The Cabanagem –
The Amazon's 'caste war' and some comparative perspectives.

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Prologue

After one foiled attempt to storm Belém, the capital of the Amazonian province of Grão-Pará, a group of landowners, artisans, soldiers and peasants, planned another takeover during a major festivity celebrating the patron saint of Indians, São Tomé. In the early morning of 7th January 1835 the rebels stormed the capital, murdered the region's president, his deputy and some Portuguese traders, and opened the prisons. The rebellion had begun. Now known as the Cabanagem, it occurred during a time of general social upheaval in not just Pará but also Brazil. The term Cabanagem means the activity of people who live in *cabanas*, the region's poorest housing – palm and wood huts. The rebels were called *cabanos*, those who lived in thatched huts, and comprised all the kinds of people living in the Brazilian Amazon at the time: Indians, people of mixed descent, whites from Portugal, freed slaves and slaves.[1]

On that opening day a prominent landowner was released from prison and declared the new president. The administration in Rio refused to recognise him, despite his proclamation of allegiance to the Empire of Brazil and Pedro II. Yet the rebels were in control of the provincial government and sought to continue its functioning. Soon factions opened up, bringing to the surface previous differences between the local élites and their poorer allies. The soldiers of one group (the urban and rural poor) fought with those of the president (an élite liberal). The president was captured, and, on his way to prison, shot and his body mutilated.

In the following month, February 1835, the dominant group elected another president. Again, Rio would not recognize him, and appointed their own man, sending him to Pará with

[1] *Cabanos* carries associations of backwardness, poverty, and sedition. It is unlikely the rebels ever accepted the term *cabanos* for themselves; and they had no overall name for their rebellion. The leading participants described themselves as "defendores da patria e liberdade." The term *Cabanagem* was applied retrospectively, later in the nineteenth century (the first source, which remains authoritative, is Domingos Antonio Raiol's multi volume study which was first published in 1865.)

troops under the command of a British mercenary. These forces retook Belém easily in June 1835: cabanos had been told to lay down their arms by their president. However, the capital was once again taken by the rebels in late August in a fierce battle, in full view of not just the Brazilian navy but also the Portuguese, British, American and French naval forces, whose presence had been requested by consuls to protect their countries's citizens and property. The rebels were a force to be reckoned with. The third, and most important, rebel president was adopted by a victorious crowd in August 1835.

The Cabanagem at this time was a broad and fragile alliance composed of different interests and with an international dimension. Radical liberal ideas brought together those living in rural and urban districts, and appealed to long-standing animosities against distant control by outsiders, arbitrary justice and economic exploitation. Yet the regency administration feared the break up of the newly independent nation of Brazil and did not respect the people in charge of the disobedient province. The violent pacification of the region was justified by portraying the movement as a race war, dominated by 'people of colour' incapable of ruling themselves. The Rio administration argued that Brazil must be kept different from the rest of Latin America. That is, it should not break up into smaller parts and should keep its monarchy. [2] Independent Brazil became an empire, governed from Rio by an emperor, a descendent of the Portuguese royal family.

On 13th May 1836 the capital reverted to imperial hands. But the rebellion had not ended, for the rest of the region became embroiled in conflict. As it developed, ethnic and class alliances changed. For four more years battles continued. While rebels gradually lost towns and fortified rural encampments, they were never defeated militarily. The advice from the Pará president in 1839 to the Minister of War in Rio was that the insurgency could never be eradicated for the rebels knew the environment too well. Organised attacks continued until a general amnesty was granted to all rebels by Emperor Pedro II, who was prematurely proclaimed of age at fourteen years old on 23rd July 1840.

The basis for continental comparison

This chapter continues the history of Amazonians Indians recounted by Barbara Sommer in her chapter. It moves to the first part of the nineteenth century and includes not

[2] For the general context of Brazilian dissimilarity see Kenneth Maxwell, 'Why was Brazil different: The Contexts of Independence', in his *Naked Tropics*, New York, Routledge, 2003, pp. 145-170.

just Indians but others who fought in the Cabanagem. At the turn of the eighteenth century *índios aldeados* (village Indians, or domesticated Indians) were declared legally dead, and no longer under the tutelage of the secular state.[3] New policies were implemented to promote an independent peasantry and class of artisans. Collectively these people were known as *gente de côr,* variably by whites, and occasionally as a term of auto-denomination (for example during the Cabanagem). It was a vernacular category and not a legal or administrative one. There was a deal of ambiguity about whether it included enslaved Africans. The category of *índios bravos* (wild indian) or *gentio* (literally gentile) continued to be used, referring to Indians who remained as a tribal unit on the fringes of colonial and imperial life, sometimes with very little contact but still affected by it. This area has been called the "tribal zone" by Whitehead and Ferguson (1991).[4] The use of these two categories in Brazil has regional variations, outcomes of local histories and different administrative regimes. For example, the Mundurucu, who played such an important part in the period covered by this article, were officially at peace with the Portuguese Crown from 1796 and some lived in missions, *aldeias*, on the Tapajós River. They remained *índios bravos* from the point of the view of local military officers, but according to the state they were *índios mansos* (tame indians) and no longer on the frontier of colonial life. According to Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (1992) there was quite a lot of confusion in the use of categories in nineteenth century Brazil. This arises from the existence, and interpenetration, of various kinds of classificatory regimes: administrative, practical, regional, nationalist, and literary (Cunha 1992: 136).[5]

This categorical complexity however should not distract from my argument, which concerns the diminishing movement of people across ethnic boundaries and official categories as the 19th century advanced. This period (1800-1840) can be seen as a transition from the contingencies and admixtures of colonial policy and practice to the growing imposition of

[3] Missions were no longer present in the main colonial areas of the Amazon. To all practical purposes all missionaries left when the Jesuits were expelled in 1757 and their property confiscated. The state then took over the running of the old missions. A few missions were set up by priests in the late eighteenth century for the Mundurucu and Maués.

[4] There may also have been Indians beyond the tribal zone but a consideration of this issue at the time is beyond the present purpose. If there were such people, they would have to have no contact with Indians in the tribal zone however indirect. Indians had already lost much of their special juridical and collective status in the middle of the eighteenth century with the secularization of the mission villages and the expulsion of the Jesuits. Prior to the Pombaline reforms of the 1750s, the *junta das missões* oversaw Indian affairs (see Sweet 1992 on Francisca for example). From 1799 Indians disappeared from the census and in effect became part of the poor and what was labeled informally *gente de cor* (for similar discussion of the legal "death" of Indians in Mexico and the Andes see Wachtel and Gruzinski 1997).

[5] Nineteenth century Brazil was bereft of legislation on Indian affairs. As a category they were mentioned very briefly in the first constitution of 1823, concerning the need for the National Assembly to set up establishments for their education. The most significant administrative policy was the regulation of missions in 1845, but this had no political objective (Carneiro da Cunha 1987).

central political control in a newly independent country and hardening of class categories and ethnic frontiers. The result was that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the traffic between those people formerly known as *índios aldeados* and Indians (wild or tame) in the tribal zone became, in practical terms, unbridgeable. What had once been a busy link for the movement of commercial produce and contact with wild Indians for paid labour was effectively shut off. Yet some of these Indian-peasants in the colonial and then national zone (previously *índios aldeados*) continued to identify as Indians (a unique example will be presented). Certainly white elites treated them as badly as ever. And when in alliance with non-Indians they were 'gente de côr', as we will see below. So the situation dazzles with ambiguity.

This shift is specific to the Brazilian Amazon rather than Brazil as a whole. While it is at least half the territory of Brazil, the Amazon has always been somewhat removed and marginal from the nation. Various factors such as its riverine and forested environment and stronger Indian participation have contributed to this historical alterity (in the imagination as well as reality). This article will draw out these specificities and will briefly put them in a comparative perspective by picking out relevant themes.

These are:

1) What conceptions of the *patria* did the rebels, élite and popular, have? With this question we can explore how forms of attachment emerged in relation to the nation-state, and to the land of the Amazon specifically. This is basic to understanding why there was such widespread participation and cross class alliances over the period. The sources used will be the proclamations made by rebels during the time of the Cabanagem.
2) What were the economic features of the region at the time of the Cabanagem and how did they motivate individuals? Here we can examine the increasing control of land and labour by élites, how this affected poorer peasants and others, and the way in which class and ethnicity were related.[6]
3) How did the ethnic and class dimensions of the conflict develop over the course of the rebellion? This question builds on the first one by investigating how a broad alliance of self-identified "Brazilians" succeeded in controlling many towns and rivers and then

[6] Economically, the European desire for chocolate was growing; so prime land for cacao trees on the fertile floodplains near towns was targeted by richer peasants, again a mixture of Portuguese and Brazilian, which in effect meant pushing small-holders out. This land grabbing marginalized further the poor peasants (Indians and their descendants, mixed and otherwise) and threatened their subsistence base. On the one hand, it is impossible to find clear lines in this period between popular and élite, peasant and planter, Portuguese and Brazilian, Indian and white, and so on. This fuzziness makes the characterization of the Cabanagem as a race or caste war difficult to sustain. But this is how it was understood at the time, and how it is still perceived by some. On the other hand, there were political and economic divisions that meant any shared political platform would be tenuous.

broke up as the élite radical liberals abandoned the rebel movement and rejoined forces with the regency government.

These themes are far from exhaustive but they focus and facilitate the comparison with the Andes and the rest of Latin America. Popular culture and religion, the role of the church, and in particular priests, are amongst the topics that are not considered.

Since the first moves to independence in 1820, when Pará was the first Brazilian province to support the calls for political reforms in Portugal, there had been running battles in the streets of Belém between Portuguese loyalists and Brazilian patriots (Pedro 1 declared independence on 7th September 1822). They had fought over the election of the provincial president and vice president (head of the provincial army), the economic exploitation by outsiders of the riches of the Amazon and the demand for legal equality. These were popular and violent struggles and positions shifted as quickly as the river's currents. Simultaneously, there were other struggles that should be seen as part of the two centuries of colonial presence in Amazon: the looting of villages and farms by Indian 'nations' (and accompanying of murder and kidnap) and the running away of slaves from their masters. The Cabanagem was essentially a confluence of these different threads of resistance and revolt in one long episode. Each person wanted to be an equal part of the new nation. The marginalised considered that independence was for everybody, not just the whites and the wealthy. After all, Indians and slaves had suffered at the hands of the Portuguese more than anybody else.[7]

How can we understand Indian participation in the Cabanagem in order to work towards a comparison with other areas of Indian resistance in Latin America? Can the rebellion (or some aspects of it) be characterised as a peasant revolt (along the lines of Thompson's "moral economy" argument)? Was Indian and peasant involvement different from other sectors? And how does it compare with Andean and Mexican Indian perceptions of citizenship and nation-building in the nineteenth century? What were the ethnic and class characteristics of the peasantry in the Amazon?

The Cabanagem occurred during a time of rupture and uncertainty: the Portuguese born monarch, Pedro I, who had led Brazil to independence from Portugal, had abdicated amid a rising tide of radical liberalism and virulent attacks on Portuguese in 1831. His son was too

[7] Never able to develop a plantation economy, the Amazon remained dependent on Indian and slave labour and knowledge for extracting the numerous products (the drogas do sertão e.g. herbs, medicinal plants, cacao, cinnamon vanilla, Brazil nuts) for sale beyond the region. As a result, the élites never became strong or large enough to consolidate their position. Independence offered them an opportunity to do so; they sought to mobilise and arm supporters. The Portuguese minority remained a stubborn and powerful presence, frequently buttressed by Brazilian conservatives who feared what could happen if Indians, and other undesirables, were given respect and sensed power.

young to rule so a regency administration was created. Over the following four years new laws were introduced which gave more power to the regions. In the 1830s, significant uprisings took place not only in Pará but also in the Northern provinces of Pernambuco (the Cabanada), Maranhão (the Balaiada) and Bahia (the Sabinada and the Muslim slave revolt of 1835), and in the far south of Brazil (the Farroupilha). Still the Cabanagem was the most widespread geographically and most intensively fought of the period.[8] Each one questioned the central control of Rio, and challenged, in different measures, popular exclusion from politics and the nation, élite land grabbing, slavery and monarchy. Ever since, historians have grappled with the national nature of the political breakdown.[9]

In my handling of the answers, it becomes apparent that the Portuguese-speaking Amazon bears significant comparisons with other areas of Latin America where there were large concentrations of indigenous people involved in the colonial regime, such as the Andes and Mexico. The literature on Indian interpretations of nation-building, peasant economic and social organisation and agrarian structures in those regions has helped to sharpen the questions emerging from the Lower Amazon.[10] Across the continent in the nineteenth century there was mass engagement with liberalism and a factionalized élite mobilizing supporters in various kinds of alliances. How did peasants and Indians engage with central state systems? What was the response from élites and how did their own class formation change over the century? [11]

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[8] The provincial capital had been twice overcome, three presidents elected, the provincial government in the hands of rebels twice for a total of fifteen months. Municipal councils from all over Pará had backed the shift in power. A diverse and wide co-existence of people had joined the rebellion, which by then encompassed a large portion of Brazilian territory, rural and urban.

[9] For example see Henrique Handelmann, *História do Brasil*, Instituto Histórico e Geográphico Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro 1931 [1860]; José Pereira da Silva, *História do Brazil na Menoridade do Pedro 2*, Rio de Janeiro, Havre, 1888; Caio Prado Jr, *Evolução Política do Brasil*, São Paulo, Editora Brasiliense, 1976; Emilia Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000; Boris Fausto, *História Concisa do Brasil*, São Paulo, EDUSP, 2001.

[10] See for example Steve Stern (ed.), *Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, for the Andes, and Frederich Katz, *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico,* 1988, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1989 for Mexico, and more generally Brooke Larson, *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810-1910*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

[11] Late colonial Brazil was experiencing its own rebellions and then a bloody and unhappy independence, achieved in the Northern provinces of Bahia, Maranhão and Grão-Pará with considerable military force supplied by British mercenaries, most famously Thomas Cochrane. Some of those in the Northern parts called for a more federal organisation to the Brazilian Empire, which would give them more local powers, but the courts in Rio feared a break up of the massive territory, and responded aggressively to any threat. On Brazilian independence see the work of Carlos Guilherme Mota (ed.), *1822: Dimensões*, São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1972; Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *O Brasil Monárquico. Vol. 4, Dispersão e Unidade* (Introdução geral, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda), Rio de Janeiro, Bertrand Brasil, 2004; José Honorio Rodrigues, *Independência: Revolução e Contra-revolução*, 5 vols. 1976. For more recent reappraisals of independence see István Jancsó (ed.), *Independência História e Historiografia*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2005 and István Jancsó (ed.) *Brasil: Formação do Estado e de Nação*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2003. For regional studies of the struggle for independence see Matthias Rohrig

A note on the geographical limits of the chapter: the general area of reference includes the trunk of the Amazon River and its tributaries from the Negro and Solimões Rivers to the mouth feeding the Atlantic Ocean. Roughly, this is the area the Portuguese tried to dominate in the colonial period, and for practical purposes it can be seen as Lower Amazonia to distinguish it from Upper Amazonia (encompassing Spanish speaking areas). When I use the term Amazon, I am referring to the Brazilian Amazon and then to riverine towns and villages, along the main rivers, and their neighbouring hinterland, unless specified otherwise. In the colonial period this region was known as Estado do Grão-Pará and in the independence period as the Província do Pará.[12]

Why the ethnic question is significant in the Amazon

The Cabanagem is of relevance to historians and anthropologists for a variety of reasons. First, it provides insight into the political reasons why different kinds of people came to fight together. Secondly, the rebellion and its repression marks a critical rupture in the development of the region. Afterwards, the Amazon became more rigidly structured internally, more controlled from the centre of the empire in Rio de Janeiro and subject to outside demand for rubber, following the opening of the Amazon to outside shipping and market reforms. Yet the form of life forged in the late colonial period remained critical to the continuation of peasant livelihoods and economy. These were tied to the waterways, mobile, diverse and flexible in order to take advantage of the seasonal changes and constantly moving between the urban and rural. Thirdly, the biased nature of the documentary sources – mostly produced by the elite – means that there are large gaps and silences in the record of the rebellion. Why, to give a small example, were rebels' clothes and hats stained red with

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Assunção, 'Élite Politics and Popular Rebellion in the Construction of Post-Colonial Order: The Case of Maranhão, Brazil, 1820-1841', *Journal of Latin American Studies,* vol. 31, 1, 1999, pp. 1-38; Jeffrey Mosher, 'Political Mobilization, Party Ideology, and Lusophobia in Nineteenth-Century Brazil: Pernambuco, 1822-1850,' *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, 2000, 881-912; Hendrik Kraay, '"As Terrifying as Unexpected": The Bahian Sabinada, 1837-1838', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 72, 4, 1992, 501-28. For Cochrane's version of events which involved a number of tricks and much skullduggery and the stealing of Portuguese property, see his autobiography, *The Autobiography of a Seaman*, 2 vols, Constable, London, 1996.

[12] The term *Amazonia* was not used until the late nineteenth century. Grão-Pará included the Upper Amazon (around the Solimões River) and Negro River right up to the border with the Viceroyalty of Peru. Administratively, Grão-Pará was a captaincy with a governor until 1820. Between 1820 and 1824, it was ruled by regionally elected juntas and then, with the new constitution and independence, it became the Province of Pará, with an appointed president. The Upper Amazon and Negro River region remained a politically subordinate but separate territory until 1850. Then, Pará split with the creation of the Province of Amazonas, with Manaus as the capital.

annatto dye? It is clear that a joint effort between historians and anthropologists is required to answer this, and other, questions.

A key anthropological question that has dominated studies of Amazonians since the 1940s is the character of cultural mixtures there. Although contextualised in terms of acculturation - Indians losing their cultural practices as they are integrated in national society - the matter has largely been addressed ahistorically. That is, the forms of *mélange*, to use Gruzinski's phrase (2003), are not located in specific situations; rather, it is assumed that a particular value or skill has some intrinsic connection to an ethnic identity. Although completely discredited, this perspective continues to influence a continuing gulf between anthropologists and historians, and between those anthropologists of indigenous peoples who largely adopt a 'culturalist frame' of reference and others who tend to have a 'materialist' one. While there are good reasons for the different approaches, it also gives the false impression that the variety of inhabitants of Amazonia cannot share a historical framework and a mutual platform in understanding the complexity of the place. There is a presentism, then, that obscures the common histories and bridged horizons of those who have lived and live there now. One of the central tasks of Amazonian ethnohistory is to examine critically these prejudices, and explore the relations and movements between different ethnic groups over time, or the translations across them. Such an ethnohistory can bridge anthropological and historical scholarship and reveal the connections between contemporary indigenous and non-indigenous societies. After all, how is it possible for people who did not recognise their native ancestry for most of the early twentieth century to pursue their claims to native identity in the later part of that century and beyond? An ethnohistorical perspective can show that this change is part of a much longer story of adaptation and accommodation to colonial and early postcolonial pressures. Particular motives and how they are shaped by powerful outside forces must be part of the same argument.

To take the example of the red hats and clothes. Many observers of the Cabanagem noted that rebels wore red to stand out from the black colours of the imperial army (though in fact very few soldiers wore uniforms due to a lack of them). It is well known that the colour red at the time had connotations of the revolution (the French Phrygian cap). In Brazil it was the colour worn by Portuguese loyalists who wanted to show support for the return of Pedro 1 to Brazil after his abdication in 1831 (Ricci 2004). And in the Amazon, the Jesuit missionary, João Daniel, wrote in the 1750s that Indians, on the rare occasions when they wore clothes (probably when forced in missions), used to dress in red skirts and shirts dyed with annatto (urucum, 2004:273). These associations may have circulated in equal measures at the time.

Which one was it that influenced the rebels? Here a partnership between an insider type ethnographic perspective (emic) and an outsider archival (etic) one can provide an answer. Although I have not reached a conclusion, my working argument is that the red of the Amerindians was extant in regional oral histories and was revived by rebels whether they had indigenous ancestry or not. At the same time this local salience must have been provoked by the revolutionary meaning of red.

For these reasons it is important go beyond another false dichotomy, history of Indians and Indian history, where it is implied that the former is an external point of view based on documents, and the latter an internalist one emerging from fieldwork and understanding culturally specific perceptions of time and historical action. This divide assumes that history and anthropology have incompatible methods and cannot enter a collaborative dialogue.

The ethnohistorical work of Nugent (1993), Sommer (2000), and Roller (2012), amongst others, has begun to undo some of these assumptions in the Amazon. In their view, the transition from forest dwelling aboriginal to ethnically neutral peasant was not a one-way process of loss. Indians did not just give up their identities, nor do peasants lack an ethnicity. Indeed the distinction between peasant and Indian, which is embedded in Brazilian ethnology and historiography, does not fit with the historical record in the Brazilian Amazon. In Spanish-speaking Latin America outside of Amazonia, scholars have used the terms Indian and peasant more or less synonymously or as complementary terms (there were ethnic peasants under the Incas)[13]. The Amazonian peasantry has a historically complex character (Nugent 1993), and comprised Indians, Portuguese exiles, and colonists as well as escaped and freed slaves. In other words, the categories used by the state are not representative of, and do not do justice to, the populations they describe. They are also problematic because they change over time, though the changes can sometimes be partially assumed by those subject to re-classification.[14]

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[13] However this should be contrasted with Karen Spalding more evolutionist and nationalist interpretation in *De Indio a campesino: cambios en la estructura social del Perú colonial* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1974).

[14] The question I have grappled with since I began fieldwork is: who are these people who live on the floodplain? This might seem a strange question but it is aimed at understanding the historical and cultural foundations of peasant societies. From the point of view of today's local élite, and many other Brazilians, caboclos, as they are known pejoratively, are marginal and lacking in ambition. They are formally citizens of Brazil, but they contribute nothing and are poorly educated; they vote but their votes can be bought. Caboclos are neither properly Brazilian nor Indigenous. Their inbetweenness is a function of their multiplicity – a product of too many traditions, if predominantly Indian. Their own expressions of their identity are varied and contradictory, having been supressed for so long. So I was led back to an event when the ancestors of my informants did articulate a point of view and were prepared to die fighting for it.

Let me explore this further by looking at the problem of 'ethnic translation'. Although the Amazon has gone through successive phases of European conquest, there are some significant continuities across them. The forms of social and economic life tied to the river and its rhythms have provided for some enduring features. Skills of boat making and river navigation, and knowledge of seasonal opportunities and location of natural products, for example, have always privileged Indians, and those who work close to the river and its riverbanks. These advantages certainly helped some Indians gain political leverage in the colonial world (Sommer 2000).

Another continuity was the nature of settlement. Many of the missions from the late seventeenth century were established on older Indian villages, even though the inhabitants were not the same. We know this less through archaeological surveys, than because of the presence of large areas of *terra preta* – the human made soils that are highly fertile, which are easily visible even now (see Heckenberger this volume). In almost every case, the missions became significant riverbank towns, the building blocks of the colonial society, economy and administration (see Roller 2012 for further discussion on the nature of settlement in colonial Amazonia). This meant that what looked like new patterns of residence along the Amazon and its tributaries were in fact connected to established ones, and, perhaps, were integrated with others such as seasonal movements and ritual participation, activities that were largely outside the sphere of Portuguese domination.

However, in terms of social structure and organisation, aboriginal Amazonian societies did not remain cohesive. Those living along the main Amazon trunk, including the Solimões and the Rio Negro rivers, and near the mouths of the tributaries, were broken up by disease, war and slavery by the early to mid eighteenth century. The survivors were displaced to missions far away. Further up the tributaries it was a different matter. On the other side of the colonial frontier, Indian societies were affected by it, and interacted with it, but managed to remain ethnically bounded in 'the tribal zone'. This does not imply in any way that groups remained constant – Indians fought each other, assimilated enemies as slaves, renamed themselves, conquered and so on (see for example Menendez 1992 on the Tapajós/Madeira region in the middle Amazon).

Thus the impact of conquest on indigenous peoples in the Amazon contrasts somewhat with the Andes, and how contemporary scholars approach a historical view that takes in a long timeline from before Europeans colonization to the present day (Heckenberger 2005 and this volume). According to Thomas Abercrombie, the core question for "Andean ethnographers is to reconcile the pre-Columbian past with the postcolonial present"

(Abercrombie 1995: xvii; see also Larson 2004: 14-17 for a critique of Andean legacies). I would posit that a similarly significant question for ethnohistorians of Amazonia shifts attention to the continuities and ruptures across people and places, as much as across time (which may also be true in Andes). As individuals were forced to relocate, or enslaved, or voluntarily moved across the colonial frontier, what identities, skills and knowledge did they take with them? How did their new experiences reconfigure and reconstitute older values and motivations? And how were the developing meanings shaped by colonial structures and forms of domination? In the history of Amazonia these translations across situations are particularly pertinent to survival and struggle in the colonial world. There were no clear or fixed boundaries between kinds of people – it was as though the river brought everyone together and mixed them all up in different degrees and kinds of mixing.[15]

A brief note on language is required at this point; another area that could profitably result from an intellectual collaboration involving linguists as well as historians and anthropologists. Although Portuguese was the official language of correspondence and was spoken among whites, it was probably not the dominant language at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Tupinamba-derived *lingua vernácula* (or *vulgar)* was widely used until the second half of the nineteenth century. More usually known as the lingua geral, the common language in the Amazon was not Portuguese, despite the stringent efforts of many peninsular administrators, especially with the Pombaline reforms. The significance of language to the rebellion is critical, though little can be concluded for certain. To my knowledge no letters survive in lingua geral. It is rarely mentioned by officials, probably because it was taken for granted. Was lingua geral the language of the Amazonian way of life? What was the attitude of early nineteenth-century liberals toward it (later in the century, it became a popular topic)? Was lingua geral the preferred language of the rebellion?[16]

In answer to that question, there is only a sliver of a story told to the Victorian botanist, Richard Spruce, some fifteen years after the rebellion, about the significance of language. He was informed that if a person could not speak lingua geral, or had a beard, then he or she was liable to be slaughtered by rebels.[17] This statement exists on its own, and in a

[15] For example, Magda Ricci (2004) argues for a revised understanding of the Brazilian Amazon on the basis not just of the internal assemblies but the international ones too. Far from being a sleepy and undeveloped backwater, the place, particularly around Belém, was alive and made cosmopolitan with a range of Europeans and Americans, conservatives and insurrectionaries, traders and craftsmen.

[16] Moreover there may have been other indigenous languages spoken, perhaps not widely but in pockets, such as in the Tapajos and Madeira areas where the Mundurucu and Mura were present and involved in the colonial sphere.

[17] Richard Spruce, *Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes*, London: Macmillan, 1908, 61.

period when antirebellion propaganda was in full swing. While it cannot be taken at face value, it is nevertheless likely that parts of the rebel movement may have articulated such a position and saw the promotion of lingua geral as part of their political project without seeking the support of leadership in Belém.

The relevance of this section is to emphasise the connections between ethnically different Brazilian Amazonians. These relations were promoted by a life lived along the river and the relatively flat class structure. In turn, there was a strong identification with an autonomous homeland (sometimes called *patria* by participants). The manner in which the rebellion was repressed and represented put an end to these alliances. The repression effectively used class divisions to cement economic and racial differences by forcing those without property and a certain level of income to be assigned work obligations by the state. Over time the gap widened and became more significant in the rest of the nineteenth century. But that lies beyond the confines of this essay.

How many of each kind of person lived in Pará?

The best census data exists for the second half of the eighteenth century when numbers and categories of people were relevant to the organisation of labour. The last detailed colonial census in Pará took place in 1797 when 70,573 individuals were recorded as living there. Just under thirty per cent of the population (19,869) were classed as *índios* living in Indian villages (*índios aldeados*), forty four per cent lived as free people (31,118) and twenty eight per cent were slaves (19,586). The Indian category might have been larger if it had included people living outside the Indian recognised villages (which were mainly old missions), in the capital of Belém, for example. These Indians who were not classed as *índios* in the census data, were probably former mission residents, and for whatever reason lived as free people conducting their own business[18]. The term *índios aldeados* is a colonial category to refer to those who were living under the directorship of an appointed administrator. Although they had obligations to work for the state they received a portion of the profits, which they could use at their own discretion (see Roller 2012). It is difficult to know the numbers of whites within the category of free individuals – especially since white is such a

[18] It is worth mentioning here the famous case of the woman who deliberately sought to sell herself into slavery in early 1780s. She lived outside an Indian village near Belém and petitioned the governor to accept her request to be a slave – Indian slavery at the time was banned (see Carneiro da Cunha 1986 and Sommer 2012).

loaded and fluid term. Yet a detailed household census from 1778 described about twenty per cent of the population as white. This is a high figure and probably reflects those who were in administrative positions, municipal and legal, and owned property. Here we must not confuse race with the ascription of colour. Race should be understood as a socially constructed system of ethnic classification. In the Amazonian context, it is linked to class, family, and marriage, and to power and authority.

In summary, Pará had more Indians, slightly more whites and fewer slaves compared to the rest of Brazil. Consequently, there were not as many mestiços in the official records (such as mamaluco, cafuzo and mulato, which are the most common, see below). If the rest of the Amazon is included, that is the Rio Negro (later known as Amazonas) province, there were even more Indians, and even fewer whites and slaves, and similar numbers of mestiços (Harris 2010, Baena 2004, Roller 2012).

Some thirty years later in 1832, the population of Pará had grown to about 120,000, and the categories of people are even more difficult to find, except for slaves (who numbered about 20,000 at the time of independence, mostly living in and around Belém, Baena 2004). On the popular level, the salient category was place of birth: Brazil or Portugal. So being Portuguese born, or identified with a Portuguese family, placed a person on the other side of a divide from the rebels. It was only with the repression of the rebellion that ethnic terms returned to political discourse in the Amazon. Terms like 'casta' (caste) for example came to be used from 1835 with the repression in full swing to distinguish between rebels and all others. The term, according to Mahalem de Lima (2008), acquired a variety of meanings, including class based, racial and cultural, growing ever more complicated and sui generis by the mid to late nineteenth century (see also Monteiro 2000).

Obviously, these terms cannot be relied upon to relate to self-perception and practical realities of ethnic categorial usage. Moreover, the changing nature of racial terms and the composition of Amazonian society in the first decades of the nineteenth century had blurred many of the differences between classes and ethnicities that marked the earlier conquest period. The colonial categories could no longer contain the flourishing of regional identities.[19]

Despite such difficulties in understanding the racial categories being used, the following broad picture can be constructed of the different kinds of people and their places of

[19] Pará probably had the most diverse set of racial terms compared with other places in Brazil (Cleary 1998). Originally used to distinguish biological parentage and ancestry, the terms had come to be used to refer to assumed associated cultural characteristics loosely related to appearance. They had also become terms of abuse and control, and out of keeping with how the restless numbers of 'cultural mestiços' (i.e., village Indians and poor whites) wanted to see themselves. Put another way, it could not be assumed that because someone was called an Indian or a white, he or she would act in "Indian" or "white" ways, and vice versa.

residence. At the time of independence, the region remained focused on Belém. Almost half the population of the whole Amazon lived in its district. Manaus, Santarém, and Cametá were the largest towns in the interior, though still small. Whites, including foreigners, lived in and around Belém, but there were a few in the interior also in administrative and military positions. Slaves were concentrated in the Belém area on the sugar cane plantations, though they were spread out in the whole region and had developed their own cultural forms. Village Indians lived along the riverbanks near towns; in a few places they controlled town councils (*câmaras*), especially on the Tapajós River, parts of Marajó, and the north bank areas of the Lower Amazon. Mestiços, freed slaves, and poor whites were hardly distinguishable in class terms from village Indians, though they may not always have recognized the similarities. They produced their own food on small-holdings; they set up households together, traded their own produce, and sold their labour. Many Indian nations operated in the tribal zone, such as the Mura and the Mundurucu, that is, they lived on the other side of the colonial frontier but were affected by and interacted with it. They too occasionally earned piece wages, traded, and visited towns (sometime going under cover of darkness to conceal a raid). As a whole, these diverse groups comprised an interlocking and dynamic series of relations.

In her recent study of the eighteenth century Amazon from the village Indian point of view, Roller (2012) brings attention to an intriguing paradox. Indians were at once highly mobile and able to create stable places to live in. Following the Andean literature, she draws out the manner in which Indians 'moved within the system of colonial communities, forging new relations of reciprocity with both native and non-native officials, while retaining ties with their villages of origin'. The supporting evidence shifts previous arguments that reduced Indian responses to colonial life to either flight or fight. In taking advantage of the opportunities open to them, Indians did not remain locked into colonial village life, but actively went in search of better conditions from one place to another. Roller characterises Amazonia as a 'society made up out of outsiders and migrants' (on the same lines to *forastero* society in the Andes), 'mobile and increasingly mixed', where connections were made through personal trade relations, saints' festivals and ritual curing, and colonial institutions such as the militia and town councils (Roller 2012: 13-14, and 211).[20]

Generally, as in the Andes, there was a colonial division between villages of Indians and those of whites ('the two republics'). In the Amazonian Indian villages, labour was organised by appointed native and colonial officials who then transported a large portion of

[20] New Indians were recruited into the colonial sphere through expeditions called *descimentos* (Sommer 2006, Roller 2014).

their produce to Belém to be handed over to the royal treasury. This can be seen as a kind of tribute, which was so significant in the Andean context. In the Brazilian Amazon this state-administered economy was abolished in 1798 (along with the legal category of indios aldeados category); there is no evidence that anyone wanted a return to it as an internal market for labour and produce was created. There is, nevertheless, plenty of evidence to show that Indians remained living in colonial villages and did not return to the forest once state control over their labour and residence was stopped (Sommer 2000, Roller 2012). In other words, the resemblance between Andean and Amazonian villages became diminished in the late eighteenth century, and became even more so with the reforms that were introduced in the early nineteenth century in both regions. The irony is that on paper the two republics (i.e. regimes of administration) should have kept ethnic and class categories apart. In practice, there was a great deal of movement and mixing and opportunity for Indian autonomy. After independence this paradox was reversed as new policies recognised a more equal relationship between class segments, but the practical fear of mixtures and increased racism fixed boundaries and exclusions in new ways (cf. Guerrero 2003 on "private administration of populations" in Ecuador).

This is relevant to the current discussion because of the different political and cultural undercurrents in the Cabanagem. What began as an urban and metropolitan, and distinctly radical liberal revolt in January 1835, quickly entered other towns and rural areas over the whole of region. Each place may have had its own particular groupings that forced it to take certain positions. The explicit liberal dimensions of the revolt became weaker once Belém was taken by imperial forces in May 1836. Then it spread into rural areas and its anti-colonial rather than anti-Portuguese (against authoritarian figures as opposed to people identified by their ethnic classification) aspects became more emphasised and the divisions more entrenched. Here its peasant/Indian character assumed more significance as the cultural and ethnic foundations of the rebellion were targeted by the Imperial army. This point can be clearly seen in the proclamation outlined below that mentions two Indian leaders from the early colonial period.

The prisoner records provide important evidence on the widespread participation in the rebellion, and undermines the view that the rebellion was fought between different ethnicities. Five bound volumes of lists of prisoners taken between 1836 and 1840 exist in the Public Archive of Pará in Belém. One of them has been badly damaged and cannot be read; the other four document the names, crimes, ethnic category, and locations of arrest, and occasionally birthplace and other information. These data have been processed by John

Chasteen in an article on people and politics in 1830s Pará. [21] Together, the four volumes list 1,405 prisoners, some of whom died while incarcerated. The largest single category listed is *índios* and *tapuios*[22] (terms indicating indigenous parentage, and a vernacular not legal category) who composed twenty-eight per cent of the total; then pardos and *mulatos* (of European and African descent) with twenty-three percent; brancos (whites), seventeen per cent; mamelucos and mestiços (white and Indian parentage) sixteen per cent; *cafuzos* (Indian and African descent) ten percent; and *negros* and *pretos* (African ancestry, including freed slaves and slaves) six percent. These prisoners represent about one fifteenth (1/15) of the number of people who may have died and a fraction of those who were taken prisoner but not sent to Belém for processing. Nevertheless, they reveal that whites were a significant part of the overall movement. Such a large number of whites is also surprising given the dominant perception that the rebels were mostly Indians. What is also significant here is the relatively small numbers of arrested slave rebels (assuming the category negro encompassed them). This could be a reflection of the lack of interest in abolition among the other rebels, but it could also be the possibility that, once caught, slaves were returned to their masters, owing to their economic importance. Alternatively, they could have been killed and their bodies left to rot or tossed into the river. Another commentator has also used these figures to indicate that the Cabanagem was a truly multiethnic movement and spread over a vast region (Roller 2012: 3)

How did the rebels perceive themselves?

The participation of slaves, however, raises an important question about abolition of slavery and the nature of popular liberalism. There is very little evidence in the proclamations to indicate the rebels wanted slavery to end. Moreover the third and most successful rebel president, Eduardo Angelim, publicly executed a slave for apparently killing his master.

[21] John Chasteen, "Cautionary Tale: A Radical Priest, Nativist Agitation, and the Origin of Brazilian Civil Wars," in R. Earle (ed.), *Rumours of Wars: Civil Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2000. Bernardo de Souza Franco, Pará's president after Andréa, calculated that 2,085 people had been arrested and put into prison, and 504 died in their place of incarceration. He estimated that four thousand more were arrested and imprisoned without being officially recognized, and that at least a thousand of these nameless people died in prisons. A further thousand men were sent to the south of Brazil to fight in the repression of rebellions there, Raiol, *Motins Políticos,* 1000. It is likely Souza Franco's sources for this first figure were five codices at the APEP (new series) 1004, 1014, 1024, 1025, 1026.

[22] *Tapuio* had a similar meaning to *índio*, and referred to an Indian without a nation, or at least one which was not know to the clerk.

Apparently this kind of action is where elite and popular liberalism agreed. However it is clear that some slaves did run away from their masters (or rather their masters ran away once they saw the fury of the rebellion) and subsequently participated alongside rebels and formed their own groupings and encampments with allies nearby (Salles 1971). On this basis popular liberalism was an amorphous body of ideas and practices. Around independence abolition was a very strong call of some elite liberals; but ten years later in Belém there was more ambiguity. Perhaps in the interior where popular liberalism was weaker, and alliances stronger, slaves found it easier to participate alongside rebel factions.

One of the core cleavages between popular and elite liberalism in early 1830s concerned the legitimacy of leaders to rule, something which bothered all local elites in this period and was subject to various reforms. A clause in the 1824 constitution was interpreted by popular liberals as giving them the right to overthrow provincial presidents who were ruling in a despotic way and abusing the *patria*. Thus many of the proclamations of the Cabanagem were concerned with establishing the illegitimacy of the nominated president and their own right to hold power. This rested on their self-understanding as the rightful and sovereign guardians of a rich land; outsiders did not care for the place in the way they did. Needless to say, the Regency government did not agree, and nominated another president.[23]

It is important to make these distinctions because the rebellion originated in a coalition between the elite and popular classes in rural and urban districts. But once the first president was murdered, himself an elite farmer, priests, plantation owners and traders shifted their support to the imperial forces. They did not persist in their campaign as they did in Pernambuco, Maranhão and Bahia, precisely because of the extent of mass participation and the fear of unleashing something they could not control. This was less a 'selling out' than a rapid evolution of their ideas in tune with liberals nationally and the conservative backlash (*regresso*).

Although there are documents written by the rebel presidents in the State Archive in Belém, one of the main sources for the self-perception of the cabanos is their proclamations and official pronouncements. These are not plentiful: I collected about thirty spanning the fifteen months of their government of the province. Apart from two, these were printed and issued in Belém. So they give a metropolitan and predominantly liberal perspective. Yet cabano liberalism changed as the rebellion developed and elite liberals abandoned the struggle

[23] The interpretation of the clause in the 1824 Brazilian constitution provides an interesting connection to ideas of the right to rebel against an unjust ruler, which were important in Spanish America (ideas in turn coming from Aquinas and reinvented by later thinkers).

and supported the imperial repression. Moreover liberalism was less pronounced outside the capital where it assumed a more nativist (that is, local cultural) dimension.

Here I will concentrate on the terms used by rebels to refer to themselves. The majority of early proclamations open with a series of vocatives: Paraenses!, i.e. the people of Pará; citizen (*cidadão*), and patriot (*patriota*, *patrício*). Another term that indicates the nativist dimension is the term *filho da terra*, that is someone born and nurtured in the homeland. Being 'of the land' makes a strong connection to the rightfulness of participating in the political and economic future the region merits. This will be clearly seen in the following section where a letter from a remote village makes exactly this point.

The third president, Eduardo Angelim, issued more proclamations and was more diverse in his use of descriptors. There the people of Pará are seen as "defenders of liberty and the motherland", the fighters as "brothers united". Even though Pará was the immediate homeland, Brazil was their land and it should be defended against the Portuguese tyrants. Moreover, 'people of colour' (*gente de côr*) will not be excluded from government on the basis of their ethnicity and ancestry.[24] The use of the term *gente de côr* in this context recognises the alliance between people of different ethnic backgrounds and potentially includes slaves as well, though this is an open question as mentioned above.

In the interior, a similar set of terms was used. For example, the people in the largest rural fortified encampment, built at the side of the Amazon River in 1835 and housing about 2000 rebel soldiers and their families near the town of Santarém, referred to themselves as the *Forças dos Brazileiros Reunidos*, or United Brazilian Forces.[25] This self-description indicated their loyalty to an independent Brazil, and antipathy to those who would undermine the well-being of the country by exploiting it and ruling without legitimacy. Moreover, the term 'united' indicated plainly the congregation of interests behind the movement. It was possible to bring together different kinds of people and organise a collective struggle. However, their interpretation of their constitutional rights was different to some of the Paraense élites and the imperial government in Rio. In particular, the methods for electing officials was one of the sticking points (see Harris 2010). Why? The answer here is that the liberalism of the rebels emerged from a way of life tied to the river, diverse skills and seasonal mobility and a long-standing sense of oppression.

[24] In other words, in these official texts there was no expression of a desire for separation from the rest of Brazil and no desire to end the monarchy. Rather they wanted to elect their own leaders, put an end to exploitation and the abuse of the law. Domingos A. Raiol, *Motins Políticos ou História dos Principais Acontecimentos Politicos da Provincia do Pará, desde o ano de 1821 até 1835*, Belém: Universidade Federal do Pará, 1970, vol. 3, 938.
[25] For example, Raiol, *Motins Políticos*, 1035.

Something of the complex and Amazonian character of cabano liberalism can be seen in the following. Here a unique reference gives an insight into popular discourses that do not fit the liberal ones of the time. Just minutes before he was declared the new president of Pará province in August 1835, Eduardo Angelim spoke to the assembled crowd as they recovered from the violent fighting that had caused the imperial forces to leave the capital. Angelim started off by addressing the crowd as "Corajosos Paraenses, valentes Defensores da Pátria e da Liberdade! Depois de nove dias de fogo mortífero com outras tantas noites, estamos senhores da famosa Belém, capital da província!" Instead of saying he was a revolutionary – which is how historians have portrayed him – Angelim calls the imposed imperial president the "rebel", because he had no mandate from the people. "Seja cada um de vós um pai, um protetor da inocência desvalida! Procedendo assim bem teremos merecido da pátria e das gerações futuras."[26] He ended his speech on a note of good leadership. 'Soon', he went on, 'teremos que aclamar um presidente que mereça a nossa estima, confiança e respeito. Dignos chefes de tôdas as colunas, vós todos sois merecedores dos maiores louvores e elogios pelo vosso valor, firmeza de caráter e lealdade.' His last sentences invoked two figures from the past: "Vivam os descendentes dos Ajuricabas e Anagaíbas! Vivam os paraenses livres! Viva o Pará!"[27]

This appeal to two Indian leaders from more than a hundred years earlier is extraordinary. Mindful that a new president was needed, he placed himself in an oral tradition of resistance against the Portuguese oppressor that would play well with the crowd. Here a direct continuity was being established between the insurgents of the past and the actions of the present. Both groups were fighting against the same kind of enemy – tyrannical, abusive, and despotic. There are no other mentions of these insurgent indigenes in his other printed proclamations. The purpose, though, was clear: it legitimized the current conflict by placing it within the lineage of freedom fighting, which had a vibrant life in the oral traditions of the people of Pará.

Ajuricaba was the legendary chief of the Manao Indians from the middle and lower reaches of Rio Negro in the 1720s. In textual history, he was a strong warrior who sold members of other Indian tribes into slavery to the Dutch. It is alleged that he used to sail with a Dutch flag in a deliberate attempt to provoke the Portuguese. A war was launched against him and his followers and eventually he was captured and put on a boat to Belém in 1725.

[26] Raiol, *Motins Políticos*, 926.
[27] The whole speech is reproduced in Raiol, *Motins Políticos*, 925–926; also printed in *Brasil, 500 Anos em Documentos*, 195–198, Ivan Alves Filho (ed.), Mauad Editora, Rio de Janeiro, 1999.

Ajuricaba and his group were considered official enemies of the Portuguese, which meant a "just war" could be waged against them; if caught, they could be enslaved (friendly Indians were put into missions). On the ship taking him downriver, Ajuricaba tried to organize a mutiny, which failed and, still in irons, he managed to jump overboard to his death rather than face punishment by the Portuguese.[28]

Anagaiba is more difficult to locate. He may have been the chief of the Nheengaibas, an Arawakan group that once lived on Marajó Island. These Indians waged war against the Portuguese in the early to mid-seventeenth century and earned a particularly fierce reputation. In the 1660s Antonio Vieira, the famous Jesuit missionary, persuaded them to desist. After that time, little is known about what happened to them; they are mentioned in some eighteenth-century chronicles as continuing in the same area.[29] If it is correct that Anagaiba was a particularly famous headman of the Nheengaibas and there exist no textual references to him, this would have significant implications for understanding the Cabanagem. (It is also conceivable that Angelim was referring not to a person but a collective entity.) The existence of a powerful oral tradition of anticolonial resistance in the 1830s must have been extremely threatening to the provincial administration.

It is possible that Angelim had read the accounts of Ajuricaba (or had had them read to him) since there were at least two accounts extant at the time, one of which dated from 1777 and tried to recover Ajuricaba's good name as an anti-colonial hero.[30] Obviously, Angelim never would have evoked the names of culture heroes if the reference had not resonated with his audience. It seems likely, then, that such struggles from the past, heroic or otherwise, gory or not, were a lively part of popular culture. This tradition should be interpreted as Amazonian in character rather than part of a national discourse associated with

[28] David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed: The Middle Amazon Valley, 1640–1750," Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1974, 534-546; Baena, *Compêndio das Eras do Pará*. Belém: Universidade Federal do Pará, 1969, 147; Francisco Bernardino de Souza, *Lembranças e Curiosidades do Valle do Amazonas*, Belém: Typographia do Futuro, 1873, 214. Sweet, however, is not convinced of Ajuricaba's greatness as a leader. There is also a play by Márcio Souza of his life, characterized as a Christ-like figure, which was first performed in 1974, *A Paixão de Ajuricaba*, Editora Valer, Manaus, 2005.

[29] The story of their pacification by the Jesuits is told in detail in Serafim Leite, *História da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, vol. 3, 235–246. Antonio Vieira, in a letter cited by Leite, reports the Portuguese belief that, with the conquest of the Marajó region, the Amazon became impenetrable from the outside. The Portuguese justified the massacres of the Nheengaibas because of their alliance with the English and Dutch in the early part of the seventeenth century (Leite, *História*, 246). See also João Daniel, *O Tesouro Descoberto no Máximo Rio Amazonas*, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Contrapunto, 2003, vol. 1, chap. 18, 368–369; and Antonio Porro, *Dicionário Etnohistórico da Amazônia Colonial*, São Paulo: Cadernos do Instituto dos Estudos Brasileiros, 2007, 73–74, who cites Bishop Queiroz (1763), Noronha (2006 [1768]), and João Vasco Manuel de Braum (1789) as his sources. John Monteiro writes that *Nheegaiba* was a generic term used for non-Tupi speaking groups in the Marajó area; John Monteiro, "Escravidão Indigena e Despovoamento na América Portuguesa," in Francisco Faria Paulino (ed.), *Brasil: Nas Vesperas do Mundo Moderno*, Lisboa: Commisão Nacional, 1992, 156.

[30] Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed," 536.

anti-Portuguese sentiment (lusophobia or nativism). In short, an accumulation of memory and experience fed into the Cabanagem and distinguishes it from liberal political discourse. [31]

Nevertheless, Angelim was fully versed in liberal politics, having participated in previous attacks on and petitions against the government in the 1830s. Somehow he was able to provide a bridge between radical liberalism and a colonized Amazonian culture. The opening references to the "merecido da pátria e das gerações futuras" and liberty in the speech above derive from liberal thinking. The characteristics of the leaders – courageous, strong, and loyal – appear locally meaningful and aimed to connect with those who identified with Indian chiefs who had led their people against the Portuguese. His singular success may explain why he was able to command the fifth most important city in Brazil from August 1835 to May 1836.

What did anti-colonial resistance mean to Indians?

Hardly anything is known about how Indians on either side of the porous colonial/national divide interpreted independence and the Cabanagem. One letter from a village on the white sandy banks of the Tapajós River does provide some important clues. In that document a predominantly Indian municipal council expressed support for independence and their expectation that it would lead to liberty and equality.[32] They also complained to the governor about an event in June of that year (1824). Some individuals had come into the place threatening to kill 'Europeans.' As a result, the village was visited by an armed boat from Santarém, which pounded the place with artillery from the river. But the rebels had already left, according to the council, so the attack was pointless. Residents were forced to flee into the forest for safety, only to return a few days later to find the town ransacked by the army. The letter was strongly and formally worded so as to demand reparation for the damage. Accompanying it was another demand – a petition, but this time the tone was very different.

It was written in the same hand as the council letter, but is much more colloquial, as if the clerk was told to write down exactly what was being said.

[31] This effort fits with calls in Andean studies to extend the short timeframes of some historical analyses in order to recognize the depth of local oral histories; for example, Steve Stern (ed.), *Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th centuries*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

[32] Previous indios aldeados were generally encouraged to put themselves forward in town councils for election from the reforms of 1799 (but could stand throughout the colonial period). As far as I can tell very few were elected. Alter do Chão is certainly one exception.

> Nos abaixo asignado fazemos ver aos Illustrisimos Senhores do Governo Geral, q' esta Vila sempre anda huns pocos de annos muito pobre, e como sabemos, o q' nos recommenda o nosso Amabelissimo Imperador o Senhor D. Pedro Primeiro, para q' nos enteresse nos Negocios, e Lavouras motivo para q' queremos q' o arrecadador dos Dizimos queremos de hoje para diante q' seja filho da terra, e nao Contratador, q' nao faz senao roubar promiscuamente de viuvos, e viuvas q' tudo o anno levao a dar Dizimos, e sempre fiquemos a dever; outro sim sempre está este Camara a receber officios da Vila de Santarem para dar-çe Indios para elles servirem-ce com os dois pois asim perde muito a Vila pois a Liberdade veio para tudo aquelle q' for filho do Brazil. e aquelles q' digo nao aos Europeus dizendo q' defendem a Patria tudo hé para inganar aos filhos da terra.

The petitioners then explained that they had arrested two European traders who had failed to comply with a request to provide a cargo list. *"We took this action",* the petitioners explained,

> Pois se asim obramos ha' pella razao delles nao fazerem sinao amiassar dizendo q' sumos Macacos, e Araras, pois nos q' temos a Liberdade do Nosso Augosto Imperador de podermos falar quando ellez pello contrario q' a Independençia q' he delles, e nao para os Indios, pois nos apezar de seremos Indios sempre somos Baptizados taobem como ellez pois de hoje para diante deregimos alcanssar de V. Excellencias huma ordem para q' elles nao conttendao com este Vila. [33]

The petition was signed by thirty names. The surnames were the same as those of the five councillors from the first letter. We can assume that the municipal chamber was composed of the same families as those who were writing the second letter. There are a few important points to be drawn out here.

This extract offers a window into what Indians living in the interior were thinking around the time of independence and for this reason it is highly significant, given the absence of documentation from elsewhere. It appears that they also held dear the declaration of independence from Portugal, having been cheated by outsiders for many years. Finally, they had the opportunity to influence people who would understand better their interests. Hence the call to change the person who calculates tithes, revealing the agrarian dimensions of the conflict. In the same vein, there was the complaint, replicated in many other places, that

[33] Council of Alter do Chão to Governo Geral of Pará, July 5, 1824, Alter do Chão, APEP cod. 789, doc. 2. I am grateful to Heather Roller for her transcription of this document.

Indians were regarded as a source of ever-available, cheap labour. They claim that they should be free now of colonial bondage (including conscription and labour service) and be able to work on their farms providing tax for the Emperor.[34]

The other significant element is the distinction the writers of the petition drew between Europeans and those "who think independence is only for them." This indicates that there were some non-Indian Brazilians who did not regard Indians as Brazilians, but a class apart who provided services for others and were entitled to nothing. From the Indian point of view, they were certain they were native and Brazilians, were part of the Catholic church[35], and had just causes and claims on the state because they provided taxes, identified with the emperor, and so on. And since they, like other Brazilians, were "sons of the land," they held a common identity. It is likely the attitudes expressed here were reasonably widespread at the time. In the absence of further evidence, it would not be unreasonable to link the violent conflict in the towns of the Lower Amazon with the dissatisfaction felt about the constant pressure on labour and the lack of fulfilment over freedom and independence. If the government would not act, the Indians would.

Caste and the repression

It should be clear that the Cabanagem consisted of large numbers of different kinds of people who found sufficient common ground to fight together. So how did the rebellion come to seen by Brazilian élites as a caste war, with Indians pitted against whites in a fight to the death?

The answer is to be found in the way the imperial representatives suppressed the rebellion and the tactics and propaganda used. The notion of a war of racial hatred originates

[34] In Alter do Chão the Indians were dominant, as they were in some other towns in the interior, such as Villa Franca. As always, Indian labour was in high demand, particularly where slaves were absent, either because they had run away or were too expensive. Many whites, Brazilians or Portuguese or other Europeans, thought they still had a right to cheap Indian hands. Rather than enter into reciprocal labour exchanges with other whites (the mestiço peasant strategy to labour shortage), they sought to "employ" Indians. Most of the work was agricultural, such as preparing land, planting, harvesting, and preparing the product for sale. Those employed were working almost in a state of slavery, since they had little option not to work and were probably not paid, or only very little. They were probably threatened with violence if they refused. If this was not bad enough, the work regimes prevented the Indians (or mestiços) from working their own plots of land or attending to their domestic needs. Essentially, the conflict over labour had these two basic dimensions: forcible service to whites, which was illegal, and the detraction of time and effort from working for oneself. The second aspect then implied a third dimension, the right to land: if someone or a family had no time to work their plot of land, it could be claimed by someone else.

[35] The significance of their emphasis on baptism is worthy of further exploration.

from outside the Amazon in a continent-wide discussion surrounding independence, which had become prominent in Spanish-speaking America. Élite Brazilians (like creoles in Spanish speaking areas of the Americas) were reluctant to see their own divisions in such terms, but Pará was different and basically unknown to the southern Brazilian upper classes at the time. The Portuguese had a larger presence there and had cultivated its geopolitical significance from the point of view of their Atlantic empire and the Amazon's borders to the west and the north. This separateness permitted misconceptions to develop. On hearing about the uprising, the liberal journalist and constitutionalist Evaristo de Viega wrote in the periodical *Aurora Fluminense* about cabanos in highly dismissive terms, as scum, anarchists, and rabble (*gentalha*, *crápula*, and *massas brutas*). He also observed that Pará looked more like Spanish America than Brazil because it had more Indians.[36] Although no other published report readily confirms this opinion, it is likely to be representative of the Imperial government's general view towards the Cabanagem rebels. Portraying the leaders and their followers as part of the brutish masses foreclosed any negotiation with them.

The seeds for what one commentator has called a *guerra geral* against the rebels were sown in the second half of 1835 (Mahalem de Lima 2008) by the president of the Pará nominated by the Imperial government and the British naval officer employed as a mercenary to repress rebellions. Both men were stationed on ships in the bay of Guajará, looking towards Belém, which was of course under the control of cabanos. Here they set about constructing a highly negative version of the rebels as enemies of all good people (*homens de bem*) and without civilisation. The propaganda lent support to the idea that the rebellion was completely without reason and deserved exceptional measures of containment.

Here is an example:

> *É preciso que V.Ex^a. considere ou reflicta um pouco sobre a população desta Província que é composta pela maior parte de negros libertos, cafuzes, mulatos, mamelucos e índios ou Tapuios que de entre as castas é a melhor, porque esta susceptível é de seguir o bem como de seguir o mal conforme os seus directores, mas já não são assim as outras castas que inteiramente desmoralisadas e sem o desinteresse dos índios, tem combinado o mesmo plano dos Haitianos e nem se deixão levar por chefes que não pensam no mesmo modo que elles. Se os Vinagres não fossem da mesma opinião já teriam sido mortos. O fim da revolução de 9 de janeiro próximo passado esta inteiramente mudado. Então a luta foi por interesses particulares, foram a inveja e a*

[36] Leslie Bethell and José Murilo de Carvalho, '1822–1850', in L. Bethell (ed.), *Brazil: Empire and Republic, 1822–1930*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 70.

cobiça que assassinaram a Lei, hoje, porém, é a guerra d'aquellas diversas castas combinadas entre as vidas e propriedades dos homens brancos, sob o pretexto de ser o [país] da prosperidade. Mas é de notar que os Tapuios, como eu já disse, são os menos enthusiasmados neste negócio.

(AHI Lata 875, Maço 01, Pasta 02, *Officios do Chefe de Divisão João Taylor a partir de Agosto de 1835 até o Officio de 20 de Janeiro de 1836.* No. 1, Officio de 13 de junho de 1835)

Very soon this ideology of caste became one of a war of racial hatred with the appointment of brigadier José Soares Andrea who was sent to Belém in February of 1836. The concern of the regency administration was the re-establishment of its version of peace and tranquillity. Andrea was brought out of early retirement, which had been necessary to quieten liberal critics who accused him of the abuse of civilians in the 1820 campaigns of independence in Pernambuco. At age sixty-three, Andrea's reputation was in tatters: he had been close to the Portuguese royal family during their exile and associated with calls for the return of Pedro 1.[37] His nomination letter to the top civilian and military posts of Pará nevertheless exonerated him of the crimes with which he was associated and required him "manter a religiosa observancia das leis para liberdade, segurança e prosperidade dos povos que vos são confiados."[38]

By the middle of May Andrea has retaken Belém with hardly a fight. The first measure he enacted was the suspension of all individuals' constitutional rights.[39] In fact, it was argued that for the previous six months (that is, more or less since Angelim became president), the constitution had not been in place in Pará and this measure was a mere continuation of a state of exception (and it might be added unconstitutionality), justified by the need to end the rebellion. For Andrea, the suspension meant that guarantees of individual rights, such as trials, could not be invoked and people could be arrested on suspicion of support for rebels and kept in prison indefinitely.[40] These emergency powers were granted him by the Rio government, but were not explicitly stated in his nomination letter. There was some debate

[37] José Andréa, *O Marechal Andreia Nos Relevos da História do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exercito, 1977.
[38] "Cartas Imperiais nomeando Francisco Andréa para o presidente do Pará e exonerando," Coleção Manoel Barata, BIHGB Lata 279, pasta 15.
[39] See Leandro Mahalem de Lima, "Rios Vermelhos, Perspectivas e Posições de Sujeito em Torno da Noção de Cabano na Amazônia em Meados de 1835," Master's thesis, University of São Paulo, 2008, 146–161, on the suspension of legal rights. He argues that the Cabanagem had elements of a "just war," echoing the Portuguese employment of that ideology in its confrontation with indigenous people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
[40] Raiol, *Motins Políticos*, 974–975.

among liberals in Belém, and also in Rio, about these matters and criticism of the extreme actions taken by Andrea.[41] In early 1838, almost two years later, Andrea justified the continuing absence of constitutional rights because

> *O estado da Guerra tem autorizado a atacar o inimigo por todos os lados até aniquilhar-lhe a fôrça, e para isto ter efeito foi preciso prescindir das formalidades com que a lei escuda criminosos.*[42]

Here, the characterization of the Cabanagem was no longer as a rebellion but as a war; the political demands were expunged. In his three years as president of Pará (1836–1839), Andrea succeeded in de-legitimizing the rebellion, so that it lost popular support, and transforming the movement into one of racial hatred.[43]

> *Quanto ao recrutamento, convem saber-se que esta Provincia não dever ter soldados filhos d'ella, que o melhor partido seguir-se he troca-los constantemente por outros das provincias do sul. Todos os homens de côr nascidos aqui estão ligados em pacto secreto a darem cabo de tudo quanto fôr branco. Não hé uma historia, he facto verdadeiro, e a experiencia o tem mostrado.*[44]

Whether this claim was part of a carefully orchestrated campaign on behalf of Andrea or an article of his class-based faith, the effect was the same. It "naturalized" the conflict, turning one's participation in it into a question of birth. This process of depoliticization helped the repression by demarcating sides very clearly. Rebels could be identified not by their participation or by their political beliefs but simply by the color of their skin – and their residence in rural areas. In the same way, "white" or "Portuguese" or *bicudo* (long-snout) were also shorthand for slave owners, the rich, and so on, combining race with class. Given the complex and variable nature of perception of racial characteristics, the term *gente de côr* here should not be taken to refer literally to skin color, but a complex of characteristics, including ancestry, appearance, popular perceptions, clothing, and place of residence

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[41] Raiol, *Motins Políticos*, 980, but much of the Paraense documentation was lost when the box in which Raiol kept these documents was destroyed by sea water in Fortaleza in 1883, 974.

[42] Raiol, *Motins Políticos*, 980.

[43] A British naval officer who led the imperial army, John Taylor, had also commented in August 1835 as Belém was overtaken by insurgents, that they had 'declared war on people not of their race', see Harris 2010: 217-218.

[44] Francisco José Soares d'Andréa, Belém, December 18, 1837, quoted in Jorge Hurley, *Traços Cabanos*, Belém, Oficina Gráfica do Instituto Lauro Sodré, 1936, 284. Mattos said the rebels wanted "the extinction of people of white colour" in 1845, by which time the propaganda had been fully digested, João Henrique de Mattos, "Relatório do Estado da Decadência em que se Acha o Alto Amazonas," RIHGB, 1979 [1845], 325, 145.

(language was not a general marker of identity at the time, unlike in the Andes. Gente de côr could have included all non-whites. The new focus on observable characteristics heralded a shift to a form of racism that conflated physical attributes with class, dwelling, and occupation. These forms of discrimination fitted in well with unofficial pacification of the region. Areas, especially small hamlets, suspected of harboring rebels were attacked. If people of color lived there, they were "naturally" against the imperial government and therefore should be arrested or exterminated.

The Cabanagem was the only Brazilian revolt in which the imperial élites used the ideology of caste or race war (Mahalem de Lima 2008). The phrase comes directly from the wider Latin American context. The radicalized turn was a complex outcome of the justification for the repression and the effect of radical élites mobilizing the masses through violent means. Yet the written pronouncements from rebels do not contain any evidence that they saw themselves as fighting whites as a single category. Racial hatred was not a significant mobilizing force; lusophobia was never characterized as such. Similarly, Terry Rugeley argues that the caste war in the Yucatan peninsula was not the outcome of a long period of racial antagonism. In the period preceding the war, the most visible political violence was the municipal uprising. These were complex events, revealing "struggles internal to the new and decidedly multiethnic municipalities of independent Mexico."[45] To view these rebellions as preparation for the caste war is misleading. So what was the connection between the violence and the caste war? Like Pará, a variety of motives was in play, including land alienation, labour obligations, tax revenue, and changes in patron-client relations.

The violence in Yucatan continued to the 1840s, when political identities remained unpolarized around predictable race-like groups. Rather, the uprisings were 'in fact a manifestation of crude, embryonic party politics: multiethnic, formed by strands of patron-client relationships that extended from the affluent urban politicians to landless peasants, with innumerable strands of intermediaries connecting the two.'[46] These patron-client ties became unleashed as peasants lost faith with the mediators and Maya chiefs. In Pará the absenting of the élites and patrons from the rebellion also broke the bonds that had connected the region in chains of alliances. Yet the peasants, organized by a dynamic of local family and long-distance commercial networks, continued their struggle.

[45] Terry Rugeley, "Rural Political Violence and the Origins of the Caste War," *The Americas* 53, no. 4, 1997, 473.
[46] Rugeley, "Rural Political Violence," 495.

With the amnesty in 1840 a new beginning was heralded by the young emperor who would help create a sense of identity with the new nation of Brazil, as a unique place in the Americas. In the Amazon this was partly achieved through a series of new labour policies that effectively divided the population in half, explicitly along ethnic lines; people of colour made it into the white category if they 'se tratem decentemente elles, e suas familiares' (Harris 2010: 271-79)[47]. On one side were people who had their own property and means of livelihood and on the other were those who were forced to work for most of the year for others. Franciscans were drafted in by the state to missionize actively (read: 'keep separate and police') in the Tapajós and other areas of the Amazon (see Amoroso 2006 and in São Paulo see Sposito 2012). New boundaries of exclusion were forming.

Conclusion

The submission of colonized Amazonians to central control was a long and cumulative process that started in concerted fashion in 1750 with the arrival of Mendonça Furtado, the marquis of Pombal's brother, and the throwing out of the Jesuits, and ended with Pedro II's coming of age in 1840. This gradual assimilation then ran in parallel with the political emancipation of Brazil. One was not possible without the other. In Pará, 'Brazilianization' meant marginalizing and making invisible the heterogenous and poorer gente de cor, as well as Indians and those who came be to known as *caboclos* (a term which more or less replaced gente de côr in the late nineteenth century). Given the central presence of Indians, the importance of their labour, and the persistence of the river-based way of life, this sidelining was always going to be difficult. So the making of the *Brazilian* Amazon was an ongoing process, the subordination of the region never being complete or total. Nevertheless, the people of Pará paid a high price for their political adherence to Brazil.[48]

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[47] The original phrase comes from José Soares D'Andréa, *Instruccoens para a Organização dos Corpos de Trabalhadores e Regulamento dos Mesmos Corpos*, Palácio do Governo do Pará, Belém, August 8, 1838, 24 (also reprinted in Carlos Moreira Neto, *Indios da Amazônia, de Maioria a Minoria, 1750–1850*, Petropolis, Vozes, 1985, 273–275.

[48] One response by the modern élites to this situation is the appropriation of nativism for their own interests. They have promoted a folklorized version of the Amazon's distinctive identity, at once making it unthreatening for wider consumption and exotic enough to retain some of its origins. Here I am thinking of tales about the rose-colored dolphin transforming into a handsome man or forest-dwelling monsters such as the *mapinguari*. For analyses of the enchanted beings in Amazonian folklore, see João de Jesus Paes Loureiro, *Cultura Amazônica: Uma Poetica do Imaginário*, Belém, Cejup, 1991; Candace Slater, *Dance of the Dolphin: Transformation and Disenchantment in the Amazonian Imagination*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994.

This process marks a critical difference between the Brazilian Amazon and the Andes. The Amazon has been of geopolitical significance to many countries, particularly to Portugal and Brazil, as these countries have tried to control its borders and maintain territorial unity. This has been the case since the sixteenth century when rival Spanish, English, Irish, French and Dutch exercised claims to settle and trade (Lorrimer 1989). This observation on boundaries returns us to the question of ethnic frontiers. I have revealed that there was significant Indian participation in the formation of the nation in the Amazon and this activity was part of a concerted collective effort to claim equality and freedom in the newly independent Brazil, such as the Indians from Alter do Chão.

In the late eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century, Lower Amazonian Indians (on both sides of the colonial and imperial frontier) shared many experiences of other Indians from the rest of the continent. These parallel trajectories up to independence are based in several aspects of their accommodation to colonial control. Their separate governance and legal status and obligations to the state (up to 1799 in the Brazilian Amazon and independence era in Spanish speaking Latin America) were common features. Uprisings by Indians, in alliance with mestizos, took place in all areas in the late colonial period. This was significant and generalized in the great Andean rebellions of the 1780s. In the Amazon, the Mundurucu, Maués and Mura – guerrillas from the 'tribal zone' – attacked the colonial infrastructure and people throughout the eighteenth century and a general insurrection by Indians was expected and feared at any moment (Daniel 2004). These raids were carried out without help from those within the colonial sphere, as far as we know; yet there was a coalition between the Mundurucu and Maués nations (Harris 2010). For independence, the same late colonial alliances between poor Indians and mestiços were mobilized by Brazilian élites against the Portuguese. Despite having fought for independence and for the patria in the Cabanagem, these poor gente de côr became on a national level politically and economically invisible or, in the words of one commentator, neither Brazilian nor citizen (Sposito 2012).

With independence, and ongoing adjustments to political and economic demands, the comparable experiences diverged from each other. Though Indians did share one overall feature – the determination of élites to incorporate them and yet deny them equality in the march to modernity (see Larson 2004 for the Andes: the quandary was how to integrate without giving real equality to peasants and keep them marginalized; cf. Guerrero on legal invisibilization – "all Ecuadoreans are citizens" – with local everyday discrimination against

Indians)[49]. In the Brazilian Amazon, índios bravos, those Indians on the other side of the colonial frontier, were a separate legal entity (*orfão*, or wards of the state)[50], and were effectively kept apart from national development. After the Cabanagem, Indians like the Mundurucu, were pushed back into the category of 'indios bravos'. This label distinguished them from 'índios mansos', tame Indians ready for Brazilian civilization and education.

By contrast, in the southern Andes, Indians continued to act collectively and were not divided between those who had been colonized and those who the state considered in need of colonizing. There was a further distinction between the salvajes of the lowlands and the Indians of the highlands.[51] The Mexican situation was different again: Indians were merged into the peasantry, yet remained a distinct ethnic force, and able to continue to make their presence felt in nation-building over the course of the nineteenth century and spectacularly in the early twentieth. These three different outcomes can usefully be traced back to the way élites mobilized Indians in the independence era, the economic and political significance of the territory, and the impact of liberal reforms. In each case we find, from the Indian point of view, the hardening and shrinking of boundaries of ethnicity and territory.

In the early twentieth century, the Amazon was described as 'land without history' by one of Brazil's greatest writers, Euclides da Cunha. Part of his meaning was that the Amazon River was so powerful it had the capacity to destroy the past as quickly as it made the present. Yet the implication was that the Amazon had no history worth speaking of and was ripe for colonization and development. In this article I have shown that the region does in fact have history – various histories – though it may not have been one that nationalist politicians and historians approved of and wanted to tell. And Indians, along with others, were active contestants in it. But this inclusion in the formation of Brazilian Amazonia was made invisible by the manner in which the Cabanagem was repressed. Marginalization was continued by reforms in the wake of the rebellion.

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[49] In Peru, San Martin's declaration that all indians were Peruvians was undermined with their renaming as "indigenas" in 1840 (see Thurner 1997). And in Bolivia the fiscal category of indios was revived and prolonged (see Platt 1993).

[50] Indios bravos were effectively legal minors, as in the Andes. On the rights of Indians and the status of orphanhood see Nádia Farage and Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, 'Carater da tutela dos índios: origens e metamorfoses', in *Os Direitos do Indio*, ed. Manuela Carneiro da Cunda, São Paulo, Editora Brasiliense, 1987, 103-117.

[51] Yet in Bolivia some highland Indians were also pushed back into the savage category from the second half of the 19th century, partly because of renewed cases of cannibalism in the highlands, also contributing to the hardening of ethnic frontiers. If in Ecuador there was invisibilization, in Bolivia (where Indians could not be invisibilized) there was a distinction between civilized and savage (Platt personal communication).

The consequence for historiography has been the ignorance of the full dimensions of the rebellion, that is, the non-liberal and non-urban features that merged with their counterparts in the region. Thus the Amazon has come to be represented as a case apart. It has traditionally been seen as resistant to colonization and – one might add – to comparison. I hope to have shown that the origins of this view can be found in the Cabanagem and the period that directly precedes it. It is time that this rebellion is placed in a continental framework. This act will release critical features of the history and anthropology of the Brazilian Amazon, helping recover its similarities as well as its differences from its geographical neighbours.

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