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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Undesirable Independence: People of Colour, Race War and Authoritarian Leadership in Ceará, Brazil, 1821–3

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Abstract

The independence of Brazil (1822) resulted in its separation from Portugal and its birth as an independent empire. It is important to understand the role of people of colour in this movement for independence. Focusing on Ceará, the main argument of this article is that people of colour, both free and enslaved, played an active and significant role in Brazilian independence, as they fought for freedom, for established rights, and for greater involvement in public affairs. They accomplished this amidst social upheaval, political instability and the rise of local authoritarian leadership resulting from the collapse of the old colonial order. As a study in subaltern agency, the contributions of this article go even further, as the consulted primary source material depicts the vital role of Ceará in the absorption of Brazil's northern regions into the new empire – an understudied topic in its own right.

Keywords: independence of Brazil; people of colour; empire of Brazil; slave conspiracy; race war; subaltern agency

Introduction

Almost nine months had passed since emperor Dom Pedro I had declared Brazil's independence from Portugal on 7 September 1822. Priest Vicente José Pereira was appalled by the increased acts of violence against Portuguese-born individuals in Fortaleza, capital of the province of Ceará, in the aftermath of the declaration. He was further preoccupied because those attacks were perpetrated by people whom he described as the 'rabble and scum from the *plebe* [masses]'. The priest asserted that 'scoundrels … cloaked in the guise of patriotism, have attacked, struck and robbed Europeans, and this patriotism has been refined and has now passed from [attacking] Europeans to [attacking] Brazilians'.[1] Showing his concerns, he stated that 'whoever is not African today is in danger'. He ended by cautioning

[1]At this time, 'European' meant someone from Portugal, while 'Brazilian' meant someone born in Brazil, regardless of class or ethnicity.

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the provincial government to act, and immediately, or else 'we shall suffer the repugnance of witnessing our homeland entirely ruined'.[2]

As the priest's words show, during the movement for independence some among the political elite were apprehensive over the prospect of a race war. They sought to pursue a moderate political project that could lead to a successful separation from Portugal, establishing a constitutional monarchy with political representation, while maintaining an unchanged social hierarchy, especially concerning the masses, made up mostly of people of colour, both free and captive. The political leadership in Ceará made efforts to appease the local non-white population by listening to their demands, while seeking to prevent any alternative political projects, particularly one that could lead to an undesirable form of independence, through which the overwhelmingly white elite could be cast down from its preeminent position within society.[3]

Divided between Portuguese- and Brazilian-born crown officials, landowners, merchants and army and militia officers, the elite in Ceará had concerns founded on previous experiences. The Haitian Revolution of 1789–1804 is a prime example of an external event which had a profound effect on Brazil. The revolution caused the end of European rule, but at the cost of crippling Haiti's economy and subverting the traditional social structure. The ruling white minority was decimated by rebellious mixed-race and Black people, many of whom were slaves.[4] In his memoir, Manoel Ximenes de Aragão, who witnessed the independence of Brazil in Ceará, declared that the local non-white population was aware of the 'disastrous events' that had transpired in Haiti decades prior, even discussing them among themselves, and that they were a source of recurrent concern to the white minority.[5]

The wars of independence of the Spanish-American colonies from 1808 until 1833 also affected Brazil. What began with demands for further autonomy, political representation and the adoption of a constitution to restrict the king's powers developed into downright separatist rebellions, leading to the division of the viceroyalties into several republics, often characterised by political instability, social unrest, constant uprisings and the rise of local personalist strongmen, the caudillos. In the political and armed conflicts that occurred during those years, the participation of non-white people was essential.[6] The challenge to the colonial order in Spanish

[2]Pereira's pleas were part of a memorandum submitted to the provincial government, which was transcribed in full in the minutes (*ata*) of the provisional government junta's session of 31 May 1823. See 'Registro de Actas da Junta do Governo Provisorio da Provincia, 1823–1824', Arquivo Público do Estado do Ceará, Fortaleza (hereafter APEC), Governo da Provincia (Livros) (hereafter GPL), vol. 1, fols. 12v–19r. It was published in Vicente José Pereira, 'Memoria apresentada a junta do governo da província do Ceará', *Revista Trimensal do Instituto do Ceará*, 1 (1887), pp. 58–64, 75–82.

[3]For a general outlook on Brazil's political elite during this period, see Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798–1852* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 22–30, 36–8, 44–5, 76–7, 138. The *cearense* elite's expectations and goals will be discussed in detail later. ('*Cearense*' means of or pertaining to Ceará.)

[4]For the effects of the Haitian Revolution abroad, see David P. Geggus (ed.), *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2020).

[5]Manoel Ximenes de Aragão, 'Memorias: As phases de minha vida: Genealogia', *Revista Trimensal do Instituto do Ceará*, 26 (1913), pp. 47–157, here p. 71.

[6]Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*, new edn (New York: New York University Press, 2018), pp. 160–1.

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America found supporters in the Brazilian territory. In 1817, a rebellion against the Portuguese crown erupted in the province of Pernambuco, eventually finding adherents in the south of nearby Ceará and Paraíba do Norte. Located in the Brazilian northeast, the two provinces shared close political, social and economic relations. Ceará had once been a captaincy (province) subordinate to Pernambuco. Events in the one often affected the other, and the 1817 insurrection was one such.[7] Although swiftly subdued, the revolt had a tremendous impact, both for what was accomplished and for what could have occurred. The insurgents called for an independent republic 'that quickly found support among the planter elite, the Brazilian-born merchant community, the clergy, petty officials, and a large number of the free, often mixed-race, skilled artisans and literate persons of limited means'.[8]

Both rebel and royal troops committed widespread violence against individuals and private properties belonging to the opposing side. Slaves took advantage of the turmoil to flee from their masters, some joining groups of bandits that roamed the countryside causing further mayhem.[9] During the 1817 uprising, most of the non-white population, including those of mixed race, Blacks and Indians, remained faithful to the Portuguese king Dom João VI. Nevertheless, the rebellion served as an example for many among the elite of the perils of political radicalism and popular mobilisation. The subsequent movement for the independence of Brazil that began in 1822 was the outcome of political manoeuvring and a nationwide war against the troops still loyal to Portugal. It led to the formation of a Brazilian empire within a constitutional framework, with Pedro I (Dom João VI's son and heir) as its emperor, all the while preserving the existing hierarchical and racialised society of which slavery was a crucial element.[10]

However, the path that Brazil took was by no means a foregone conclusion. The Confederação do Equador (Confederation of the Equator) of 1824, a rebellious attempt at a separatist republic by Ceará and Pernambuco, is yet another example of the challenging political projects of that period. Indeed, during the movement for independence, Ceará experienced political and social upheaval, like other Brazilian provinces. It began in 1821 with uprisings against the Portuguese governor, Francisco Alberto Rubim, leading to the creation of a moderate reformist provisional government headed by the local Portuguese–Brazilian elite which sought to uphold order, later supporting independence in 1822. The provincial government was eventually overthrown in early 1823 by a movement based in the south of the province, led by an ambitious and opportunist strongman, José Pereira Filgueiras, who established an authoritarian regime distinguished by political violence, an anti-Portuguese stance, racial tension and populism. During this

[7]Denis Antônio de Mendonça Bernardes, 'Pernambuco e sua área de influência – um território em transformação, 1780–1824', in István Jancsó (ed.), *Independência: História e historiografia* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 2005), pp. 391–6.

[8]Jeffrey C. Mosher, *Political Struggle, Ideology and State Building: Pernambuco and the Construction of Brazil, 1817–1850* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), p. 37.

[9]Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, 'Os negros armados pelos brancos e suas independências no Nordeste, 1817–1848', in Jancsó (ed.), *Independência*, pp. 895–6.

[10]Barman, *Brazil*, pp. 120–3.

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turbulent period, Ceará sent pro-independence forces elsewhere to fight troops still loyal to Portugal. By focusing on 1821–3 we can learn the reasons why the Confederação do Equador ultimately failed.

The scope of this article is to understand how people of colour reacted to the unpredictable and evolving nature of political developments in Ceará during Brazil's era of independence in 1821–3. The central argument is that they were actively engaged during the entire process and adapted to the changing circumstances, either in support of or in opposition to existing political projects, while attempting both to preserve their rights and to enhance their social standing. This group was remarkably active, pushing for greater participation in public affairs, and even inciting some of the major events of the independence movement in Ceará. Hendrik Kraay correctly noted that 'Not only did elites have to contend with competing regional economic interests and ideological differences, they also faced subordinate classes whose members actively contested elite projects, took liberal ideals to heart, and insisted on making their voices heard.'[11] The focus on Ceará is appropriate; it provides a distinct opportunity to evaluate subaltern agency during what can be considered one of the most significant events in Brazilian history, especially when taking into consideration that province's crucial participation in ending Portuguese rule in northern Brazil. José Honório Rodrigues aptly remarked that 'Ceará does not need to fight to join Brazil … it fights and wages war instead to aid its neighbouring siblings … Ceará represents a unique role in independence, comparable to [the province of] Rio de Janeiro.'[12]

The independence of Brazil represents a peculiar case in an era termed the 'Age of Revolution', mainly because of the preservation of the monarchy. Historiography of Spanish America has shown the essential contribution of the lower classes to the independence movements against Spain. Their involvement in the struggles, both in favour of and against independence, impacted the formation of national states and the eventual outcome of slavery, set the ground for further social mobility, and broadened popular participation in politics.[13] The traditional historiography about the Brazilian imperial era (1822–89) depicted the masses as apathetic and ignorant, slow to react, with few participating in political events, and supporting

[11]Hendrik Kraay, *Race, State, and Armed Forces in Independence-Era Brazil: Bahia, 1790s–1840s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 3. Although Kraay was describing social relations in Bahia, his conclusions broadly fit this case.

[12]Honório José Rodrigues, *Independência: Revolução e contra-revolução*, vol. 3: *As forças armadas* (Rio de Janeiro: F. Alves, 1975), p. 157.

[13]See George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800–1900* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Peter F. Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800–1857* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Aline Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770–1835* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808–1826*, 2nd edn (New York: Norton, 1986); John Lynch (ed.), *Latin American Revolutions, 1808–1826: Old and New World Origins* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994); Anthony McFarlane, *War and Independence in Spanish America* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Winthrop R. Wright, Café con leche: *Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990); Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810–1821* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

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the independence movement of Brazil as a united country under constitutional monarchy.[14] Scholars emphasised independence as a political arrangement between self-serving elites with converging interests.[15] Following a different direction, modern scholarship has instead demonstrated the complexity of that historical event, and has placed an emphasis on nation-state building, ideology, political culture, race and subaltern agency.[16]

Regarding subaltern agency, the older historiography either ignored the people, or considered them 'unconscious manipulated masses, incapable of ideas or political projects'.[17] Historians have recently reinterpreted the role of the masses, revealing that, far from being passive, ignorant or pliable, the people were active and resourceful participants in the independence movement. According to João Paulo Peixoto Costa and Mariana Alburquerque Dantas, Indians in Ceará, Pernambuco and Alagoas realised that, by engaging in political and armed disputes, they

[14]Honório José Rodrigues, *Independência: Revolução e contra-revolução*, vol. 4: *A liderança nacional* (Rio de Janeiro: F. Alves, 1975), pp. 124–30.

[15]See Florestan Fernandes, *Circuito fechado: Quatro ensaios sobre o 'poder institucional'* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1976), pp. 48–9; Caio Prado Júnior, *Evolução política do Brasil e outros estudos*, 9th edn (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1975), p. 48; Nelson Werneck Sodré, *As razões da independência*, 3rd edn (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1978), p. 251; Nelson Werneck Sodré, *Formação histórica do Brasil*, 5th edn (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1968), pp. 189–201.

[16]See Matthias Röhrig Assunção, 'Elite Politics and Popular Rebellion in the Construction of Post-Colonial Order: The Case of Maranhão, Brazil (1820–41)', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 31: 1 (1999), pp. 1–38; Barman, *Brazil*; Flávio José Gomes Cabral (ed.), *A independência do Brasil em foco: História, cultura e instituições* (Jundiaí: Paco Editorial, 2021); José Murilo de Carvalho, Lúcia Bastos and Marcello Basile (eds.), *Às armas, cidadãos! Panfletos manuscritos da independência do Brasil (1820–1823)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2012); Denis Antônio de Mendonça Bernardes, *O patriotismo constitucional: Pernambuco, 1820–1822* (Recife: UFPE, 2006); Mariana Albuquerque Dantas, *Dimensões da participação política indígena: Estado nacional e revoltas em Pernambuco e Alagoas (1817–1848)* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 2018); Fernando Diégues, *A revolução brasílica: O projeto político e a estratégia da independência* (Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2004); Hélio Franchini Neto, *Independência e morte: Política e guerra na emancipação do Brasil (1821–1823)* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2019); Marcelo Cheche Galves, '"Ao público sincero e imparcial": Imprensa e independência do Maranhão (1821–1826)', PhD diss., Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2010; István Jancsó (ed.), *Brasil: Formação do estado e de nação* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 2003); Jancsó (ed.), *Independência*; Hendrik Kraay, *Days of National Festivity in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1823–1889* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013); Kraay, *Race*; Isabel Lustosa, *Insultos impressos: A guerra dos jornalistas na Independência (1821–1823)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000); Maria de Lourdes Viana Lyra, *A utopia do poderoso império: Portugal e Brasil: Bastidores da política, 1798–1822* (Rio de Janeiro: Sette Letras, 1994); André Roberto de A. Machado, *A quebra da mola real das sociedades: A crise política do Antigo Regime português na província do Grão-Pará (1821–1825)* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 2010); Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *A outra independência: O federalismo pernambucano de 1817 a 1824* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2004); Mosher, *Political Struggle*; Jurandir Malerba (ed.), *A independência brasileira: Novas dimensões* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2006); Lúcia Maria Bastos Pereira das Neves, *Corcundas e constitucionais: A cultura política da independência (1820–1822)* (Rio de Janeiro: FAPERJ, 2003); Gladys Sabina Ribeiro, *A liberdade em construção: Identidade nacional e conflitos antilusitanos no Primeiro Reinado* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2002); Estilaque Ferreira dos Santos, *A monarquia no Brasil: O pensamento político da independência* (Vitória: Edufes, 1999); Kirsten Schultz, *Tropical Versailles: Empire, Monarchy, and the Portuguese Royal Court in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1821* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Ana Rosa Cloclet da Silva, *Inventando a nação: Intelectuais ilustrados e estadistas luso-brasileiros na crise do antigo regime português (1750–1822)* (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 2006).

[17]Bernardes, 'Pernambuco e sua área de influência', p. 381.

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found the means to advance their own interests.[18] Similarly, in Bahia, Kraay demonstrated that non-white militia officers were just as aware of the possibilities: 'Generously rewarded for their services against the Portuguese, black and mulatto officers cast their lot with the new regime, seeing in it the possibility of a greater role for themselves.'[19] In northern Brazil, in the province of Grão-Pará, Mark Harris noted that 'the fight over independence quickly moved from the urban center to actively involving large portions of the people, often self-organized … In this context, new alliances were forged in a campaign against a common enemy identified as the colonial order and those who upheld it.'[20] Jeffrey C. Mosher, in his study on Pernambuco, noticed the convoluted character of race relations and political projects, in which whites often misinterpreted the masses' intentions, fearing a race war when the latter instead wished to 'secure a government more attentive to their needs'.[21] Discussing popular mobilisation, Gladys Sabina Ribeiro observed the same problem with people of colour in Rio de Janeiro: 'If the people had autonomy of thoughts and of projects, their shouts on the streets frightened everyone.'[22]

Recent works concerning Ceará during the period are considerably scarcer, with only four worth mentioning: a couple concerning nation-state building, another about political power and patronage, and the last on Indigenous participation.[23] Surprisingly, the role of people of colour, especially mixed-race individuals and Blacks, is still largely unexplored, despite their direct influence in major events. It is necessary to point out that the topic is a difficult one owing to the paucity of primary sources available for Ceará when compared to the other influential provinces of Brazil, but it still possible to infer possible motivations and ideas of people of colour from their actions. Additional difficulties stem from the fact that the extant records were mostly produced by individuals marred by prejudice and class concerns, especially towards people of African descent. Nevertheless, Ceará's contribution to Brazilian independence represents a valuable case study of popular mobilisation that reinforces a pattern evident in other regions of the country, while its distinctive ethnic mixture is significant for the assessment of general interpretations of independence.

Ceará and its People

Around the time of Brazil's independence, there were 150,000 inhabitants in Ceará, divided 'between 18 towns, five of Indians and 13 of non-Indians, in addition to

[18]João Paulo Peixoto Costa, *Na lei e na guerra: Políticas indígenas no Ceará (1798–1845)* (Teresina: EdUFPI, 2018), p. 281; Dantas, *Dimensões*, p. 239.

[19]Kraay, *Race*, p. 107.

[20]Mark Harris, *Rebellion on the Amazon: The Cabanagem, Race, and Popular Culture in the North of Brazil, 1798–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 189.

[21]Mosher, *Political Struggle*, p. 61.

[22]Ribeiro, *A liberdade em construção*, p. 270.

[23]See Reginaldo Alves de Araújo, 'A parte no partido: Relações de poder e política na formação do estado nacional brasileiro, na província do Ceará (1821–1841)', PhD diss., Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2018; Keile Socorro Leite Felix, '"Espíritos inflamados": A construção do estado nacional brasileiro e os projetos políticos no Ceará (1817–1840)', Master's thesis, Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2010; Tyrone Apollo Pontes Cândido, 'A plebe heterogênea da independência: Armas e rebeldias no Ceará (1817–1824)', *Almanack (Guarulhos)*, 20 (2015), pp. 194–215; and Costa, *Na lei e na guerra*.

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Figure 1. Ceará and Brazil, c. 1821–3, with Selected Urban Centres and Geographical Features.

some villages'(see Figure 1).[24] The multi-ethnic character of the *cearense* people and the economic disparity of the existing racial groups was noted by the Portuguese–British traveller Henry Koster: 'I never saw an Indian mechanic

[24]João da Silva Feijó, 'Memória sobre a capitania do Ceará', *Revista Trimensal do Instituto do Ceará*, 3 (1889), p. 22. This memorandum was originally published in *O Patriota* (Rio de Janeiro), no. 1, Jan.–Feb. 1814, pp. 46–62, and no. 2, March–Apr. 1814, pp. 17–26.

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[artisan] in any of the towns; there is no instance of a wealthy Indian; rich mulattos and negroes are by no means rare.'[25] A contemporary explained that each town 'is governed by their respective *capitães-mores* [captains-major] and *juízes ordinários* [local magistrates], and all are subordinated to the general government of the captaincy, located in the town of Fortaleza, which is its capital'.[26] The captains-major commanded the *ordenanças*, which served as a reserve militia, or a 'third line of defence', and were used to strengthen the *milícias* (militias) under colonels, which served as the 'second line'. They were a reserve force to a small army unit in Fortaleza, considered the 'first line' in case of an armed threat, particularly from abroad. The officers in the militias and *ordenanças* were often local notables.[27]

As elsewhere in the Portuguese colonial empire, the militias were racially segregated; this segregation, according to Kraay, was 'a product both of the late colonial militarization of the Spanish and Portuguese empires and the Enlightenment penchant for ordering society and classifying its members'.[28] In effect, 'Militia organization reflected and sought to impose race distinctions.'[29] As in the rest of Brazil, racial prejudice was common in Ceará, serving to regulate social interactions and reinforce racial and social hierarchies. Skin colour, wealth and lineage were among the factors to define a person's position within Brazilian society. Koster mentioned that 'the Indian *Capitaens-mores* are much ridiculed by the whites; and indeed, the half naked officer with his gold-headed cane is a personage who would excite laughter from the most rigid nerves'.[30] The different non-white groups were also prejudiced toward one another. Koster pointed out that the 'mulattos consider themselves superior to the Indians, and even the Creole blacks look down upon them'.[31]

A clarification concerning racial classification in Ceará is necessary, since modern historians have equated the mixed-race (*mestiço*) population, generally called *pardo* (brown), with mulatto (someone of mixed European and African descent).[32] In Ceará, *pardo* represents a broad multiracial category of mixed Indigenous, African and European descent, comprised of mulattoes, *mamelucos* and *cabras*. A *mameluco* had mixed Indigenous and white ancestry, while *cabras* were the 'product of the crossing of the Indian and the African'. In Ceará *cabras* was often informally employed interchangeably with *pardos* to designate 'people of

[25]Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), pp. 120–1.
[26]Feijó, 'Memória', p. 23.
[27]Barman, *Brazil*, p. 22.
[28]Kraay, *Race*, p. 82.
[29]*Ibid.*, p. 83.
[30]Koster, *Travels*, p. 117.
[31]*Ibid.*, p. 118. A creole, or *crioulo*, was a Brazilian of entirely African descent. It is worth noting that prejudice among whites was common as well. Mary C. Karasch mentioned that 'many Portuguese, whether noble or not, treated the Brazilian elite with disdain because of their color [i.e. the Portuguese did not think that the local elite were as white as they thought they were] and did not accept them as equals'. See Mary C. Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 68.
[32]For examples, see Barman, *Brazil*, pp. 15–16; Karasch, *Slave Life*, pp. 6–7; Kraay, *Race*, pp. 22–3; Jeffrey D. Needell, *The Sacred Cause: The Abolitionist Movement, Afro-Brazilian Mobilization, and Imperial Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), pp. 16–17; Martha S. Santos, *Cleansing Honor with Blood: Masculinity, Violence, and Power in the Backlands of Northeast Brazil, 1845–1889* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 34.

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Table 1. Population of Ceará (1813)

White	Indian	*Pardo* (free)	Black (free)	*Pardo* (slave)	Black (slave)	Total
41,659	9,196	67,485	13,197	6,336	10,872	148,745
28%	6.2%	45.4%	8.9%	4.2%	7.3%	(100%)

Source: *O Patriota* (Rio de Janeiro), no. 3, May–Jun. 1814, pp. 96–7. The total population according to this census was 149,285; this does not match exactly with the actual numbers when each ethnic group is counted, but the difference is less than 0.4%.

colour' (*gente de cor*).[33] Unlike in other Brazilian regions, the impact of Africans in the racial composition of mixed-race people in Ceará was minor, especially in comparison to that of Indians.[34] A census carried out in 1813 (see Table 1) showed that Blacks and slaves did not have an overwhelming presence. In a study of the backlands in southern Ceará, Billy Jaynes Chandler suggested that the smaller slave population was 'a result of the area's emphasis on cattle-raising, which requires only a few workers'.[35] In fact, the single largest racial group was the *pardo*.[36]

However, even though most *pardos* in Ceará may have held some physical resemblance to their Indigenous ancestors this did not make them Indians. Legally and socially, they were regarded as a distinct social and racial group. During the nineteenth century, the Indians shunned attempts at mistaking or

[33]Rodolfo Teófilo, *Os brilhantes* (Fortaleza: Minerva, 1906 [1895]), p. 72. The word '*mameluco*' originated from the Arabic '*mamluk*'.

[34]Gustavo Barroso, *Terra de sol*, 8th edn (Rio de Janeiro: ABC Editora, 2006 [1912]), p. 119; José da Cruz Filho, *Historia do Ceará: Resumo didático* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos, 1931), p. 80; Feijó, 'Memória', p. 22; Raimundo Girão, *Pequena história do Ceará*, 2nd edn (Fortaleza: Instituto do Ceará, 1962), pp. 99–100. As stated by Leslie Bethell, it 'is impossible to calculate with any degree of accuracy either the total population of Brazil in 1800, or its racial composition, or the proportion of free persons to slave. However, a reasonable estimate of the population (excluding unreduced Amerindians [that is, Amerindians outside *reduções*, or Indigenous settlements under Crown authority], numbering perhaps as many as 800,000) would seem to be between 2 million and 2½ million. Two-thirds, perhaps three-quarters, of the population were coloured and between one-third and one-half were slaves.' See Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807–1869* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 3. Colonial censuses were severely deficient. For their problematic nature, see Dauril Alden, 'The Population of Brazil in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Preliminary Study', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 43: 2 (1963), pp. 180–3.

[35]Billy Jaynes Chandler, *The Feitosas and the Sertão dos Inhamuns: The History of a Family and a Community in Northeast Brazil, 1700–1930* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1972), p. 146. In comparison to Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Pernambuco and Bahia, Ceará's population of African descent was minuscule. The province was prohibited from conducting a direct slave trade with Africa, instead being obliged to purchase overpriced slaves from Pernambuco. The elite of Fortaleza unsuccessfully petitioned the crown to lift the prohibition in 1808. See Francisco Afonso Ferreira *et al.* to Prince Regent Dom João, (c. August) 1808, Fortaleza, Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro (hereafter ANRJ), Correspondências do Presidente da Província, Ceará (hereafter CPPC), IJJ[9] 167.

[36]*Jornal do Commercio* (Rio de Janeiro), no. 150, 8 March 1832, p. 1. There is evidence of regional distinctions concerning race: in Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro, *cabra* signified the offspring of a Black person and a mulatto. See Karasch, *Slave Life*, p. 6; and Kraay, *Race*, p. 22. Ian Read encapsulated the issue: '*Pardos* and *mulattos* (along with *cabras*, *fulos*, and a number of other racial/color/social categories) appear to have signaled different things to different people at different times and places. Historians have yet to sort all this out, and much debate and ambiguity remain.' See Ian Read, *The Hierarchies of Slavery in Santos, Brazil, 1822–1888* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 216 n. 38.

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combining them with the growing *pardo* population.[37] To each Indian village there was appointed a white official, a 'Director', who represented the interests of the crown vis-à-vis the local Indigenous population. This system, officially called the 'Directory' and created by law in 1755, was geared towards the control of Indians and their integration into the larger Portuguese colonial empire. Directors were expected to 'civilise' the Indigenous inhabitants under their jurisdiction, and to provide labour from among them for non-Indian enterprises, such as plantations, public works and domestic service.[38] As will be seen, Directors routinely abused their powers. Nevertheless, Indians lived in their own towns, owned rural properties, and had their own militias: privileges that had been conceded by the Portuguese crown. This is why they were fiercely protective of their status as 'Indians', which they deemed to be the most effective manner in which they could protect their relative autonomy and lands from outsiders.

Meanwhile, *pardos* and Blacks were confined to towns and areas dominated by the white minority and were generally bound to the latter's legal classification and perception of race and class. As will be demonstrated, they sought to work within this legal and social framework, despite its restrictions and imposition from above. Instead of challenging prevailing racial identities, they accepted them, using race to negotiate their place within local politics and society. The contribution of Indigenous peoples in Ceará to the independence of Brazil has already been studied elsewhere.[39] What remains to be understood is the participation of free and enslaved *pardos* and Blacks in that process, since they comprised not only the greater proportion of people of colour in the province, but also the majority of the *cearense* population.

The Crato Rebellion

Since 1808 king Dom João VI had lived in Brazil, following the transfer of the royal administration from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro. This unprecedented move was meant to be temporary, in effect until the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and his armies no longer posed any threat in Europe. Nevertheless, the Portuguese ruler seemed uninterested in returning to his former capital, causing discontent among his European subjects. On 24 August 1820 a revolution occurred in Portugal with the purpose of establishing a constitutional monarchy and demanding Dom João VI's return. Brazil had been elevated to the status of a kingdom only in 1815, gaining equal status to Portugal. The possibility of ending the absolutist regime and imposing limitations on the king and his agents in 1820 only exacerbated existing regional tensions in Brazil. In Ceará, the elite's tenuous relationship with the provincial governor, Rubim, a native of Portugal, grew increasingly worse.[40] He feared that the mounting pressure from the local elite to be allowed

[37]Maico Oliveira Xavier, '"Cabôcullos são os brancos": Dinâmicas das relações sócio-culturais dos índios do Termo da Vila Viçosa Real – século XIX', PhD diss., Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2010, pp. 232, 237, 242.

[38]Costa, *Na lei e na guerra*, pp. 50–2, 218. The Directory was abolished in Ceará in 1845.

[39]See Costa, *Na lei e na guerra*, pp. 137–64, 279–314.

[40]Francisco Alberto Rubim to Joaquim José Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821, Fortaleza, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon, Conselho Ultramarino, Brasil (hereafter AHU, CU-Brasil), box 23, doc. 1343. The same documents from Ceará during 1821–3 can be found at ANRJ, CPPC, IJJ[9] 167, 170 and 170-A.

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into the decision-making process would serve as an opportunity for other groups to demand the same, resulting in loss of centralised control and the emergence of anarchy. In March 1821 the governor issued a proclamation to the people of Ceará informing them of the revolution in Portugal; in it he reminded his audience of the 'turbulence and discord that ambition and fanaticism produce in the people', and anguished over the 'terrible tyranny of many', pondering on whether constitutional limits on the king's power 'shall create many kings, even if not in name but in practice, the more so to be feared'.[41]

Rubim had reasons for apprehension. As noted above, barely a few years earlier, in 1817, a major revolt had erupted in the nearby province of Pernambuco, swiftly spreading to the province of Paraíba do Norte and to the south of Ceará. Not only did it have separatist and republican aims, it had also been met with 'support from all ranks of society'.[42] Although the rebellion ended in failure, Rubim saw parallels between it and ongoing turmoil in Ceará.[43] Furthermore, the relentless conflicts between him and the local elites over his policies ultimately set the course towards Ceará's involvement in the growing threat of Brazilian independence. That threat merits discussion here. 'Although the Crown never abated by one iota its assertion of absolute authority in the colonies', noted Roderick J. Barman, 'its agents in the New World often found that the most effective and rewarding course lay in maintaining a discreet balance between the orders of the Crown and the interests of the governed'.[44] Rubim, however, differed from most crown agents. And he paid for it. As Barman noted, those 'who did attempt to enforce the letter of the law or to carry out novel or unpopular policies soon found themselves caught in a web of passive resistance and covert obstruction'.[45] Rubim sought to close what he perceived as loopholes and abuses that were widespread in the province, primarily involving tax evasion. He also attempted to protect social groups that were frequently the target of exploitation and violence: lower-class women and Indians. In retaliation, the municipal chamber of Fortaleza sent a letter to the king, accusing the governor of establishing 'an arbitrary and truly despotic government in the full extent of its meaning'.[46]

The major source of contention was Rubim's measures to restrict abuses towards Indians, 'without royal order for such'.[47] In the eyes of the councilmen, agriculture was thus 'deprived of Indian hands, which until then the Directory used to provide'.[48] Rubim explained that 'the Directors [of Indians] would drag them from

[41]Proclamation of Francisco Alberto Rubim, 25 March 1821, Fortaleza, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 23, doc. 1331.

[42]Barman, *Brazil*, pp. 57–8.

[43]See Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821.

[44]Barman, *Brazil*, p. 25.

[45]*Ibid.*

[46]Municipal chamber of Fortaleza to king Dom João VI, 17 Nov. 1821, Fortaleza, in Braz da Costa Rubim, *Memoria sobre a revolução do Ceará* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria J. Leite, 1866), p. 254. The municipal chamber was the elective town council. The letter was written only after the local elite ousted Rubim on 3 Nov. 1821, and the complaints were likely shaped by this event, as a means to provide the councilmen with some legitimacy for their unlawful removal of a crown agent.

[47]*Ibid.*, p. 255.

[48]*Ibid.*

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their families and fields, transporting them to others as prisoners'.[49] Men and women were coerced into this form of servitude, some to work on the fields and others in domestic functions. Rubim had now decided that only vagrant Indians (*índios vadios*) could be so compelled to work, while all others would provide service only if they wished, and any agreements with their prospective employers were to be made in the presence of the Director, who would serve as a third party. The governor remarked that 'this truly just and saintly measure did not please the capital's residents, because they lacked the sweat of Indians to sustain their own luxury and vices, but it did much to please the Indians'.[50]

Rubim may have intervened against established abuse to provide a certain measure of justice to marginal groups within society; however, he resisted the possibility of relinquishing any of his own power, and even less of extending participation in public affairs to the elite. On 8 April 1821 news arrived in Fortaleza that king Dom João VI had sworn to uphold whichever constitution were to be drafted by the revolutionaries in the elected parliament (the Cortes) in Lisbon.[51] With his relationship with the local elite already strained, Rubim faced further challenges when pressured to support the forthcoming constitution, as his authority steadily deteriorated. He sought a compromise and on 8 May 1821 named a 'consultative council' (*conselho consultivo*) to advise the governor on matters concerning public governance. The background of each member is revealing as to the pressure groups in Fortaleza seeking influence within the provincial administration. According to Rubim, the council was 'composed of the *ouvidor* [superior judge], three *sargentos-mores* [majors] of the first and second lines [i.e. army and militia], which hold the highest ranks in this town, the three most powerful merchants, and three of the greatest *lavradores ou fazendeiros* [planters or farmers]'.[52] The arrangement did nothing to abate the increasing restlessness within the local elite, who shortly after insisted that the consultative council should be an elected and governing body, instead of merely advisory. Again, Rubim acquiesced, and an election was carried out on 31 July, leading to a new council comprising representatives of the same pressure groups, this time with the addition of a clergyman.[53]

While the capital of Ceará played a leading role during these developments, the news of a still-to-be-written constitution was met with a mixed response in other towns. Many had trouble understanding the very concept of constitutional rule and, in some cases, there was scepticism and even opposition, particularly from people of colour. In Maranguape, a mostly Indigenous settlement near the capital, Indians, fearful that the new regime would lead to their enslavement and further encroachment on their lands, caused unrest beginning in October 1821 that lasted for two years. Their local enemies were Portuguese, now supporters of the constitutional regime, but men who had previously exploited their labour and taken their

[49]Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821. Peixoto Costa briefly mentioned Rubim's attempts to 'restrict the indiscriminate access to Indigenous labour', but did not explore it further. See Costa, *Na lei e na guerra*, p. 140.

[50]Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821.

[51]*Ibid.*

[52]Francisco Alberto Rubim to Carlos Frederico da Cunha, 3 Aug. 1821, Fortaleza, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 22, doc. 1316.

[53]*Ibid.*

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lands. This past enmity caused apprehension among Indians, who believed that the new regime would allow their enemies greater powers to abuse them.[54] In Crato, a village in the south of Ceará, in the Cariri backlands, matters were different. The *cabras* and mulattoes (both grouped in the generic category of 'brown people', or *pardos*, in official correspondence) staged an uprising against constitutionalism in May 1821.[55] It began when the ruling white elite pleaded with the king to maintain the absolutist regime, since 'they [the masses] have heard nothing that would persuade them of the meaning of "Constitution"'.[56] Their leader, captain-major Pereira Filgueiras, along with other white militia and *ordenança* officers, convinced the *cabras* and mulattoes that under the constitutional regime they would be enslaved and sold 'to other provinces, and that the profit from their sale would pay the national [government's] debt'.[57]

As this uprising in Crato developed during May of 1821 and the following months, between 2,000 and 3,000 *pardos* from Crato and the nearby village of Jardim took up arms in opposition to the constitution, with Pereira Filgueiras' approval.[58] They moved across the countryside, threatening and harassing those whom they deemed supporters of the constitution, sometimes entering villages and causing disturbances. In a particular instance, on 5 August, 50 insurgents surrounded the church of Crato during mass and invaded it, causing churchgoers to flee. The *ouvidor* of Crato's judicial district (*comarca*) and eyewitness to the incident, José Joaquim Correia da Costa Pereira do Lago, considered the *pardo* uprising a 'war of [skin] colours, the most terrible of this kingdom'.[59] Another eyewitness, the former *ouvidor* José Raimundo de Passos de Porbem Barbosa, called it a 'war against whites'.[60] Rubim himself feared that 'men of colour' might go on to a general revolt, noting 'in this case the damage to whites would be horrendous'.[61]

Despite the claims of the three men, all Portuguese and thus white, there is little to demonstrate that the *pardo* insurgents sought or even planned to pursue a race war, since they did not target white people specifically. Rubim, Porbem Barbosa and Pereira do Lago agreed that they were influenced by Pereira Filgueiras.[62] However, it is difficult to imagine that the captain-major would seek a conflict

[54]For a detailed analysis of the Indigenous uprising in Maranguape, see Costa, *Na lei e na guerra*, pp. 143–57. The Indians were also worried about the possibility of losing the tax exemptions granted to them by the crown for their loyalty during the 1817 rebellion. See Bernardes, 'Pernambuco e sua área de influência', p. 394 n. 34.

[55]Other recent studies have discussed the revolt but failed to mention the white elite's fear of race war, instead opting to treat it as a social class dispute. See Araújo, 'A parte no partido', pp. 80–8, 144; Cândido, 'A plebe heterogênea', pp. 201–2; Felix, 'Espíritos inflamados', pp. 86–7, 91.

[56]Francisco Alberto Rubim to Francisco Maximiano de Sousa, 4 July 1821, Fortaleza, AHU-Brasil, CU, box 23, doc. 1330.

[57]*Ibid.*

[58]Pereira Filgueiras' approval is inferred from Rubim's correspondence: Francisco Alberto Rubim to Carlos Frederico da Cunha, 20 Aug. 1821, Fortaleza, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 22, doc. 1317.

[59]José Joaquim Correia da Costa Pereira do Lago to João Batista Filgueiras, 22 Aug. 1821, Icó, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 22, doc. 1318.

[60]José Raimundo de Passos de Porbem Barbosa to king Dom João VI (Jan. 1823), Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, box 809, proc. 25.

[61]Rubim to Sousa, 4 July 1821.

[62]Rubim to Cunha, 20 Aug. 1821.

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that would undermine the established social order, even less the safety of white people, their property, and their standing, since he was himself white and a member of the upper classes of society in Crato. It seems more probable that he exploited the apprehension of people of colour concerning their free status and sought to manipulate them to serve his interests. The invasion of the church on 5 August resulted in the cancellation of the election of the *cearense* representatives to the Cortes in Portugal. The following day the insurgents invaded the town of Missão Velha, preventing the electoral process there as well. Pereira Filgueiras may have seen the Cortes and its supporters in Fortaleza as a threat to his authority and autonomy. During their demonstrations, the *pardo* rebels shouted 'death to the constitution', calling it the 'devil's law', and being 'against our [catholic] religion'.[63] Furthermore, they accused Rubim's envoys of being 'freemasons, deceiving the king and the people, and [the actual] authors of the constitution'.[64]

In official reports, these mixed-race individuals were portrayed as ignorant, violent and barbaric, but it appears that at this stage they still wished to maintain the social order as it was, rather than overturning it, and their acts were generally confined to threats, refusals to comply, or displays of force – not actual violence. Pereira do Lago pointed out that the mixed-race individuals were mainly motivated by concern regarding the possibility of enslavement and threat to their religious faith.[65] There seems also to have existed a sense of racial solidarity among *pardos* in the area, perhaps based on their mutual mixed-race ancestry and desire to protect their freedom. This is apparent when the militia troops in Crato positioned themselves as guards at Pereira Filgueiras' residence and refused to engage the *pardo* insurgents, 'saying that they were not against their brethren'.[66] Moreover, Pereira do Lago claimed that '*pardos* from the nearby captaincies are already in talks with those from here, placing at their head the great captain-major of Crato [Pereira Filgueiras] as their universal leader', with the same occurring in Jardim.[67]

The Provisional Government

With the rebellion in Crato and the dissatisfaction with his policies mounting, Rubim's position became untenable, and the elite in Fortaleza forcibly removed him on 3 November 1821, leading to the creation of a 'provisional government' (*governo provisório*). In a letter to the king, the commander of the army troops in Fortaleza, lieutenant-colonel Francisco Xavier Torres, stated that 'the [municipal] chamber of Fortaleza in agreement with the battalion of first line [i.e. the army], and citizens of all [social] classes installed the current provisional government to the contentment of all'.[68] Xavier Torres was careful to remark that the

[63]José Joaquim Correia da Costa Pereira do Lago to João Batista Filgueiras, 22 Aug. 1821, Icó, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 22, doc. 1318.

[64]*Ibid.*

[65]*Ibid.*

[66]José Joaquim Correia da Costa Pereira do Lago to Francisco Alberto Rubim, 9 Aug. 1821, Icó, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 23, doc. 1318.

[67]*Ibid.*

[68]Provisional government of Ceará to king Dom João VI, 11 Dec. 1821, Fortaleza, Arquivo Histórico Militar, Lisbon (hereafter AHM), PT/AHM/DIV/2/01/02/11.

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abrupt change of leadership did not represent a challenge to the crown's authority.[69] The provisional government was an elected body composed of nine members, both Brazilian and Portuguese, and all were white. Unlike Xavier Torres, who claimed that members of all social classes endorsed the ousting of Rubim, therefore providing it a veneer of legitimacy, the former governor portrayed it as a military coup, in which 'the people stayed at home [fearing violence on the streets]'.[70] 'The people' were not the only ones who were excluded from the event and its outcome. The election occurred in Fortaleza, and the newly formed provincial administration was a product of the different pressure groups in the capital. Interestingly enough, Rubim pointed out that three Indigenous villages near the capital (Messejana, Soure and Arronches) did not recognise the new government, nor did the town of Aracati, 'the most populous, wealthy, and industrious of the province'.[71]

Facing imminent unrest from the outset across the province, the *cearense* provisional government called for new elections, now following the Cortes' decree of 29 September 1821, which established guidelines for the creation of provisional juntas (*juntas provisórias*), as the administrative bodies in provinces were to be known. By the end of the year, this new model of governance had been established in most Brazilian provinces, 'by force or consent'.[72] In Ceará, parishes – which usually included a town and its surrounding settlements – would vote for electors, who would in turn elect the members of the junta. On 17 February 1822 the electors convened in Fortaleza to select the new government, and most parishes sent representatives, including the Indian towns. At least one of the electors was an Indian, Vitorino Correia da Silva, captain-major of Arronches. However, another Indian village, Messejana, instead sent its white Director as its elector. The new governing body of Ceará was composed of men from several towns, giving it a wider representation than previous administrations.[73] Porbem Barbosa, the former *ouvidor* who witnessed the unrest in Crato, was elected president of the provisional junta, while Xavier Torres, commanding officer of the army troops who had ensured Rubim's overthrowing, was appointed governor of arms (*comandante das armas*), a position that granted him (theoretically) authority over the entire provincial military.[74]

Both Porbem Barbosa and Xavier Torres were natives of Portugal, as were others involved in the provincial administration. The remaining members were white Brazilians of high status. However, one group which saw the rapid political developments as an opportunity to increase their influence were people of colour. The junta agreed to their demands and established a militia infantry battalion

[69]Provisional government to king Dom João VI, 12 Nov. 1821, Fortaleza, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 22, doc. 1317.

[70]Provisional government to king Dom João VI, 5 Nov. 1821, Fortaleza, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 23, doc. 1343; Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821.

[71]Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821.

[72]Barman, *Brazil*, p. 75.

[73]See Livro de Atas da Câmara Municipal de Fortaleza, 1818–1823, Instituto do Ceará, Fortaleza (hereafter IC), Coleção Atas da Câmara Municipal de Fortaleza (hereafter CACMF), fols. 130r–133v.

[74]Francisco Xavier Torres to Joaquim José Monteiro Torres, 22 Feb. 1822, Fortaleza, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 23, doc. 1346.

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specifically for them, divided into four companies. According to Xavier Torres, 'This battalion shall be created owing to the request for this purpose made by the *pardo* people from this capital, and its surroundings.'[75] As mentioned earlier, the militia and *ordenança* troops were racially segregated, which served to reinforce social hierarchies and racial prejudice. Nevertheless, membership in militias, especially for officers, provided an opportunity for both social mobility and recognition of successful social advancement. Additionally, it opened another avenue for individuals of colour to have access to the monarch and to appeal for intervention on their behalf.[76]

Moreover, the creation of the battalion indicates a certain degree of organisation and influence among mixed-race people at the local level that was taken seriously by the provisional junta. The man chosen to command the militia, José Ferreira de Azevedo e Silva, was described by Xavier Torres as 'very young', and lacking in military experience, but 'very lively and capable and very supportive of the constitutional system'.[77] He was most probably a leader within his community, which could explain his appointment at an early age. Besides Fortaleza, the provincial capital, there was also a *pardo* militia regiment in the town of Icó (with six companies), commanded by Antônio Martins de Melo, whom Xavier Torres described as being 40 years old, with '26 years of [military] service, [but he is] without military knowledge, nor is he particularly wealthy'. Xavier Torres noted that despite those limitations, 'he serves with care … [and] he is constitutional'.[78] Both quotes broadly suggest the *pardos*' recognition of the advantages of a constitutional government.

These concessions of the ruling elite and its willingness to admit persons from other races and social backgrounds within their power structure had its limitations. Women and slaves were not considered in the envisioned reforms. The provincial administration appointed a commission to establish plans to develop the infrastructure, including the construction of roads connecting towns provincewide, facilitating trade. It also proposed the expansion of public education and the leasing of idle plots of land for farming, which could possibly have benefited landless individuals. Lastly, it sought to create a new police force, ending the authority over matters of policing still held by Directors of Indians and militia commanders, whom the commission called the 'children of despotism'.[79] The elite was neither entirely driven by self-preservation nor were their goals utterly self-serving, unlike Rubim's earlier assessment of them as being displeased by his 'just and saintly measure' to protect Indians.[80] These were sincere attempts at modernising the province and improving the lives of its inhabitants, except for those of slaves: in fact, the elite responded with either concern or violence to issues involving slaves. There was one notable exception, however. Shortly after being deposed, Rubim complained about the parish priest of Sobral, one of the largest and wealthiest towns in the province, who

[75]'Relação dos comandantes dos corpos de infantaria e cavalaria da 1a e 2a linha da província do Ceará', 21 March 1822, AHM, PT/AHM/DIV/2/01/57/36.

[76]See Kraay, *Race*, pp. 82–105.

[77]'Relação dos comandantes', 21 March 1822.

[78]*Ibid*.

[79]'Operações da Commissão encarregada dos melhoramentos na Província do Ceará', *Conciliador* (São Luís), no. 104, 10 July 1822.

[80]Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821. See section 'The Crato Rebellion', above.

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told slaves that 'under the constitution they were [to be] freed and that if their masters did not wish to free them, they [the slaves] could kill them [the masters]'.[81] This was a radical understanding of what a constitutional regime would entail for Brazil and its people. This specific case still requires further research, but it is enough to note that the priest's ideas did not resonate among elite members.[82]

The junta was also preoccupied with two concurrent serious crises. The first was the escalating dispute between prince Dom Pedro and the Portuguese Cortes. The prince had stayed in Brazil serving as regent on behalf of his father the king, but he was progressively stripped of his authority by the Cortes, until he felt powerless beyond the borders of the province of Rio de Janeiro.[83] Because several of its members were Portuguese, some historians have claimed that the provisional junta of Ceará hesitated to side with the prince regent in his path towards independence, even opposing it.[84] This has no basis in the existing primary sources. The junta maintained relations with the government in Rio de Janeiro, closely following its directions and orders, and supporting the prince even when he defied the Cortes' order to return to Portugal.[85]

Dom Pedro declared Brazil's independence on 7 September. In a ceremony in Rio de Janeiro on 12 October he was acclaimed emperor, and the junta in Ceará both recognised him as such and joined the independence movement on 24 November. At this event in Fortaleza, the 'troops, clergy, nobility and people' swore allegiance to the now emperor Dom Pedro I, 'affirming [their support for] a moderate [form of] independence and union for the good of the "Luso-Brazilian" Holy Cause'.[86] The wording of the proclamation is worth highlighting, given that it embraced independence as a political movement without radicalism, one in which the established Portuguese–Brazilian order would not undergo significant changes, thus excluding undesirable alternative projects. This meant that Brazil would gain autonomy from Portugal, with the two countries sharing the ruling dynasty. The Portuguese-born Dom Pedro I would reign over the nascent Brazilian empire, while still preserving his status as heir to the

[81]Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821.

[82]The perpetuation of slavery was favoured by the elites in Brazil, who at most supported the possibility of slaves attaining the status of citizens once freed. This became the law, at least for those slaves born in Brazil, under the constitution of 1824. The priest José Martiniano de Alencar, a representative for Ceará in the constituent assembly of 1823, was one of the few who advocated an end to the slave trade with Africa and to slavery itself. See Márcia Regina Berbel and Rafael de Bivar Marquese, 'The Absence of Race: Slavery, Citizenship, and Pro-Slavery Ideology in the Cortes of Lisbon and the Rio de Janeiro Constituent Assembly (1821–4)', *Social History*, 32: 4 (2007), pp. 421–9; Hebe Maria Mattos de Castro, *Escravidão e cidadania no Brasil monárquico* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2000), pp. 21–35; Machado, *A quebra*, pp. 104–6.

[83]Barman, *Brazil*, pp. 74, 76.

[84]Airton de Farias, *História do Ceará*, 7th edn (Fortaleza: Armazém da Cultura, 2015), pp. 146–8; Girão, *Pequena história*, pp. 170–2.

[85]See *Gazeta do Rio* (Rio de Janeiro), no. 75, 22 June 1822, p. 410; no. 87, 20 July 1822, p. 457; no. 92, 1 Aug. 1822, p. 475; no. 140, 21 Nov. 1822, p. 701. The support included the elections for the general assembly that would meet in Rio de Janeiro to draft a constitution for Brazil.

[86]'Sessão extraordinaria para efeito de acclamar imperador constitucional do Brasil o serenissimo senhor Dom Pedro de Alcantara', Livro de Atas da Câmara Municipal de Fortaleza, 1818–1823, fols. 183r–186r.

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Portuguese throne. The proclamation of independence in Ceará was signed by 104 men, and, although there is no study of their background, two *pardo* individuals are identifiable: Azevedo e Silva, the young commanding officer of the *pardo* militia of Fortaleza, and José Cavalcante Uchôa, a captain in that same militia.[87] To confirm its commitment to Dom Pedro I and to the imperial government in Rio de Janeiro, when news arrived in December concerning the nearby province of Piauí's civil war between supporters and opponents of independence, the *cearense* junta sent army troops to aid the former.[88]

During 1822, the *cearense* junta faced another major crisis, one that had been inherited from Rubim's administration. Pereira Filgueiras, the captain-major of Crato, who had been leading the mixed-race rebels in an effort to restore the absolutist regime, had now reinvented himself and his followers as stalwart defenders of the constitution and of the independence of Brazil. He accused the junta of lacking true commitment to independence and of hindering its success.[89] Pereira Filgueiras' sudden shift should not be seen as a change of creed but as a clever political manoeuvre. The captain-major had plotted against the monarchy back in 1817, with the intention of joining forces with republican rebels in Pernambuco.[90] At the last moment he switched sides and positioned himself as loyal subject fighting his former allies. As discussed above, in 1821 he had refused to acknowledge the constitutional system and built support by falsely claiming that constitutional rule would lead to the enslavement of people of colour. A year later, he again changed his political views, now favouring a constitutional monarchy, and one independent of Portugal. Pereira Filgueiras demonstrated little ideological coherence, following a course of action based on what could preserve his powers or perhaps enhance them. He formed a broad alliance between Crato and other towns, established an electoral college that elected a 'provisional government' claiming to be the legitimate provincial government, and marched on the provincial capital at the head of an army made up of mixed-race individuals.[91]

The captain-major's behaviour and actions bear strong resemblance to the phenomenon of caudillismo that was pervasive in contemporary Spanish-American republics. According to John Lynch, the caudillo 'first emerged as a local hero, the strong man of his region, whose authority derived from ownership of land, access to men and resources, and achievements that impressed for their value or their valour'.[92] In weak or weakened states, caudillos found fertile ground for action. 'Caudillos were thus likely to emerge when the state was in disarray, the political process disrupted, and society in turmoil', says Lynch; 'personalism and violence took the place of law and institutions, and the rule of the powerful was preferred to representative government'.[93] 'In general terms', Jeffrey M. Shumway

[87]*Ibid.*

[88]'Registro da portaria de capitão de comissão passada ao tenente quartel-mestre Luiz Rodrigues Chaves', Registro de Patentes, 1820–1841, APEC, Governo da Capitania (hereafter GC), box 22, vol. 74, fol. 135r.

[89]José Pereira Filgueiras to the municipal chamber of Russas, 29 Oct. 1822, Fortaleza, AHU, CU-Brasil, box 24, doc. 1394.

[90]Rubim to Monteiro Torres, 23 Nov. 1821.

[91]Pereira Filgueiras to Russas, 29 Oct. 1822.

[92]John Lynch, *Caudillos in Spanish America, 1800–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 4.

[93]*Ibid.*

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emphasises, 'caudillos are usually associated with the nineteenth century, when charismatic strongmen provided a semblance of stability in the power vacuum left at independence'.[94] Caudillo leadership has been characterised as 'a combination of authoritarianism and primitive populism, which punished opponents and rewarded followers'.[95] Pereira Filgueiras shared similar traits. He took advantage of the political instability in Ceará to revolt against the provincial administration, hoping to assume power, while leading the mixed-race peasantry, which he would reward with militia posts once he occupied Fortaleza.

The Rise of Pereira Filgueiras

As a result of Pereira Filgueiras' actions, the provisional junta had collapsed by December 1822, and only Xavier Torres remained, with the sole purpose of transferring the administration to him. On 23 January 1823 Pereira Filgueiras took office along with other members of a new 'temporary government' in Fortaleza. Its composition is worth noting, since the previous administration had comprised members from northern towns.[96] The victorious rebels, however, originated from central and southern Ceará, pointing to what seems to be to the basis of Pereira Filgueiras' appeal: the southern region's ambition to dominate the province.[97] Politically more noteworthy, however, is the explanation given by Pereira Filgueiras to the imperial government in Rio de Janeiro for his actions. In a letter to the minister of war – one that has been ignored by historians – the captain-major accused the defunct junta of 'treason' and 'despotism', and its members of being 'passionate sectarians of the party opposed to the independence of Brazil'.[98]

The accusations against the junta should not be taken at face value, however. As stated earlier, Pereira Filgueiras reinterpreted recent events to suit his ambitions. Now he positioned himself and his supporters as the victims of oppression by a provincial government dominated by Portuguese nationals that feigned adherence to the project of independence. In the letter, he claimed that the presence of Portuguese-born individuals in the provincial administration 'excited the people [i.e. the masses] to a well-founded distrust of [possible] treason and more'. He added that he and his allies felt compelled to 'obey the demands of the people to avoid seditious acts, to appease and to contain them', thus 'dismissing Europeans [Portuguese] from offices, positions and posts in the entire province'. He further stated that he had dismissed most army officers because of 'popular tumults in which the unhindered *plebe* were starting to mistreat Europeans'. In turn, Pereira Filgueiras replaced them with supporters, with the goal of solidifying his position. Finally, the captain-major described the racial background of those whom he called 'the masses', declaring that they had freely joined his ranks, and asking for the

[94]Jeffrey M. Shumway, 'Juan Manuel de Rosas: Authoritarian Caudillo and Primitive Populist', *History Compass*, 2: 1 (2004), pp. 2–3.

[95]*Ibid*, p. 2.

[96]"Termo de eleição do governo provisório do Ceará', Livro de Atas da Câmara Municipal de Fortaleza, 1818–1823, fols. 130r–133v.

[97]João Brígido, *Homens e factos* (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. Besnard Frères, 1919), p. 445.

[98]José Pereira Filgueiras to João Vieira de Carvalho, 20 Feb. 1823, Fortaleza, Governo das Armas às Cortes Gerais e Ministérios no Rio de Janeiro, APEC, GC, box 13, vol. 46, fols. 6r–12r.

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creation of further *pardo* militias in Icó, Aracati and Fortaleza.[99] There is evidence that he promoted several individuals in the *pardo* militias during this period, including Azevedo e Silva, raised from captain to *sargento-mor*, and Cavalcante Uchôa, who went from captain to lieutenant-colonel, both of whom had signed Ceará's acclamation of the independence of Brazil.[100]

Under Pereira Filgueiras' new provincial regime, arbitrary actions and violence became common. Portuguese were arrested and routinely beaten, and firearms belonging to all inhabitants of Fortaleza were confiscated.[101] A few months later, on 13 September, the provincial government learned of a conspiracy by a group of 'freed and captive negroes' in Fortaleza and the surrounding area, what it called 'a childish and insane uprising'.[102] Their leader was a freed Black named Raimundo Vieira, whom his followers dubbed 'the colonel', perhaps in imitation of *pardo* people who had been awarded their own militia units. As noted by André Roberto Machado, 'the slaves engaged with the political debate then under discussion in their own way, most of the time arriving at a particular interpretation of the ideas that circulated'.[103] Therefore, 'they paid attention to what was happening, hoping that they could improve their rights or change their situation'.[104] Nevertheless, the provincial government reacted swiftly to the nascent uprising, sending an army detachment to arrest the culprits. After their capture, Vieira and some unidentified Black women informed on their own companions. They received severe punishment, and, despite the free status of some of the conspirators, were treated as slaves, and were not granted a trial. Vieira, 'the colonel', was given 200 lashes, 'for two successive days', the others were given 100 lashes, and a Black woman named Rosa suffered 'two dozen blows with a paddle [*palmatoada*]'.[105]

Whether the freed and captive Blacks were indeed planning an uprising is uncertain, but the apparent participation of Black women suggests broader coordination. It is worth pointing out that neither the defunct provisional junta nor Pereira Filgueiras' temporary government bestowed militia ranks on Black men, thus denying them an alternative source for social advancement. In Ceará, the Henriques militias (units for Blacks, named after their founder) existed until 1798, but the government made no attempts to recreate them. As seen with the *pardo* insurgents in Crato and with the failed uprising by freed and enslaved Blacks, some form of solidarity seems to have existed within a race category, but there is no indication that it crossed racial lines. Nevertheless, the provincial government's decision to deploy army soldiers to suppress the emerging insurrection, rather than the newly raised

[99]*Ibid.*

[100]See 'Registro de Nomeações e Patentes, 1780–1830', APEC, GC, box 18, vol. 62, fols. 308v–315r, 322v–323r, 336r–338r.

[101]See 'Registro Geral de Correspondência, 1823–1824', APEC, Governo da Província (Caixas), box 1, vol. 1, fols. 1r, 3v–4r; 'Registro de Actas', vol. 1, fol. 10r–10v.

[102]'Registro de Actas', vol. 1, fols. 44v–45v.

[103]Machado, *A quebra*, p. 104.

[104]*Ibid.*

[105]'Registro de Actas', vol. 1, fols. 44v–45v. Vieira was possibly intimidated or beaten to force him to divulge information about his companions and received further punishment afterwards. Free persons of colour had also been flogged in Pernambuco in the aftermath of the 1817 rebellion, but that occurred under an absolutist regime, not under a self-proclaimed constitutional government as in Ceará. See Bernardes, *O patriotismo constitucional*, pp. 232–3.

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pardo militias, suggests the possibility that it did not entirely trust the latter to engage people of different colour. In the other Brazilian provinces, the non-white population's attitude to independence varied and did not follow a clear pattern. In September 1822, a group of African freedmen and slaves – led by a 'king' – revolted in the village of São Mateus, in Bahia, intending to kill whites and mixed-race individuals, but sparing creole Blacks.[106] In the province of Grão-Pará, Indians and Blacks, including slaves, jointly rebelled in favour of independence in April and May of 1823.[107]

The rapid response of the *cearense* government in the case of the freed and enslaved Blacks illustrates the double standard applied by the regime established by Pereira Filgueiras in respect of mass mobilisation and popular violence. As mentioned in the Introduction, one of its members, the priest Pereira, pleaded for his colleagues to take firm action against the spread of violence by people of African descent, but little was done, because political violence was tolerated.[108] The perpetrators, whom the priest called 'rabble and scum', could not have been the *pardo* militia officers, who were well known and respected, and could easily have been identified. The attacks could not have been the result of mounting racial tension since the former junta never alluded to unruly conduct by persons of colour in Fortaleza. Priest Pereira did not describe any similar behaviour in towns in which Pereira Filgueiras' faction held control before ousting the previous administration. He did comment on the forceful requisitions for cattle, firearms and ammunition during the march on the provincial capital, but not on intimidation or physical aggression against Portuguese in other towns.[109]

This leaves open the question of why this phenomenon occurred in Fortaleza. A possible interpretation is that the perpetrators were Pereira Filgueiras' henchmen, or at least had his tacit endorsement, and the attacks were carried out to intimidate enemies and possible rivals, and to strengthen his position. It is equally possible that they were Black men who had found service under Pereira Filgueiras in an informal capacity as the only available avenue for advancement and social inclusion. It is reasonable to assume that the captain-major tolerated popular mobilisation only if it occurred under his authority, as seen with his fierce reaction to the attempt by freed and enslaved Blacks led by Vieira ('the colonel') to instigate an insurrection. Not nearly enough is known about the causes of popular violence, but it probably reflected some genuine, budding Lusophobia, in addition to Pereira Filgueiras' political calculations. According to Ximenes de Aragão, who witnessed the stream of violence spread to interior towns – particularly to Quixeramobim, where he was living at the time – there were Brazilian-born children of Portuguese who did not care if their parents were beaten or suffered some other appalling treatment.[110] Lusophobia also became common in other Brazilian provinces. It 'marked a fundamental step in defining the nation.

[106]João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*, trans. Arthur Brakel (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 53–4.

[107]Machado, *A quebra*, p. 167.

[108]Priest Vicente José Pereira was an ally of Pereira Filgueiras, and was elected to the provincial government after the latter removed Porbem Barbosa's faction.

[109]'Registro de Actas', vol. 1, fols. 12v–19r. See also Pereira, 'Memoria apresentada a junta', pp. 60–1.

[110]Ximenes de Aragão, 'Memorias', p. 62.

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Indeed, many Brazilians received their first lessons in what it meant to be Brazilian while hearing anti-Portuguese diatribes or participating in the sack of a Portuguese shop.'[111] Jeffrey D. Needell has commented on this form of popular mobilisation: 'It should be stated that the controlled use of violent urban poor, people generally Afro-Brazilian or African, to intimidate constituted authority or … to intimidate or eliminate rivals during elections, makes its appearance early on in the monarchy's history.'[112] Pereira Filgueiras' authoritarian rule, characterised by its political violence, its anti-Portuguese stance, its populism, and its appeal for support from the masses, particularly people of colour, was not unique to Ceará. Indeed, the same happened under regional leaders elsewhere in Brazil, such as Miguel dos Santos Freire e Bruce in the province of Maranhão (1823–4) and, briefly, Pedro da Silva Pedroso in Pernambuco (1823).[113]

As seen above in his letter to the minister of war (note 98), Pereira Filgueiras gave the impression that only he could appease the masses, and therefore contain them. The captain-major was playing on the ruling elite's notorious apprehension over race war. It is apparent that Pereira Filgueiras had no intention of improving the lives of the masses or providing meaningful political advances for Ceará, since the former junta's reformist plans were ignored. Indeed, the distraught priest Pereira complained that nothing had been accomplished since the seizure of the government: 'From then to now, how has the province been improved? I do not know.'[114] Rather, Pereira Filgueiras was preoccupied with amassing an army to engage the troops still loyal to Portugal in Piauí and Maranhão. He spent months marching through the *cearense* countryside, gathering soldiers to his cause and arresting those he deemed disloyal.[115]

The War of Independence and Later Developments

Pereira Filgueiras' mobilisation effort was hindered when the inhabitants of Crato, Jardim and Lavras rebelled against forced recruitment and requisitions.[116] In those towns, which had previously rebelled against Rubim, Pereira Filgueiras stated that 'a great party is being organised against our holy cause', whose supporters called themselves 'soldiers of Our Lord Jesus Christ'.[117] He accused them of being partisans of Portugal, calling them 'ignorant people' and an 'unruly coloured rabble [*cabraria desenfreada*]'.[118] The rebels' location, religiosity and race are indicators that they were quite possibly the same *pardo* individuals as those who had once

[111]Kraay, *Race*, p. 147.

[112]Jeffrey D. Needell, *The Party of Order: The Conservatives, the State, and Slavery in the Brazilian Monarchy, 1831–1871* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 96.

[113]Matthias Röhrig Assunção, 'Miguel Bruce e os "horrores da anarquia" no Maranhão, 1822–1827', in Jancsó (ed.), *Independência*, p. 352; Mello, *A outra independência*, pp. 121–7; Mosher, *Political Struggle*, pp. 57–62.

[114]'Registro de Actas', vol. 1, fols. 12v–19r. See also Pereira, 'Memoria apresentada a junta', p. 75.

[115]Tristão de Alencar Araripe, 'Expedição do Ceará em auxílio do Piauhi e Maranhão', *Revista Trimensal do Instituto Historico Geographico e Ethnographico do Brazil*, 48: 1 (1885), pp. 258, 285, 291, 300–1, 306, 318, 324–5, 334, 339, 345, 369–70, 375–6.

[116]*Ibid.*, pp. 255–6, 267, 283, 308.

[117]*Ibid.*, p. 308.

[118]*Ibid.*, pp. 353–4, 293.

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followed him. The captain-major's disparaging description of his erstwhile followers gives credence to this conclusion, despite his arguing that Crato 'was the first to give an example of liberalism'.[119] As seen above, his insurrection against Rubim in 1821 was in defiance of the liberal constitutional regime, not in its support. Pereira Filgueiras reinvented himself as a liberal (that is, a supporter of constitutional rule) afterwards, when it suited his ambitions, and he never hesitated in refashioning past events or his enemies in whichever form seemed useful to him, as he did with the provisional junta led by Porbem Barbosa and Xavier Torres. Nevertheless, the *cabras* showed that they were not his pawns, and would, if necessary, pursue an autonomous course of action. Their former leader, on the other hand, revealed his despotic character, stating that 'first, we need to pacify our province so that then we can assist the neighbouring [one], and in this mission, we shall even be excessive, since insubordinate and servile people respect only government with an iron fist'.[120] The independence movement in Ceará had derailed into authoritarianism.

Military actions are beyond the scope of this article, but a brief description of a few is useful. For example, the battle of Jenipapo (Piauí) and the siege of Caxias (Maranhão) are frequently cited, but less known are the captures of the town of Oeiras and of the villages of Piracuruca and Parnaíba (all three in Piauí), the latter occupied by more than 200 *cearense* soldiers, 'almost all Indians from Serra Grande [i.e. the Ibiapaba mountains in Ceará], badly equipped, and only 12 soldiers from the battalion of [the first] line [i.e. the army] … with three [artillery] pieces of small calibre, [and] commanded by a lieutenant-colonel'.[121] They were part of smaller military expeditions that had been sent from Ceará while Pereira Filgueiras slowly mobilised his main army. In Piracuruca, before its capture, a slave and an Indian officer from Ceará were seized, having been sent as envoys 'to recruit the Indians from that district'.[122] It is unclear if these two individuals were promised rewards, if any, for their actions, but it demonstrates that Pereira Filgueiras and his allies did not treat all slaves with suspicion.

Only after he had subdued the rebels in Crato and nearby towns did Pereira Filgueiras' army march through Piauí and Maranhão, supporting local pro-independence forces, including the other troops from Ceará who had arrived earlier.[123] It included *pardo* militias led by Azevedo e Silva, the young commanding

[119]*Ibid.*, p. 293.

[120]*Ibid.*

[121]'Carnaubeiras – 13 de abril', *Conciliador* (São Luís), no. 186, 23 April 1823; 'Officios da câmara constitucional da villa de Caxias, à excelentíssima junta provisoria', *Conciliador* (São Luís), no. 193, 17 May 1823.

[122]*Conciliador* (São Luís), no. 168, 19 Feb. 1823.

[123]For the independence military campaign in Brazil's north, including the 8,000-man *cearense* expedition, see Rodrigues, *Independência*, vol. 3, pp. 234–58. For comparison, there were around 12,000 Brazilian soldiers (from Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco, Paraíba and Alagoas) on the northeastern front (Bahia) and 4,500 (from São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul) on the southern front (province of Cisplatina, now Uruguay): see Rodrigues, *Independência*, vol. 3, pp. 190, 218. With reinforcements from Pernambuco and Piauí, the *cearense* army grew to around 10,000 men. See Rodrigues, *Independência*, vol. 3, p. 244. For a modern appraisal of Ceará's participation, see Franchini Neto, *Independência e morte*, pp. 423–46, 476–91. Albeit an effective general history of Brazilian independence, *Independência e morte* makes no use of most of the primary sources employed in this article in its discussion of Ceará.

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officer from Fortaleza and now a lieutenant-colonel.[124] These actions and participants indicate something of the nature and role of Ceará in the region's movement towards independence.[125] Pro-independence forces pressed the weakened troops still faithful to Portugal, who capitulated on 31 July 1823.[126] Isolated, the province of Grão-Pará followed the others shortly after, and all of the northern region, including most of the Amazon, was incorporated into the Brazilian empire.[127] The military aid provided by what was to be known as the Exército Auxiliador (Auxiliary Army), the Brazilian coalition that defeated the Portuguese loyalists, came at a considerable cost. Pereira Filgueiras, as the commanding officer of the army, demanded financial compensation from Maranhão to cover the costs of fielding it.[128]

After the return of the victorious *cearense* troops to their province, Pereira Filgueiras sought to consolidate his rule, repressing any opposition, real or imagined. Among the measures taken, a militia battalion 'composed mostly of European officers and soldiers' was disarmed on 26 February 1824 and its weaponry given to the *pardo* militia.[129] Ximenes de Aragão recalled that militia infantry battalions had been created, but that white men refused to serve as soldiers.[130] Since the rank and file was largely filled by the poor, it seems reasonable to assume that the provincial government's increased tolerance of popular Lusophobia drove away whites within the lower social classes. Heightened racial tensions were possibly another major contributor to the unwillingness of whites to serve in the militia. Furthermore, a move by Dom Pedro I to appoint a provincial president (governor) for Ceará served as the catalyst for Pereira Filgueiras' decision on 26 August 1824 to secede from the empire and join the Confederação do Equador with rebellious Pernambuco, an ill-fated and abortive attempt at forming an independent republic.[131] The remaining civilian and military leadership of Fortaleza, many of whom had been either participants in or supporters of the provisional junta during the time of Porbem Barbosa and Xavier Torres, were arrested and exiled without trial.[132] Pereira Filgueiras' decision to adhere to republicanism owed less to a sincere ideological shift than to his consistent efforts to advance and maintain his position. During the rebellion against the imperial government, Pereira Filgueiras counted on the support of Azevedo e Silva, considered one of the strongest advocates of the republican system.[133] The *pardo* militia officer was imprisoned and sentenced to death for his part in the rebellion, but subsequently pardoned by the

[124]Alencar Araripe, 'Expedição do Ceará', p. 293.

[125]*Ibid.*, pp. 249, 377, 491.

[126]Rodrigues, *Independência*, vol. 3, p. 245.

[127]The naval fleet commanded by British Admiral Thomas Cochrane provided valuable assistance by blocking the main ports. See Rodrigues, *Independência*, vol. 3, pp. 256–7.

[128]Alencar Araripe, 'Expedição do Ceará', pp. 518, 524, 526–7.

[129]'Registro de Actas', vol. 1, fol. 79r.

[130]Ximenes de Aragão, 'Memorias', pp. 63–4.

[131]Brígido, *Homens*, pp. 451–5. For the wider context of the republican rebellion, see Barman, *Brazil*, pp. 122–3.

[132]José Pereira Filgueiras to Luís Rodrigues Chaves, 25 April 1824, Fortaleza, ANRJ, Ofícios do Ceará (hereafter OC), IJ[1] 719.

[133]Municipal chamber of Fortaleza to Dom Pedro I, 27 Nov. 1824, Fortaleza, ANRJ, OC, IJ[1] 719.

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emperor.[134] Pereira Filgueiras was captured by imperial troops in November 1824 and died of *sezões* (malaria) whilst being taken to Rio de Janeiro.[135]

Conclusion

The independence of Brazil followed a difficult and unpredictable course. It began as an attempt to implement a constitutional system under liberal principles within the Portuguese colonial empire, and eventually led to the dissolution of the Portuguese–Brazilian union and the birth of the independent empire of Brazil. By the time the rebellion known as the Confederação do Equador ended in 1824, barely any among the principal personages in Ceará remained as leaders, in particular those involved in the main events since Rubim's administration. They had been either deposed, imprisoned, or exiled. Many others experienced worse fates, especially the anonymous masses, who suffered violence and death on the streets, in the countryside and on battlefields. The elite, despite their internal struggles, sought to avoid revolutionary or radical political projects, particularly those that could result in an undesirable form of independence, one in which the established social order could be more easily contested. As remarked by Mosher, 'political instability … opened up space for challenges from groups previously excluded from formal politics. Across Brazil … the challenge to traditional political autonomy created opportunities for the lower classes to assert themselves.'[136] Indeed, despite the dangers, many poor, non-white *cearenses* willingly joined the political process, seeing it as an avenue for personal advance, or because they believed in a particular cause. Others felt compelled to participate, fearing for their livelihood and status as free individuals.

These developments, it is necessary to emphasise, occurred amidst 'doubts about the relationship with Rio de Janeiro, radical liberal demands for change, factional conflicts among elites, slave revolts, lower-class mobilisations that sought to broaden the meaning of liberalism and extend citizenship, and complex racial politics'.[137] It is true that the *cearense* people reacted to events that often happened beyond their control, namely the constitutionalist revolution of 1820 in Portugal and the struggle between prince Dom Pedro and the Portuguese Cortes in 1822. However, the agency of people of colour also furthered the wider historical process. Marcus J. M. de Carvalho observed that terms such as constitution, rights, freedom and independence 'were reinterpreted within the prism through which each particular section [of society] understood the world'. Predictably, '*pardos*, Blacks and the rest of the marginalised population did exactly that'.[138]

As noted above, in 1821, faced with the imagined prospect of losing their freedom, people of colour in Crato and Jardim staged an uprising against the

[134]Session of 15 June 1826, *Annaes do Parlamento Brazileiro, Camara dos Srs. Deputados, primeiro anno da primeira legislatura, sessão de 1826*, vol. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. do Imperial Instituto Artístico, 1874), p. 145.

[135]*Abelha do Itaculumy* (Ouro Preto), no. 23, 23 Feb. 1825, p. 89, no. 44, 13 April 1825, pp. 174–5, and *Diário Fluminense* (Rio de Janeiro), no. 31, 10 Feb. 1825, p. 121.

[136]Mosher, *Political Struggle*, p. 57.

[137]Kraay, *Race*, p. 256.

[138]Carvalho, 'Os negros armados', in Jancsó (ed.), *Independência*, pp. 897–8.

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constitutional government, evidencing both their mistrust of the constitutionalists' intentions as well of what the new order would entail for the masses. At the same time, *pardos* in Fortaleza and elsewhere willingly endorsed the new regime, seeing in it a unique opportunity for social advancement. Both groups served as an essential support base for successive *cearense* administrations, fielding troops for the conflicts between the regional elites and against the armies faithful to Portugal in nearby provinces. It was on *pardos* and some Blacks that Pereira Filgueiras relied to take power, harass political enemies and demobilise white militias. His leadership, which was authoritarian, personalist and ideologically incoherent, had similarities to that of Spanish-American caudillos. His followers were not his pawns, though. In 1823, when his despotic measures threatened their freedom and property, the *pardos* of Crato and Jardim revolted against their former leader, forcing him to postpone his march through Piauí and Maranhão. The relationship between the masses and whomever they chose to follow was founded on a perceived mutual exchange of benefits.

However, such association was often unequal, even among people of colour. Pereira Filgueiras created militia battalions specifically for *pardos*, but none for Blacks. In her study of popular participation in Rio de Janeiro, Ribeiro noted that 'Slaves and freedmen also claimed legal freedom of action and of autonomy in the public space.'[139] It is possible that exclusion from the militia may have pushed some freed blacks to consort with slaves in the planned slave uprising of 1823 in Fortaleza, to which Pereira Filgueiras' government reacted with violence, treating culprits as if they were the same, regardless of freed or enslaved status. Not all slaves were treated with suspicion, though. The incident mentioned above, of the capture of a *cearense* slave and an Indian in Piracuruca sent to recruit local Indigenous communities to the Brazilian side, reveals that there were slaves in the *cearense* army.[140] Furthermore, Pereira Filgueiras' appeal to racial conflict and his authoritarian measures proved to have an adverse effect once he was ousted in late 1824. Upon the collapse of the Confederação do Equador in Ceará, people of colour sought revenge on the supporters of the fallen regime, by harassing and attacking them, even threatening white women with kidnap in order to force them to give birth to mixed-race children. Fearing that a racial massacre would occur as in Haiti, the whites retaliated, fighting off the seditious *pardos*. Racial division seems to have been only one aspect of what motivated non-white people's actions, however. In the perspective of mixed-race peasants, the republican rebels were opposed to Catholicism and other traditional values that they held dear, in quite similar fashion to what occurred in Crato in 1821.[141]

It must be emphasised that people of colour in Ceará comprised an heterogenous group with distinct goals. The peasants in Crato and nearby areas were more interested in protecting their established customs. The same can be argued about those who remained loyal to the imperial state during the rebellion of the Confederação do Equador of 1824. It is reasonable to claim that the reaction was similar to what happened in the early stages of Mexican independence in 1810, when the Spanish-American counterparts of *cearense* people of colour joined priest

[139]Ribeiro, *A liberdade em construção*, pp. 316–17.
[140]*Conciliador* (São Luís), no. 168, 19 Feb. 1823.
[141]Ximenes de Aragão, 'Memorias', pp. 72–5.

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Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's revolt. As described by Eric Van Young, they sought 'to defend the integrity of their local communities and to keep the colonial state at arm's length, not to demolish it and still less to create an independent nation to replace it'.[142] It is no surprise then that the multiracial masses in Ceará considered the preservation of the monarchy under Dom Pedro I the least disruptive alternative, once the old colonial order had been eroded. Indeed, there were other *pardos*, with some education and positioned higher within society, who understood the adoption of a constitutional regime as an avenue for social advancement and greater influence in local affairs, as was the case with mixed-race individuals in Fortaleza and surrounding areas.

That *pardos* were assigned ranks within racially segregated militias but were not given positions within the provincial administration nor among elected offices is revealing of the limitations of the multiracial alliances that were formed during independence. This was hardly unique to Ceará, or Brazil in general. Aline Helg remarked that, in Colombia, 'Neither during events leading to the First Independence nor during the war up to Spanish reconquest did free men of color, women, slaves, and Indians lastingly challenge the elite leaders or upset the colonial socioracial order. In the major cities, in effect, the white elite's alliance with free men of color … remained highly hierarchical.'[143] There was a similar occurrence in Argentina, in which mulattoes and Blacks 'capitalized on their military service to win upward mobility denied them by the society at large. The Afro-Argentines lived in a white man's society; the alternatives were either to fight his wars or to suffer the consequences of refusing to do so.'[144] Indeed, Indians, *pardos* and Blacks from Ceará were engaged in the military operations against the troops still loyal to Portugal, playing an essential part in the appropriation of the northern region to the Brazilian empire, but they fought under the expectation that their cause would reward them accordingly.

The social group that fared the worst were slaves. Their attempts at achieving freedom and integration in local society were largely rejected, as seen in the aftermath of the slave conspiracy led by Vieira in Fortaleza. Unlike in Spanish America, where slavery was abolished in most countries in the first few decades after independence, in Brazil the institution would be perpetuated for much longer. The law of 20 October 1823, which established the framework and functions of provincial governments, was among the causes of the establishment of the Confederação do Equador, particularly because of the provision that allowed the emperor to maintain the right to appoint provincial presidents. Less well known is that among the provincial presidents' responsibilities was that of 'taking care to promote the fair treatment of slaves, and of proposing means to facilitate their gradual emancipation'.[145] However, this anti-slavery provision had few concrete results. Emperor Dom Pedro I, despite his shortcomings as monarch, sponsored fairly liberal projects, mainly the promulgation of the imperial constitution of 1824, which

[142]Eric Van Young, *Stormy Passage: Mexico from Colony to Republic, 1750–1850* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), pp. 142–3.

[143]Helg, *Liberty and Equality*, p. 147.

[144]Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines*, p. 137.

[145]Law of 20 Oct. 1823, art. 24, para. 10, in *Publicações do Archivo Nacional*, vol. 23 (Rio de Janeiro: Oficinas Gráficas do Archivo Nacional, 1925), p. liv.

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established low requirements for political participation and implicitly recognised racial equality – or at least it did not enforce racial barriers, unlike colonial legislation. This allowed even free Blacks to enjoy some political participation under the constitutional monarchy.[146] Despite practical limitations, since racial prejudice persisted and society remained profoundly hierarchical, the early liberal endeavours of the Brazilian constitutional monarchy demonstrated that there were developments in terms of civil rights for the multiracial masses, and that their participation in the independence movement had thus some positive consequences.

Historiography has not given Ceará the scrutiny it deserves, despite its significance for the independence of Brazil, which enjoyed considerable popular contribution, notably from people of colour. In her work about masculinity, violence and honour among peasantry in the *cearense* backlands, Martha S. Santos correctly observed that 'an area that still needs investigation relates to the question of how other political developments at the national level … affected the practice of violence' among peasants.[147] This article has sought to correct this lacuna, at least concerning popular participation during independence. It has demonstrated that people of colour in Ceará were not simply spectators or passive actors during the chaotic years of the movement for independence. The political elite reacted to their activities and demands, and sought to enact policies in response, either in favour or in opposition. What matters is that the *cearense* masses, comprised mostly of mixed-race persons from distinct backgrounds, carried out an active and crucial function in the entire process. Their decisive engagement, in both provincial and regional politics, shows that Ceará must be included in a broader history of popular mobilisation in Brazil.

La independencia indeseada: gente de color, guerra racial y liderazgo autoritario en Ceará, Brasil, 1821–3

La independencia de Brasil (1822) significó su separación de Portugal y también su nacimiento como imperio independiente. Resulta necesario comprender el papel que tuvieron las personas de color en este movimiento independentista. Centrándose en Ceará, el argumento principal de este artículo es que las personas de color, tanto libres como esclavas, desempeñaron un papel activo y significativo en la independencia de Brasil, ya que lucharon por la libertad, por los derechos establecidos y por una mayor participación en los asuntos públicos. Esto fue logrado en medio de un clima de agitación social, inestabilidad política y el surgimiento de un liderazgo autoritario local resultante del colapso del antiguo orden colonial. Como un estudio de la agencia de los subalternos, las contribuciones de este artículo van aun más allá, ya que el material primario consultado describe el papel vital de Ceará en la absorción de las regiones del norte de Brasil en el nuevo imperio, un tema poco estudiado en sí mismo.

Palabras clave: independencia de Brasil; gente de color; imperio de Brasil; conspiración esclava; guerra racial; agencia subalterna

[146]See articles 1, 6, 91–7 and 179 of the Political Constitution of the Empire of Brazil, in João Camilo de Oliveira Torres, *A democracia coroada: Teoria política do Império do Brasil*, 3rd edn (Brasilia: Câmara dos Deputados, 2017 [1964]), pp. 595–6, 606, 617–20.

[147]Santos, *Cleansing Honor*, p. 216.

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A independência indesejada: pessoas de cor, guerra racial e liderança autoritária no Ceará, Brasil, 1821–3

A independência do Brasil (1822) resultou na separação do país de Portugal e em seu nascimento como um império independente. É importante entender o papel das pessoas de cor no movimento pela independência. Com foco no Ceará, o principal argumento deste artigo é que as pessoas de cor, tanto livres quanto escravizadas, desempenharam um papel ativo e significativo na independência do Brasil, pois lutaram pela liberdade, pelos direitos estabelecidos e pela maior participação nos assuntos públicos. Elas conseguiram isso em meio à agitação social, à instabilidade política e ao surgimento de lideranças autoritárias locais resultantes do colapso da antiga ordem colonial. Como um estudos em ação subalterna, as contribuições deste artigo vão ainda mais longe, pois o material de fonte primária consultado retrata o papel vital do Ceará na absorção das regiões do norte do Brasil pelo novo império – um tópico pouco estudado por si só.

Palavras-chave: independência do Brasil; pessoas de cor; império do Brasil; conspiração de escravos; guerra racial; ação subalterna

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