

Brazil's Historians in North America, 1980-2019: A Survey of Their Careers

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Abstract

This article examines the professional careers of the 290 historians who received doctorates in Brazilian history from universities in Canada and the United States between 1980 and 2019. It is a follow-up to a 1990 study by Roderick J. Barman on North American historians of Brazil from 1950 to 1987. While the 1980s were a nadir for the field, historians of Brazil enjoyed unexpectedly good academic career outcomes in the 1990s and early 2000s; they continued to do well in the academic job market, while many of their dissertations were published. The data also reveal some enduring patterns when it comes to the chronological periods and geographical areas on which these historians focus, as well as the rising interest in post-1945 history. The proportion of women winning doctorates has stabilized at levels slightly higher than that of the profession as a whole; however, some small but troubling gender inequities persist.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa as carreiras profissionais dos 290 historiadores doutorados em história do Brasil por universidades no Canadá e nos Estados Unidos entre 1980 e 2019. É uma continuação ao estudo publicado em 1990 por Roderick J. Barman sobre historiadores brasileiro-americanos de 1950 a 1987. Embora a década de 1980 tenha sido o ponto mais baixo para a área, os historiadores do Brasil tiveram inesperado sucesso profissional nas décadas de 1990 e 2000; conquistaram cargos nas universidades e muitas das suas teses foram publicadas. Os dados também revelam algumas continuidades nos recortes cronológicos e nas regiões geográficas focalizados por esses historiadores, bem como o crescente interesse pela história pós-1945. A proporção de mulheres entre os doutores estabilizou-se a um nível ligeiramente mais alto do que na profissão como um todo; todavia, persistem algumas pequenas, mas preocupantes, iniquidades entre os gêneros.

Historians talk frequently about the job market, the professional prospects for our PhD students, and the careers that they aspire to, but we usually do so based on anecdotal evidence or on the high-level data that the American Historical Association (AHA) compiles. This brief article analyzes data on the career experience of historians in one small corner of the profession, the 290 people who received doctorates in Brazilian history in Canada and the United States from 1980 to 2019. It brings up to date the research on Brazilianist historians' careers from the 1950s to 1987 published by Roderick J. Barman (1990). Writing at what appeared to be a nadir in the field, Barman ended on a pessimistic note, and historians of my generation were weaned on the rhetoric of crisis—in the job market, in scholarly publication, in the humanities and social sciences, and in the academy in general.

However, the evidence for the next generation of Brazilianist historians indicates that they enjoyed considerable success in the historical profession, certainly much more than Barman expected. Indeed, the most surprising and humbling finding of this research is the discovery that my cohorts of the 1990s were a favored generation that, by most professional measures, did at least as well as, if not better, than the pioneering generation of the 1960s that established the field of Brazilian history in North America. Furthermore, the most recent cohorts of historians of Brazil trained in North America continue to do well, even surprisingly well, as they launch their academic careers.

The data reveal some recent trends in the field, and document some enduring patterns. A growing number of institutions award doctorates in Brazilian history. Colonial history remains a small area of focus, while interest in post-1945 history has surged. Most North American historians of Brazil are still drawn to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Bahia for their research. Unsurprisingly, slavery and post-abolition Afro-Brazilian history remain major areas of interest. Many dissertations in Brazilian history get turned into books, and indeed, the monograph is alive and well. An academic career remains the professional goal of those completing doctorates in Brazilian history and well over half have succeeded in establishing themselves in the academe since 1980. The proportion of women obtaining doctorates in Brazilian history has fluctuated since 1980 at levels slightly above those of the profession as a whole, but data also reveals some small but troubling gender differences in academic career outcomes.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge this study's limits. North American historians of Brazil are but a tiny proportion of Brazil's historians, the vast majority of whom train and work in the country, but these *Brasilianistas* have a disproportionate influence on how the

English-speaking academe views Brazil. A doctorate from a North American university amounts to virtually a requirement for landing an entry-level position in Canada and the United States, so the professional trajectories of those who obtained this degree offer insights into Brazil's place in the center of the Anglophone academe. As a high-level, largely quantitative exercise, this article is not a comprehensive survey of Brazilian history produced in North America. Rather, it analyzes basic data on the professional careers of those who trained in Brazilian history in North America during the last forty years.¹

Methodology

In the interest of comparing Barman's data with the more recent data, I largely followed his methodology in compiling the database of 290 historians of Brazil, including their dissertation topics, professional trajectory, and book publication record. Three of the principal sources were the successors to those that he used (Barman, 1990, pp. 373–374n2): *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global*, the AHA's online *Directory of History Departments and Organizations*, and its *Directory of History Dissertations*. Other sources, which did not exist in the late 1980s, proved invaluable for identifying people whose careers took them away from Brazilian history: Google (to identify people on university web sites), LinkedIn (especially helpful for finding people who left the academe altogether), Lattes (the Brazilian Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa [National Research Council]'s database of scholars' CVs), and even Facebook. WorldCat was the source for identifying books. Nevertheless, I still lack information on 26 of the 290 people who received doctorates in Brazilian history since 1980, or 9.0 percent of them. Nine of these 26 received doctorates in 1980–84, and they constitute more than a third of the cohort that had the greatest difficulty in securing academic careers during the period covered by this article.

Determining what constituted a doctorate in Brazilian history turned out to be more complicated than expected, and necessitated some corrections to the list of dissertations that Barman compiled for 1980–87. As José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy remarked in his study of Brazilianists (1990, p. 23), any listing of them is "fallible," for one has to decide whether to include those whose careers take them into other research areas, those who study Brazil's

¹ The data on which this article is based have other limitations. These include the lack of information on individuals' social and economic origins, age, or other factors that may affect career opportunities and choices. Nor can it say anything about the quality of dissertations and the monographs based on them.

borderlands, those who do comparative studies, and those who study “social, political, and religious movements in general” with Brazil as one of their cases.

The following criteria guided the selection of dissertations included in this analysis: First, the dissertation normally had to have been defended in a department of history. This meant that dissertations in art history, music history, economic history (done in an economics program), history of science or education (when done in history of science or history of education programs), historical geography, and literary history or cultural studies with a historical focus were excluded. This is not to deny the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship and we can all think of books by scholars in these fields that make major contributions to Brazilian history.² Rather, the justification for excluding them from this research is that they typically do not obtain jobs teaching history. The only exceptions to this rule are a small number of dissertations in Latin American Studies and in American Studies that closely mirrored history dissertations, most of whose authors made careers as historians. One dissertation from a joint anthropology and history program is also included.

Dissertations in which Brazil was one case in a comparative study and dissertations on relations between another country and Brazil posed a second problem, along with dissertations on the Portuguese empire, the slave trade, and Brazil in the Atlantic World. As long as Brazil appears to have accounted for half of the dissertation (as in a comparison between Brazil and another country or in a study of United States–Brazil relations), to judge by the title and the abstract, it was included in this database. This produced some anomalies when the authors’ subsequent careers led them to work primarily in the non-Brazilian field, but this may not have been their intent at the time of the doctorate. Likewise, some historians of Brazilian-American relations have made careers as primarily teachers of U.S. history and foreign policy.³

The application of these criteria to Barman’s list of dissertations for 1980–87 led to the removal of seven and the addition of four (not counting the 1988 and 1989 dissertations), for net reductions of one from Barman’s 1980–84 data and two from his data for 1985–87.⁴ I did

² Examples of scholars whose monographs based on North American dissertations defended in programs other than history make important contributions to Brazilian history but who are not included in this database include Magaldi (2004), S. Bell (1998), Guzmán (2013), Buckley (2017), Araújo (2008). An older example, understandably not included in Barman’s data, is José Murilo de Carvalho, whose 1974 Stanford political science dissertation resulted in two influential history monographs (Carvalho, 1980, 1988).

³ Examples of these career trajectories include A. Chakravarti, S. Davis, J.L. Graham, M.P. Meuwese, R.T. Priest, M. Seigel, and W.M. Weis.

⁴ Those removed included five dissertations in the social sciences, one in which Brazil was one of three case studies, and

not review or update Barman's data for 1950–79 and the data for these years in the tables and figures are drawn directly from his article. Like Barman (1990, p. 374n2), I caution that the data are “reliable but not entirely precise.” Barman appended to his article a list of the 201 dissertations in Brazilian history that he identified from 1950 to 1987. A bibliography of the 290 dissertations defended from 1980 to 2019 is available as an appendix to this article.⁵

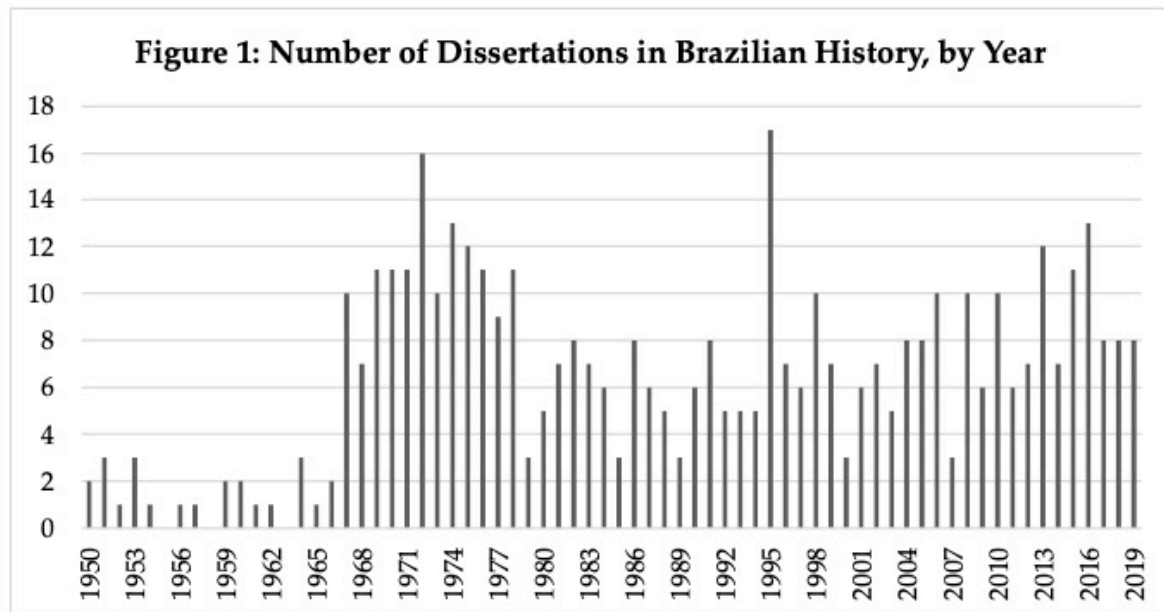
The recipients of the 290 North American doctorates in Brazilian history do not constitute the entire field, for the study of Brazilian history has been enriched by historians from other areas of Latin American history and historians trained in Brazil who now teach at North American institutions.⁶ Moreover, as Jeffrey Lesser observed in his review of the last book-length effort to survey Brazilianists' work (2002, p. 160), the distinction between work produced by historians inside and outside of Brazil is less and less clear. Especially in the field of slavery, more and more Brazilians' work is appearing in English; some Brazilians who have done North American doctorates make careers in Canada and the United States, and a few North Americans find their way into Brazilian careers. Communicating with Brazilian scholars and engaging with the latest scholarship in Brazil is easier than ever. Nevertheless, as Barbara Weinstein notes in recent reflections on her career, historians of Brazil in North America find themselves in an academic environment notably different from that of their colleagues in Brazil. They train in Latin American history and they typically work as the only historian of Brazil (or indeed all of Latin America) in their department; consequently, they regularly need to justify their work in relation to outsiders' concerns (or connect it to broader themes). They are under considerable pressure to publish primarily in English, especially early in their careers, given the limited knowledge of Portuguese in the rest of the Anglophone academe (Weinstein, 2016, pp. 211–212).⁷

one that was primarily not on Brazil (A. Raphael, S.R.D Barretta, M. Ahola, M. Keck, M. Krenn, A. Barrow, and T.L. Whigham). The additions are by M.A. Rohr, R. Cabral, W.M. Weis, and L.M.N. Garner.

⁵ For this reason, I cite dissertations in Barman's appendix (1950–87) and in the appendix to this article (1980–2019) by author name only.

⁶ Examples of the former include Andrews (1991) and McCreery (2006). Current examples of the latter include Amy C. de Farias (Monmouth College) and Sidney Chalhoub (Harvard University).

⁷ Anecdotally, there may also have been a perception among tenure committees that peer review is less rigorous in Brazil than in the Anglo-American academe. While this may have been the case in the past, it is not true today, especially for top-ranked Brazilian journals.



Overall Trends

The number of North American doctorates awarded in Brazilian history fluctuates considerably from year to year (Figure 1). That adjacent years frequently include large and small numbers suggests that some of the annual variation is an artifact of dissertation defenses late or early in calendar years. Grouping dissertations into five-year periods, as Barman did, smooths out this variation and reveals the field's long-term evolution (Figure 2). When Barman was writing in the late 1980s, he could not have known that Brazilian history in North America stood at its post-1965 nadir, as measured by the number of dissertations, although the decline in the number of doctorates awarded had been apparent since the late 1970s.⁸ There was a small increase in the number of dissertations in the early 1990s, and then driven in part by the largest number of doctorates awarded in a single year (1995), numbers for the late 1990s surged to levels not seen since the late 1970s. The number of dissertations fell by a third in 2000-04 and then grew steadily to 48 in 2015-19, exceeding the previous peak of 1995-99.

⁸ Bieber (2002, p. 202) judged the early 1990s to be the profession's nadir.



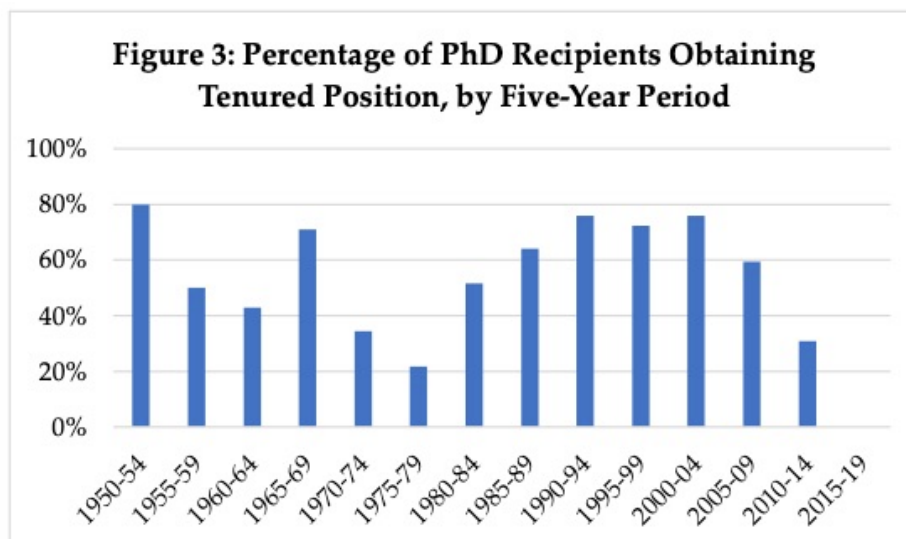
A more important measure of a field's vibrancy (and an indication of whether the supply of PhD-holders outstrips the number available positions) is the success rate at obtaining initial and tenured positions (Table 1 and Figure 3). Barman documented the good fortune of those who received their doctorates in 1965–69, 71 percent of whom obtained tenured positions, as well as the appallingly low rates of obtaining initial positions and winning tenure for those who defended in the 1970s, the group that he dubbed the “lost generation” (Barman, 1990, p. 378). He ended with a note of anxiety about the academic prospects of those who defended in the 1980s, wondering “whether North American universities c[ould] accommodate th[is] generation of Brazilian scholars” (Barman, 1990, p. 380). As it turned out, however, more than half of the smaller cohorts of the 1980s did manage to win tenured positions.

Contrary to what could have been inferred from reading Barman's article, as I did as a beginning doctoral student in 1990, the next decade was a golden age for those with doctorates in Brazilian history. The larger cohorts of this decade obtained tenured positions at rates exceeding even those of the favored generation of 1965–69. The academe absorbed, with scarcely a hiccup, the massive class of 1995, myself included, although it did not necessarily feel so easy to those of us who frequented the AHA's job register in the mid-1990s. All indications are that a generational turnover was taking place in the field, with holders of doctorates from the 1960s retiring and making space for a new generation, as a

leading Brazilianist had predicted in 1989 (Interview with Stanley J. Stein in Meihy 1990, p. 95).

	Number of Dissertations	Initial Position		Tenured Position	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1950-54	10	9	90.0	8	80.0
1955-59	4	4	100.0	2	50.0
1960-64	7	6	85.7	3	42.9
1965-69	31	23	74.2	22	71.0
1970-74	61	41	67.2	21	34.4
1975-79	46	17	37.0	10	21.7
1980-84	33	18	54.5	17	51.5
1985-89	25	18	72.0	17	68.0
1990-94	29	22	75.9	22	75.9
1995-99	47	37	78.7	34	72.3
2000-04	29	25	86.2	22	75.9
2005-09	37	26	70.3	22	59.5
2010-14	42	28	66.7	13	31.0
2015-19	48	22	45.8		
Total	449	296	65.9	213	47.4

Notes: Some remain in an initial position (assistant professor rank) in the following cohorts: one in 2000-04, two in 2005-09, and eight in 2010-14. One from the 2005-09 cohort passed away at the assistant professor rank.



Over three-quarters of the smaller cohort of 2000-04 obtained tenured positions, while the cohorts of the next ten years did professionally much better than their predecessors of the 1970s, despite entering the job market in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Between 2006-07 and 2008-09, the number of academic jobs advertised on the AHA's web site and H-Net's Job Guide fell by half, and it has not recovered (Ruediger, 2020). Nevertheless, when it comes to securing initial positions, the forty-eight people in the 2015-19 cohort do not appear to be doing badly. Twenty-two hold some type of term-certain or assistant professorship (or will do so in fall 2020), while seven held postdoctoral fellowships in April 2020. It is similarly too early to draw definitive conclusions about the previous two cohorts. As of April 2020, 22 of the 37 in the 2005-09 cohort had won tenure, while two remain at the untenured rank of assistant professor (in addition, one died at that rank). Thirteen of the 2010-14 cohort, 42 in number, had won tenure, while another eight remain at the untenured assistant professor rank. If all or most of these ten assistant professors obtain tenure, then the data in Table 1 and Figure 3 will look much better for these cohorts. The most recent to graduate in the 2015-19 cohort, as well as those in the classes of the early 2020s, will enter the job market during the COVID-19 recession, which is already wreaking havoc with state and provincial budgets, private universities' endowments, and enrolment patterns.⁹ We can only hope that they will fare as well as those who made it through the lean years after 2008.

The reasons for the long-term fluctuations in the field of Brazilian history to the 1980s (Figures 1 and 2) were quite clear to Barman. The surge of interest in Latin American history in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution and the flow of U.S. government money into area studies programs caused the number of doctorates to surge in the late 1960s and early 1970s, overshooting the academe's capacity to absorb the new entrants. Interest in Latin America declined in the 1970s and narrowed to Central America in the 1980s, and Barman concluded in 1990 that "unless and until stability comes to Brazil or a revolution erupts—neither a likely event—no great alteration in the present demand for Brazilian historians is likely" (1990, p. 381; see also Bieber, 2002, pp. 197-204). It is not easy to account for the upsurge of interest in Brazilian history in the 1990s. To be sure, there was some optimism amid the country's democratization, but economic conditions remained precarious for most of the decade. The commodities boom years (2004-14), over which the Partido dos Trabalhadores

⁹ In April 2020, the AHA's *Directory of History Dissertations* listed thirteen dissertations in progress with the word "Brazil" in their title, www.historians.org (Accessed: 21 April 2020).

governments presided, and the ensuing international hype about Brazil and its prospects may have contributed to the rising interest in Brazilian history after the mid-2000s. It is too early to tell how the recession of the mid-2010s and the right-wing reaction since 2016 may affect interest in Brazilian history. Certainly these developments have been devastating to our colleagues in Brazil.

The Evolution of a Field

The data reveal how one small corner of the North American historical profession has evolved over the past seventy years. Some aspects of what can be documented among the 449 recipients of doctorates in Brazilian history are familiar to those in the profession, while other findings are less expected and even surprising. The expected include the rising number of women in the profession, the traditionally limited interest in colonial history (a field somewhat reinvigorated by the rise of Atlantic history), the growing interest in post-1945 history and in transnational history, and the continuing interest in slavery and its legacies. Perhaps less expected are the survival of the English-language monograph in the small field that is Brazilian history and the continued success in securing academic positions enjoyed by those with North American PhDs in Brazilian history. Indeed, this last is perhaps the most surprising finding of this research: since 1980, 180 of the 290, or 62.1 percent of them, have obtained post-secondary teaching jobs. Nevertheless, some small but troubling gender differences persist.

The 290 dissertations of the last 40 years were defended at 68 institutions, 64 of them in the United States. In addition, four Canadian institutions each awarded one doctorate. Institutions that awarded five or more doctorates accounted for 72.9 percent (213) of these 290 dissertations. Since the 1980s, there has been a trend to diversification in the field. As Judy Bieber (2002, pp. 199-201) observed, key members of the generation of the 1960s established the graduate programs that dominated training in Brazilian history in the United States until the late twentieth century. While only eight institutions accounted for two or more dissertations in the 1980s, that figure doubled to sixteen in the 1990s, rising to seventeen and twenty-one in subsequent decades.¹⁰ Only four institutions (Yale; University of California, Los Angeles; Stanford; and New York University) awarded two or more

¹⁰ This data may exaggerate the degree of diversification in the field, for six of the sixteen programs that awarded two doctorates in the 1990s only did so in that decade. The comparable figures for the next decades are five of seventeen and ten of twenty-one, respectively, an indication that these institutions did not establish (or have not yet established) long-term sustainable programs.

doctorates in each of the last four decades. The eleven most active programs in the 2010s (those awarding three or more doctorates in Brazilian history) accounted for just over half of the 90 dissertations defended in this decade.¹¹ Another nine programs produced two doctorates each.¹²

In his bibliography, Barman sorted the 201 dissertations from 1950 to 1987 into twelve chronological categories. Table 2 somewhat arbitrarily collapses these twelve categories into five and also groups the dissertation topics by decade to highlight two notable tendencies that have characterized the work of North American historians of Brazil since 1980.¹³ First, colonial history remains a small part of the field, accounting for just 13.8 percent of the dissertations completed since 1980. Barman (1990, p. 378) also noted the limited number of dissertations in colonial history and the difficulties that the unusually large group of colonialists of the 1970s experienced in landing academic jobs. While this situation prevailed through the 1980s, when only two of eight colonialists secured academic positions, those with doctorates in pre-independence Brazilian history have since then landed jobs at rates higher than the rest of their cohorts.¹⁴ This reversal is likely due to the notable shift in colonial topics toward research on the Atlantic World and even in global history, making it easier for departments to justify hiring colonialists.¹⁵ The second notable tendency is the growth in the number of dissertations dealing with the post-1945 period; historians of Brazil, like their counterparts in other fields, have historicized the decades from the 1950s to the 1980s. The other conclusions that can be derived from Table 2 are not unexpected, such as the decline in the proportion (but not necessarily the absolute number) of dissertations on the imperial period (1822–1889) and that of the early republic (1889–1930).

The data on the 172 dissertations that focus on a captaincy, province, or state, or on a broader Brazilian region (Table 3), shows that the “Rio–São Paulo axis” dominates the work of Brazilianist historians (in this regard, we differ little from our Brazilian colleagues). The Northeast (primarily Bahia) accounts for the next largest concentration of scholarship.

¹¹ In order, these include Emory (8); Chicago (7); Maryland and California, Los Angeles (5); Texas at Austin, New York University, North Carolina at Chapel Hill (4); and Yale, Stanford, Michigan, and Florida International (3).

¹² Michigan State; Northwestern; Pittsburgh; California, Davis; Georgetown; Pennsylvania; Duke; Princeton; Vanderbilt; SUNY Stony Brook.

¹³ Barman’s categories of General and Colonial Era are unchanged in Table 2. The category of Imperial includes his categories of Colonial Era and Empire, Empire, Empire to Modern Era, Empire and Old Republic; the category of Republic includes his Old Republic, Old Republic to Modern Period, Old Republic and Vargas Era, and Vargas Era; the category of Modern includes his Vargas and Modern Eras and Modern Era.

¹⁴ Ten of twelve in the 1990s, nine of ten in the 2000s, and six of ten in the 2010s.

¹⁵ Thirteen of the thirty-one colonial dissertations defended since 1990 are Atlantic in their focus (Table 3).

Whether this means that the North (especially Maranhão), the smaller states of the Northeast, or those of the South and Center-West are “understudied” is difficult to determine.¹⁶ Rio de Janeiro’s prominence is unsurprising. The city was the national capital from independence until 1960 and country’s largest city for most of this period and historians of Brazil must conduct research in its archives and libraries. São Paulo state became the country’s economic powerhouse by the end of the nineteenth century, while the city became Brazil’s metropolis in the twentieth century. Bahia’s prominence in Brazilian history derives from its colonial-era importance, from Salvador’s role as a mecca for those interested in Afro-Brazilian history, and from the state’s rich archives. The Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia proudly proclaims that its holdings constitute Brazil’s second-largest archive, second only to the Arquivo Nacional in Rio de Janeiro (Fundação Pedro Calmon, 2016).

The turn toward transnational history, fueled by the rising interest in global history and the Atlantic World as a field, is also visible in Brazilian history. I have classified 35 of the dissertations defended since 1980 as comparative or focused on the Atlantic World. All but one appeared after 1990, with 26 of them defended after 2010. Fifteen of them focus on the colonial period. By contrast, studies of Brazil’s external relations following independence have fallen out of favor, with almost half the dissertations (seven out of fifteen) devoted in some way to this topic dating to the 1980s. In contrast to the eight dissertations on United States–Brazil relations defended between 1980 and 1996, only one dissertation has since then focused on relations between the two largest states in the Americas.

	1980s		1990s		2000s		2010s	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
General	3	5.2	3	3.9	6	9.1	4	4.4
Colonial	8	13.7	12	15.8	10	15.2	10	11.1
Imperial	13	22.4	22	28.9	14	21.2	14	17.8
Republic	27	46.6	25	32.9	21	31.8	26	28.8
Modern	7	20.7	14	18.4	15	22.7	36	40.0
Total	58		76		66		90	

¹⁶ This issue was debated in the Brazilian Studies Committee meeting at the January 2020 Conference on Latin American History (Brazilian Studies Committee, 2020).



Table 3: Regional and Captaincy/Province/State Focus of Dissertations, by Decade							
Region	Captaincy/Province/State	Decade				Total	Region Total
		1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s		
North		1			2	3	11
	Amazonas				1	1	
	Maranhão				1	1	
	Pará	2	1	1	2	6	
Northeast				5	1	6	43
	Bahia	4	11	7	5	27	
	Ceará			1		1	
	Pernambuco	3	2	1	1	7	
	Paraíba	1				1	
	Rio Grande do Norte	1				1	
Southeast				1	1	2	82
	Minas Gerais	5	3	1	2	11	
	Rio de Janeiro	8	10	13	10	41	
	São Paulo	6	7	4	11	28	
Center-West			2			2	8
	Distrito Federal (Brasília)			1	1	2	
	Mato Grosso		2	1	1	4	
South		1		1	1	3	9
	Paraná				2	2	
	Rio Grande do Sul		3		1	4	
Atlantic			4	4	5		13
Borderlands		1			6		7
Total							172

In her recent reflections on the field, Weinstein (2016, p. 211) notes that certain important topics in Brazilian history, such as political and intellectual history, are “less viable” for North American dissertations, while studies of gender, slavery, and the post-slavery experience of Afro-Brazilians are more easily connected to broader concerns in the contemporary North American academe. Not surprisingly, then, 31 of the 290 dissertations focus explicitly on slavery, while another 26 address the post-abolition Afro-Brazilian experience. By contrast, not a single North American dissertation of the last four decades has focused on Brazil’s independence per se, despite the importance that this topic has commanded since the late 1990s in Brazilian scholarship. Numerous as the 57 dissertations



on slavery and post-abolition Afro-Brazilians are, they surely understate the level of scholarly interest in these two areas, which few scholars can afford to ignore. Despite the absence of work on the independence period, some North American dissertations with topics that span the late-colonial period and the early empire have contributed to our understanding of Brazil's independence.

Since the 1980s, historians have lived with a constant drumbeat of lamentations about the monograph's imminent death. During the 1990s, articles in the AHA's newsletter fretted about the "endangered monograph" or even heralded its imminent demise (see, for examples, Freitag, 1995; and A.S. Bell, 1997). The reasons for the "crisis in scholarly publishing" were plain to see: shrinking library acquisition budgets and evaporating university support for their presses made publishing specialized monographs uneconomic. Latin American history appeared especially vulnerable due to the field's narrow appeal to historians as a whole and to the high proportion of books published by university presses. Accordingly, by the early 2000s, there were fears of a looming "tenure crisis" given that assistant professors, through no fault of their own, would fail to find publishers for the monographs needed to secure tenure and promotion.

Setting aside the issue of whether historians should continue to publish monographs ("History as a Book Discipline," 2015), it is clear that, despite these fears, the English-language Brazilian history monograph remains alive and well, while the career data shows that no tenure crisis materialized. To date, the 290 dissertations defended since 1980 have resulted in 118 monographs, 109 in English, eight in Portuguese, and one in Spanish (Table 4). In addition, three scholars (all with dissertations dating from the 1980s) published monographs on Brazil not based on their dissertations, and two more published monographs on other history topics. Unsurprisingly, the proportion of dissertations turned into books corresponds closely to the cohorts' success in obtaining academic positions, and only eight monographs were published by those who did not pursue academic careers (three of them were published by scholars who landed initial positions but did not continue in academic careers). Most of the eight monographs published only in Brazil were by Brazilians who returned to their home countries after doing dissertations in North America. Incidentally, all eight historians of Brazil in the class of 2004 published monographs based on their dissertations, making it the most-successful class in this regard. University presses overwhelmingly dominate the publication of English-language books on Brazilian history; fully 92 of the 109 or 84.4 percent of the monographs based on dissertations published since 1980 were issued by university presses.

Table 4: Number and Percentage of Dissertations Published as Monographs, by Five-Year Period			
	Number of Dissertations	Number Published	Percentage
1980-84	33	11	33.3
1985-89	25	12	48.0
1990-94	29	21	72.4
1995-99	47	29	61.7
2000-04	29	18	62.1
2005-09	37	13	35.1
2010-14	42	10	23.8
2015-19	48	4	8.3
Total	290	118	40.6

What accounts for the monograph's continued viability? Books remain the currency of the realm among historians, who firmly defend their value. While tenure requirements often suggest that a series of articles may be the equivalent of a book, the most research-intensive institutions in practice insist on monographs for promotion. There has been no turnaround in university press and library budgets, nor does electronic publication much reduce costs (most of the expenses associated with a book's production involve copyediting, layout, and design, not the physical printing of the volume). Have publication subventions, perhaps furtively coming out of scholars' own pockets when their own institutions do not offer them, saved the monograph? Will those who defended their dissertations since 2005 have the same success in publishing monographs that their predecessors enjoyed? Thus far, it appears that the cohorts of 2005–19 are on track to match their predecessors' publication records (Table 4), but much will depend on their success in securing tenured positions. A significant number of those who have not (yet) published a monograph have remained active in the field through the publication of articles and book chapters. At least 21 have obtained tenured positions in North America on the strength of articles and book chapters.

Those with doctorates in Brazilian history who made or are making academic careers did or do so in a variety of locations. Twenty-one work in Brazil, but only two of those were North Americans who settled in the country that they had studied.¹⁷ The rest of these were

¹⁷ J.M. Monteiro and C.A. Welch. This is fewer than the cohorts of the 1960s and 1970s, from which at least four North



Brazilians, many of them scholars doing mid-career doctorates who returned to their home institutions. Seven pursued careers in five different countries, including three in Britain, and one each in South Africa, Mexico, Israel, and Chile.¹⁸ Those who remained in North America work at a variety of institutions, ranging from community colleges to research-intensive universities with doctoral programs. The 152 people who currently hold assistant professor positions (or their equivalent), who hold tenure, or who have reached retirement in North America work or worked primarily in university history departments (Table 5).¹⁹ Five are employed at community colleges, and sixteen taught or teach in other programs or departments, including Latin American studies, ethnic studies, African-American studies, education, business, and divinity; a further three are in Spanish and Portuguese departments.

		Number	Percent
North America			
	Community College	5	2.8
	University History Department	131	72.7
	Other University Program	16	8.9
Brazil			
	University History Department	18	10.0
	Other University Program	3	2.7
Other Countries (Universities)		7	3.9
Total		180	

Rhetoric about how doctorates in history are good preparation for other careers notwithstanding, the data on the 290 people who defended dissertations in Brazilian history since 1980 show that the credential primarily leads to an academic career (Table 6). Fully 80.1 percent of the 266 for whom this information is known began their careers as academics (including those who did not obtain tenured positions, those who currently list their careers as sessionals or adjuncts, and those holding postdoctoral fellowships or their equivalent).²⁰

Americans made careers in Brazil: M.M. Hall, P.E. Eisenberg, R.W. Slenes, and M.J. Hoffnagel.

¹⁸ Respectively, N.P. Naro, C.J. Campbell, J. Blanc, A.S. Mlambo, G. Palacios Olivares, O. Preuss, and C. Castro.

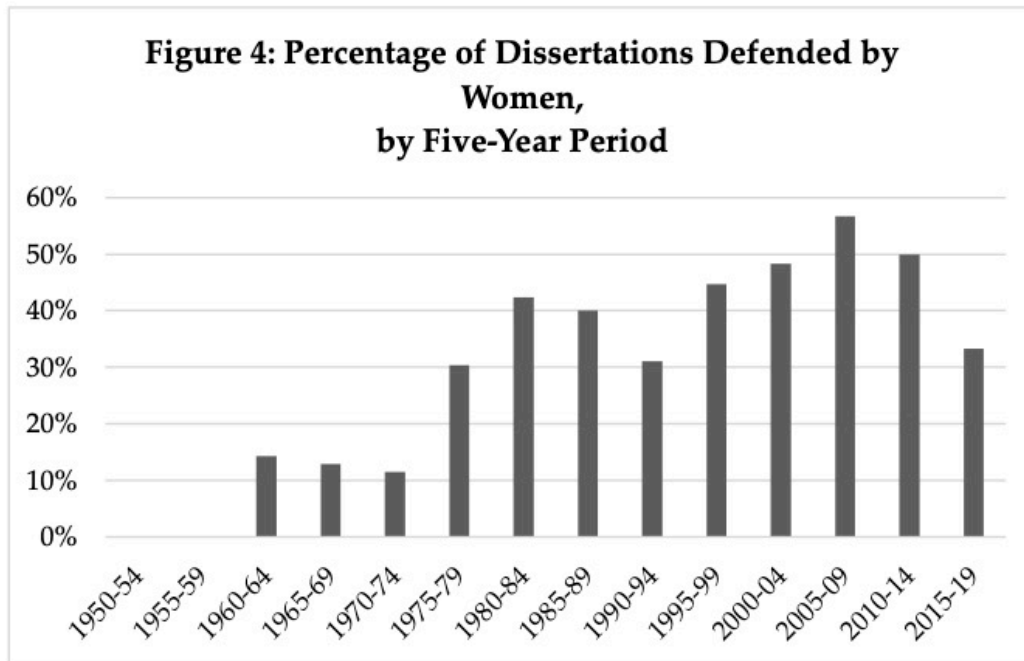
¹⁹ These figures also include three individuals deceased before retirement.

²⁰ This is consistent with the broader pattern of PhD-holders in the humanities (Finkelstein, 2019, p. 228).



To date, 55.3 percent of the 266 have obtained tenured positions or their equivalent. For some, the so-called “academic precariat” is but a career stage eventually leading to a permanent position. Other career paths pale in comparison. Nine individuals found employment in libraries and archives, twelve in academic administration or university teaching support positions, eight in some form of public history, three in secondary education, ten in business or consulting, and eight in public service or the NGO sector.

Table 6: Academic and Non-Academic Careers of Brazil's Historians			
	Number	Current Employment of Those Who Left Initial Position	Total
Assistant Professor	33		33
Instructor/Lecturer	3		3
Associate Professor/Professor	127		127
Emeritus	17		17
Academic Career Subtotal			180
Sessional/Adjunct	9	1	10
Postdoctoral/Teaching/Research	7	1	8
Academic "Precariat" Subtotal			18
University Administration	9	3	12
Private-Sector Education Support	3		3
Libraries and Archives	9		9
Public History	8	1	9
Publishing	1		1
Secondary Education	3		3
Business and Financial Services	6		6
Consulting	4		4
Public Service	5		5
Non-Government Organization	3		3
Other (Including Self-Employed)	1	5	6
Other Career Subtotal			61
Currently Unknown	26	5	31
Total			290
Notes: Those who left the academic career include one assistant professor deceased before obtaining tenure. One instructor, two associate professors, and one professor passed away prior to retirement, but they are included among the 180 pursuing academic careers.			



By the end of the 1980s, Barman could document the steady rise in the number of women completing doctorates in Brazilian history (Figure 4). In the 1970s, women accounted for almost one-third of the doctorates; their proportion rose to about 40 percent in the 1980s and 1990s, and exceeded 50 percent in the 2000s, but fell back to just over 40 percent in the 2010s (see the figures by decade in Table 7). From 1980 to 2014, the proportion of women among historians of Brazil exceeded the proportion of women among holders of U.S. doctorates by five to ten percentage points (Townsend, 2010, figure 3; American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2020). It is too early to tell whether the late 2010s decline in the proportion of women, sinking to levels not seen since the 1980s and 1990s (and well below the 40 to 45 percent in the historical profession as a whole for 2010–15), represents a new trend or whether it is just the random variation to be expected in a small universe. In any case, no less than seven of the thirteen dissertations in progress listed in the AHA's *Directory of History Dissertations* in April 2020 are by female authors.

A comparison of men's and women's careers (Table 7) suggests that there are still some inequities in the field.²¹ The data for the 2010s is still preliminary, for many in this decade's two cohorts have not had sufficient time to secure initial positions, much less be

²¹ Most of the differences between men and women recorded in Table 7 are small enough that a change in the career or publication outcome for one or two individuals per decade would bring the two groups to statistical equality.

evaluated for tenure or publish monographs (this is especially true for the large number of men in the 2015–19 cohort). Nevertheless, some somewhat troubling conclusions can be drawn from this data. Men publish their dissertations at a slightly higher rate than women, and in the cohorts of the 1990s and 2000s, men were somewhat more successful at securing initial positions. When it came to initial positions, the opposite obtained for those of the 1980s and this may also be happening for the 2010s. Sixty historians of Brazil hold positions at North American PhD-granting institutions, usually reckoned the most prestigious academic jobs, and 38 (or 63.3 percent) of them are men, a slightly higher ratio than their overall proportion in the field (56.6 percent).

A more worrisome statistic comes from a closer look at the sixteen individuals known to have begun initial positions but who did not continue their academic careers. Excluding one deceased at the assistant professor rank, eleven of the remaining fifteen are women and their departure is a disturbing loss to the field. Six of the fifteen remain in some way connected to the academe: One made a career in public history, three are currently employed in academic administration roles, one describes herself as a sessional, and one is a research fellow (Table 6). No doubt there are many motives for these career changes, and they can be seen as a continuation of the attrition that takes place at all stages of the academic pipeline. I cannot document how many doctoral students abandon their programs without completing a dissertation, given that no institution publicizes data on in-program attrition rates, but we can all remember someone from our class or cohort who dropped out before completing the degree.

This study is a snapshot of the field of Brazilian history in North America at a specific moment in time—April 2020—and it can offer no insights into future trends, which in any case are even more uncertain given the COVID-19 pandemic. The large number of doctorates awarded in 2015–19 and the large number of institutions awarding them suggest a vibrant field. The impressive numbers of historians of Brazil obtaining academic jobs since 1990, the growing proportion of women among them, the historicization of the late twentieth century, and the steady stream of English-language monographs suggest a maturing (if still small) field that has secured its place in the North American academe. Nevertheless, the findings do not justify the contention that we should be encouraging students to pursue doctorates in Brazilian history on the grounds that career prospects are relatively good or that members of the large cohort of 1995–99 will start retiring sometime in the 2020s.

Without comparable fine-grained data on the careers of those who spend five to seven years of their lives completing doctorates in other fields of history, it is difficult to explain these article's findings. Have certain subfields like Brazilian history been especially favored as departments sought to broaden the scope of their offerings beyond Europe and North America? Regardless of the answer to this question, this survey of one small, specialized group of historians tells a story that looks quite different from the sad tale of "declining opportunity" that, according to one scholar, has characterized the U.S. academe since the 1990s (Finkelstein, 2019, p. 220). In personal terms, I must acknowledge my own good fortune of having entered the field as one of a large and successful cohort at a time when jobs were plentiful and when the publishing of monographs turned out to be much easier than all of us feared.²²

Table 7: Gender Differences in Academic Careers, by Decade

	Decade	Total	Number Female or Male	Percentage Female or Male	Number Publishing Monograph	Percent Publishing Monograph	Number Obtaining Initial Position	Percent Obtaining Initial Position	Number Obtaining Tenure	Percent Obtaining Tenure
Female	1980s	58	24	41.4	8	33.3	17	70.8	15	62.5
	1990s	76	30	39.5	18	60.0	22	73.3	20	66.7
	2000s	66	35	53.0	13	37.1	26	74.3	22	62.9
	2010s	90	37	41.1	8	21.6	23	62.2	7	18.9
	Total	290	126	43.4	47	37.3	88	69.8	64	50.8
Male	1980s	58	34	58.6	15	44.1	19	55.9	19	55.9
	1990s	76	46	60.5	32	69.6	37	80.4	36	78.3
	2000s	66	31	47.0	18	58.1	25	80.6	22	71.0
	2010s	90	53	58.9	6	11.3	27	50.9	6	11.3
	Total	290	164	56.6	71	43.3	108	65.9	83	50.6
Total		290	n/a	n/a	118	40.7	196	67.6	147	50.7

²² Research for this project was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Insight Grant. Rogelio Vélez Mendoza compiled the initial database of doctorates and their recipients in early 2017. The author brought the database up to date in April 2020. I thank Roderick J. Barman for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article, which I dedicate to the memory of five colleagues and friends whose mid-career deaths robbed the field of their contributions: Bert J. Barickman, Wiebke Ipsen, Elizabeth Kiddy, John Monteiro, and Fayette Wimberly. Thanks to Pedro Falk for reviewing the translation of the abstract.



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Appendix:

Dissertations in Brazilian History Defended at North American Universities, 1980–2019

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