidence of how successful different excursions were across the French Caribbean and how they were justified, executed, and resisted.

Findings from RQ2 will first be coded according to geographic location, with emphasis placed on Guadeloupe, Louisiana, and French Guiana. Documents pertaining to specific events and administrative decisions will be then organized according to date. In this way, my project will utilize historical GIS techniques to map (see below) and periodize French colonial attempts to eliminate or marginalize maroon communities. By comparing the unfolding of events across
study sites, it will investigate the extent of connections and coordination between French colonial authorities in disparate locations. This mapping and periodization will also allow me to determine whether identifiable spatial and temporal patterns existed in French institutional responses to marronage in the wake of the Haitian Revolution. Furthermore, it will provide evidence for whether the period from 1790 to 1850 really did see a tidal shift in colonial dealings with maroons, as some have suggested. Archival data will be supplemented by a survey of secondary sources pertaining to broader changes in French governance strategies that occurred during this period. The aim here will be to determine how the French struggle against marronage in Guadeloupe, Louisiana, and French Guiana fit into wider French efforts to stabilize political and economic control of the colonies.

**Research Question 3 (RQ3):** *How did maroons throughout the French Caribbean respond to these changes in governance practices? To what extent were they influenced by events surrounding the Haitian Revolution? How did practices of marronage spatially vary across the French Caribbean, before and after the Revolution?*

RQ3 investigates how practices of marronage changed in response to the governance practices of French colonialism (RQ2) and how the activities of maroons themselves were involved in wider processes of racial formation in the Caribbean (RQ1). Thus, it attempts to understand the ways in which maroons were active agents in transforming ideas about race and shaping strategies of territorial control in the French Caribbean. Historical evidence of what maroons actually did and said, however, is not readily accessible. Maroon communities, by definition, constitute an evasive object of enquiry (Fick 1990). Their presence in the archives, as in the plantation landscapes of the Americas, is elusive and shadowy. Court proceedings from French colonies rarely include the testimonies of captured maroons. Where they do appear, they must be read as texts which have been heavily mediated by other historical actors—in this case, French colonists—whose interests directly opposed those of maroons (Davis 1999). Robin Kelley’s (1996) approach to unearthing forms of African-American agency and resistance in the historical record is particularly instructive for the way that RQ3 attempts to access and prioritize the voice of maroons in the French Caribbean in an archive that did not actively include them.
With these considerations in mind, I will search for historical documents in France, Guadeloupe, and Louisiana that help reveal what maroons were doing at the turn of the 19th century and how French colonial authorities understood and responded to these actions. Court documents and military reports will be examined for information on where maroon communities were located and how they moved throughout colonial territories. Archival data will be supplemented with a review of historical maps of maroon settlements (Agorshah 1994) and the growing body of work in archeology that attempts to locate the physical existence of maroon settlements (Weik 1997; Orser and Funari 2001). Focusing on Guadeloupe, Louisiana, and French Guiana, this information will provide the foundation for my own mapping of maroon activity during and after the Haitian Revolution. For each of the 3 sites this study will triangulate among different source materials in order to locate, to the fullest extent possible, where major maroon settlements were established, determine how long different settlements persisted, and trace the ways that maroons themselves travelled across colonial landscapes and between colonial outposts in the French Caribbean. Thus my project contributes to the emerging field of historical GIS which has aimed at reconstructing past human geographies to better inform our understanding of how contemporary social processes developed in different places (Knowles and Hillier 2008; Gregory and Healey 2007). Additionally, colonial records will be searched for reports of losses which were attributed to maroon raids and assaults on plantations and trading posts. While comprehensive accounting of the economic impact of marronage is unrealistic, it should be possible to ascertain the relative extent to which maroons hindered plantation production and trading in each site. By compiling data on losses reported by planters to local government officials, a common practice throughout the French Caribbean (Hall 1992), my project will examine if and how the defeat of maroons corresponded with the success of French colonialism in the region.

5. Rigor and data analysis

The final project phase will consist of 5 months of data analysis in Syracuse. I will synthesize archival data from a range of sources, including personal and official correspondence between French colonial authorities, court and military records, newspapers, and oral histories, to construct a broad historical-geographic narrative of how French responses to maroon
communities changed in the wake of the Haitian Revolution and how this struggle shaped broader ideas of race and strategies of governance. I will focus on places in the archives where French colonial officials expressed anxiety about marronage in a language of racialized difference and seek to understand how and why institutional responses to maroons were geographically uneven across the Caribbean. Documents collected from the archives will be initially organized according to their correspondence with each research question. Documents pertaining to each study site will also be coded and mined for information related to specific events and administrative decisions involving maroons. These data will be ordered chronologically so that a periodization of French colonial dealings with marronage can be attempted. They will also be mapped so that the spatial relationship between French colonial administration and maroon activity in the French Caribbean can be evaluated visually. The mapping of maroon and colonial administrative activities will be conducted by triangulating between the various archival documents described above, available historical maps and secondary literature to ensure that the resulting maps are as comprehensive and accurate as possible. To prepare for this analysis, especially the reviewing of documents in colonial archives, I have completed two semesters of intensive language training in French and have already conducted 4 weeks of preliminary archival research in France. This fact, along with my extensive experience with GIS and my training in qualitative methods, makes me ideally qualified to conduct this study.

6. Contributions

This project examines how French colonial attempts to deal with maroons in the Caribbean changed in the wake of the Haitian Revolution. It investigates how French encounters with maroons transformed ideas about race and shaped the ways that control over colonial territories was secured and maintained. In doing so, the research will advance theory and basic understandings of how ideas of racial difference were produced and how forms of colonial governance and sovereignty took shape in the Americas. By utilizing a comparative framework across three study sites and attending to the spatial dynamics of place-specific struggles between colonial authorities and maroons, the study will allow for a fuller and more systematic analysis of transformation in the region than is generally found in cultural studies of the Atlantic. It will
also help correct a tendency in historical studies to overlook Francophone dimensions of the Atlantic world. Additionally, the study will help to deepen geographic engagements with race and sovereignty, which have largely neglected French colonialism and slavery in the Caribbean.

More broadly, this project will help to advance understandings of the lingering effects of marronage today. Histories of struggle between maroons and colonial authorities remain important in many places across the Caribbean (e.g. French Guiana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Brazil). The descendents of maroons still lay claim to a heritage of resistance to reframe ongoing struggles over cultural survival and political rights. In addition to sharing the maps produced using historical GIS techniques with scholars of marronage, local NGOs, and maroon communities, my research will contribute to a richer understanding of current attempts to rehabilitate maroon histories in an age of heritage tourism and resurgent national politics. Where histories are less evident and celebrated (e.g. Louisiana and Martinique), it can shed light on how and why these erasures have been produced and maintained.

References Cited:


