

## BRAZILIAN STUDIES IN CANADA: DAWN OF A NEW ERA?

ESTUDOS BRASILEIROS NO CANADA: A CHEGADA DE UMA NOVA ERA?

W. E. (Ted) Hewitt\*

### Abstract:

Since the dark days of the Bombardier - Embraer and Brazilian beef debacles in the late 1990s, Canada-Brazil relations have taken a remarkable upturn. This is manifest in a broad array of sectors, from the academic (as witnessed by the establishment of the Canada Visiting Research Chair in Brazilian Studies), to the political (in the increased number of visiting Brazilian parliamentary delegations), the economic (evidenced by the recent rise in bilateral investment, especially in cement, beverage, and steel sectors) and the cultural (demonstrated in the nascent Canadian taste for Brazilian music, beer and food). In this paper, we examine whether and how such developments have been accompanied by an increase in academic research in Canada on Brazil in recent years, especially in non-traditional sectors of investigation, such as politics and economics. The paper concludes with an assessment of future needs and capacities in the Brazilian studies field in this country.

**Keywords:** Brazil-Canada relations, Brazilian studies, Brazilianists, area studies

### Resumo:

Desde os dias sombrios do Bombardier - Embraer e do boicote da carne de gado brasileira no final dos anos 90, as relações entre Canadá e Brasil tiveram uma significativa melhora. Isto pode ser verificado em vários setores, do acadêmico (como pode ser testemunhado pelo estabelecimento de uma cadeira como visitante de pesquisa em estudos Brasileiros), ao político (no crescente número de delegações de parlamentares brasileiras visitando o Canadá), ao econômico (evidenciado pela recente ascensão do investimento bilateral, especialmente em cimento, bebidas e aço) e ao cultural (demonstrado no gosto canadense pela música, cerveja e comida brasileiras). Neste trabalho, nós examinamos se e como tais desenvolvimentos têm sido acompanhados por um aumento na pesquisa acadêmica canadense sobre o Brasil nos últimos anos, especialmente em setores de investigação menos tradicionais, tais como o da política e da economia. Concluimos o trabalho com uma avaliação das futuras necessidades e capacidades na área de Estudos Brasileiros neste país.

**Palavras-Chave:** Relações Brasil-Canadá, estudos brasileiros, área de estudos Brazilianistas.

---

\* Ph.D and Professor of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. Canadian Brazilianist working on issues related to urban development, international cooperation, church and politics.



image in Brazil. For example, the Canadian government has provided limited support to the establishment of a 12 university network of Canadian Studies centres. Support was also provided to help sponsor an international congress of Canadianists in Belo Horizonte in November 2003. This event, organized by the Associação Brasileira de Estudos Canadenses (ABECAN), attracted nearly 200 Latin American scholars doing work on Canada—a majority of them from Brazil—as well as a large contingent of Canadian scholars and officials from both Ottawa and the mission in Brazil (ABECAN, 2003).

Brazil's recent interest in Canada has also produced significant changes in trade and investment patterns as well. Between 1999 and 2003, two-way trade between Canada and Brazil grew from \$2.417B to \$2.886B. This increase has greatly favoured Brazil, whose exports to Canada increased from \$1.375B to \$1.992B, while Canadian imports fell from \$1.080B to \$0.884B (DFAIT, 2004)<sup>1</sup>. What has been grabbing headlines, however, is the staggering pace of Brazilian investment in Canada in recent years—not so much in monetary terms, but in acquisition of Canadian companies. In the late 1990s, Brazil's steel giant Gerdau acquired Nova Steel of Cambridge, Ontario, a steel recycler. Gerdau also controls the steel tube manufacturing division of Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and has subsequently purchased other mills in the United States. Around the same time, Votorantim, a leading Brazilian producer of cement and cement products, acquired St. Mary's Cement, with major cement producing operations in St. Mary's and Bowmanville Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan. In 2004, Interbrew of Belgium acquired Labatt's, but immediately handed over the brewing portion of the company to its global Brazilian partner, Ambev, bottler of the Brahma and Antarctica brands — by far the best selling beers in Brazil. This occurred on the heels of a major investment by Molson, Inc., which acquired Kaiser of Brazil and subsequently introduced Bavaria — as a premium brand — to the Canadian beer market. Also in 2004, Noranda, Inc., a leading Canadian mining company, was the subject of a failed takeover bid by Brazil's leading iron ore company, the Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD).

### **BRAZILIAN STUDIES: ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING RESEARCH STRENGTHS**

With the increased visibility of Brazil in Canada and the growth in economic activity in a number of sectors, one might reasonably assume a concomitant increase in scholarly activity related to the study of Canada's largest trading partner in South America. The first





The first is the Centre d'études et de recherches sur le Brésil (Centre for Research on Brazil-CERB) established at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) in 2001. The Centre has provided a central point of contact and exposure for the many initiatives which UQAM has in place relating to Brazil, including nearly two dozen exchange agreements with Brazilian universities, and large scale environmental projects funded by the International Development Research Centre and the Canadian International Development Agency worth a total of \$2M. To date, CERB has hosted a large number of talks and seminars on Brazilian topics, welcoming leading researchers and other well-known figures from both Brazil and Canada. In 2002, for example, the Centre hosted a conference on religion and politics, with famed (and controversial) Brazilian Liberation Theologian Leonardo Boff as the keynote speaker. In the fall of 2003, the Centre invited the leader of the Movimento dos Sem Terra (MST), João Paulo Stedile, to speak on the agrarian question and MST militancy. That same year, the Centre received two delegations of visiting Brazilian parliamentarians and federal ministers who, along with local academics, participated in mini-conferences assessing the Lula government and the Partido dos Trabalhadores in power. Within the Montreal community, CERB has also, finally, hosted public events designed to showcase Brazilian films, television, and the arts (Andrès, 2003).

The other critical initiative has been the establishment of the Canada Visiting Chair in Brazilian Studies in 2003. Initiated by a consortium of four Canadian institutions—the University of Calgary, the University of Western Ontario, York University and the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)—and with support from the International Development Research Centre, and the Canadian government's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the primary objective of the Chair has been to promote the study of Brazil in Canada, and to strengthen academic relationships between the two countries. By agreement among the partners, two distinguished Brazilian scholars are invited to Canada each year for a period of at least two weeks. Typically, Chairs are expected to deliver at least one major address at each of the participating universities, meet with faculty, students, and representatives from both government and the private sector, and participate in organized events such as conferences or workshops.

In the fall of 2003, the inaugural Chair—hosted by the University of Calgary was Prof. Marcos Jank, a specialist in global trade in agriculture. In September, Prof. Jank

served as keynote speaker at a roundtable on international trade in agriculture hosted by the University and attended by key figures in government, academia and the private sector. This was followed by a Canada-wide tour, where Prof. Jank met with fellow academics, students, and government officials and business people in London, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. The second appointed chair was Prof. Germano de Paula, a Professor at the Universidade Federal de Uberlandia and an expert in international trade in steel. Hosted at the University of Western Ontario, Prof. de Paula was keynote speaker at a roundtable discussing factors affecting present and future competitiveness and export prospects in the steel industries of Brazil and Canada. Attending the workshop were a small group of academics from across Canada working on steel trade issues, international trade experts from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, members of the diplomatic corps, and senior executives and union leaders from industry. As part of the series, a major conference on cities and local governance issues is planned for Glendon College at York University in the fall of 2005. Prof. Lucio Kowarick of the University of São Paulo—an internationally renowned Brazilian architect and urban studies expert—is expected to serve at the next Brazil Chair and keynote speaker at this event, which will be attended by leading academics and senior politicians from all levels of government in both Canada and Brazil.

## **THE DISSEMINATION OF BRAZILIANIST RESEARCH**

### **Canada's Brazilianist cohort**

Using a combination of archival and reputational methods, the 1995 study of Brazilianist research identified 16 academics in Canada with a research focus on Brazil. Applying the same methodology again in 2004, it would appear that this number has remained remarkably stable over the past 10 years. At the same time, the key players have changed considerably, with older scholars retiring, and a generation of new researchers emerging (see Chart 1). These include Jean Daudelin at Carleton, who does work on the social movements and politics, and historians Rosana Nunes and Hendrik Kraay at St. Mary's and Calgary respectively. The group also tends to be increasingly representative of Canada's regions. Where in 1993, 12 of 16 researchers were from

Ontario, by 2004, Ontario accounts for just under half. Currently, five are from Quebec, and there is one each from British Columbia, Alberta, and Nova Scotia.

Less has changed in terms of the disciplinary representation of the group. As in the past, the cohort is dominated by political scientists (3) and historians (4), with a notable absence of experts in the areas of political economy and trade.

### **Dissemination of research on Brazil**

Since 1993, the number of articles published on Brazil in leading Latin America studies journals has remained fairly constant. Tables 1 and 2 provide a detailed breakdown of publication rates for two periods, 1993-1998, and 1999-2002. As can be seen, the proportion of articles published on Brazil in five key journals is 27 percent for the first period, and 23 percent for the second. Both numbers are in fact slightly below the figure of 29 percent reported for the 1987-1992 period. Somewhat more discouraging is the trend with respect to Canadian authorship of these articles. Although during the past 10 years Canadian authors have appeared more frequently in the journals cited, overall participation rates are falling dramatically. During the 1987-1992 time period, Canadian-based academics published 6 (7 percent) of 82 papers, all of these in the *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*. During 1993-1998, Canadian-authored publications did appear in each of the journals surveyed, but overall accounted for only five percent of the total. From 1999-2002, Canadian authors were all but absent, accounting for only 1 of 88 articles published, or less than 1 percent.



**TABLE 1. Dissemination of Research Results on Brazil in Selected Journals, 1993-1998**

<i>Journal</i>	<i>N. of issues surveyed</i>	<i>Total n. of articles</i>	<b>Articles on Brazil</b>	
			<i>N. of articles on Brazil</i>	<i>N. of Canadian authors</i>
Can. Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies	11	37	5 (14)	2 (40)
Journal of Latin American Studies	18	118	28 (24)	2 (7)
Latin American Perspectives	27	170	27 (16)	1 (4)
Latin American Research Review	18	93	16 (17)	1 (6)
Luso-Brazilian Review	12	89	62 (70)	1 (2)
<b>Totals</b>	86	507	138 (27)	7 (5)

**TABLE 2. Dissemination of Research Results on Brazil in Selected Journals, 1999-2002**

<i>Journal</i>	<i>N. of issues surveyed</i>	<i>Total n. of articles</i>	<b>Articles on Brazil</b>	
			<i>N. of articles on Brazil</i>	<i>N. of Canadian authors</i>
Can. Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies	8	38	2 (5)	0 (0)
Journal of Latin American Studies	14	91	12 (13)	1 (8)
Latin American Perspectives	23	132	23 (17)	0 (0)
Latin American Research Review	12	64	10 (16)	0 (0)
Luso-Brazilian Review	8	61	41 (67)	0 (0)
<b>Totals</b>	65	386	88 (23)	1 (1)

It would be misleading to suggest, however, that Canadian Brazilianists have suffered a catastrophic decline in productivity during the past decade. Indeed, a survey of the research publications of 13 Brazilianists in Canada shows a considerable increase in recent years in publication on Brazil, and in a variety of sources. As Table 3 shows, between 1993 and 1998, Canadian Brazilianists published a total of six books, 22 scholarly articles on Brazil, and 6 book chapters on Brazil. During the five-year period from 1999 to 2004, the number of articles published has remained fairly constant, at just over 20. However, the number of books has doubled, from 6 to 12, while the number of book chapters has nearly tripled, from 5 to 13. In part, this may be explained by the maturation of the cohort, many of whom were recent PhDs during the initial sampling period.





Brazilian projects undertaken by the Canadian International Development Agency have been far higher, totaling over \$25M during this same period (CIDA, 2004). Here again, however, given the developing world partner and development-related focus of the agency, Canadian institutions and researchers have not figured prominently. Still and all, since 1995, the University of British Columbia, the University of Ottawa, Ryerson University, Lambton College (Sarnia), and the Ecole Polytechnique have participated as partners in four projects worth approximately \$8M.

One newer CIDA program, administered by the Association of Canadian Universities (AUCC) and offered directly to Canadian Universities—the University Partnerships in Cooperation and Development (UPCD) program—offers a regular opportunity for Canadian post-secondary institutions to work with partners in Brazil and other developing countries to propose funding projects. Once again, however, while these may contain a research component, they must be directed primarily towards enhancing quality of life. To date, only one of these projects involving Brazil has been funded. Hosted at York University, the “Capacity Building of Civil Society in Water Resources Management in São Paulo State” project will help bring various players in Brazil together to in participate in decision-making processes concerning local water management and protection (AUCC, 2004).

In keeping with the Canadian government’s recent emphasis on trade expansion and collaborative research in science and technology, and in particular it’s focus on three specific emerging economies—India, China, and Brazil—there does now exist the potential for expanded international research programs offered through the Federal granting agencies. For example, one funding program recently announced by the Natural Science and Engineering Council looks to provide support for inter-American collaboration in materials research, with Brazil listed as one of the target countries. There is every possibility that such opportunities may expand in the coming years.

## THE TRAINING OF BRAZILIANIST RESEARCHERS

An important mechanism which can assist in generating interest in Brazilian studies among students and future researchers is the educational exchange. In 2004, the Brazilian Embassy in Ottawa undertook a comprehensive study of Canada-Brazil post-

**inter** **inter** **inter**  
**T H E S I S**

secondary exchanges of all types, which was subsequently published under the title “Cooperação acadêmica: Acordos entre instituições Brasil-Canadá, 2004” (Embassy of Brazil, 2004). Of the 47 Canadian universities which were contacted, a total of 36 responded. Twenty-one of these claimed to either have, or have had educational exchanges with Brazil of various types. Of the 21, one-quarter were located in the Western provinces and Quebec, respectively. Over a third were resident in Ontario, with the balance, just under 13 percent, located in the Atlantic provinces. A total of 101 agreements were cited in the study, involving Brazilian institutions in over 20 Brazilian states. Just under a third of the agreements were cited as “inactive” or “expired”. Moreover, of the 72 claimed as active, the primary objectives of the exchange were either left unstated or unspecified. Faculty exchange objectives were cited in 14 agreements, research in 16, and student exchange activity cited in 35. Typically, however, the level of activity indicated by the respondent institutions in each of these categories was either very low (a student or two a year), or left unspecified (Embassy of Brazil, 2004). Clearly, there is much potential for further Canada-Brazil interaction in this area

By contrast, a review of interest in Brazilian studies among graduate students reveals some encouraging trends. The 1995 report on the state of Brazilian studies in Canada noted a gradual trend on the part of graduate students toward election of Brazilian topics for Masters and Ph.D level theses between 1927 and 1990. As Table 4 shows, however, there has been a virtual explosion in graduate student interest in Brazil in recent years. During the 10-year period from 1981-1990, a total of 16 Masters and 20 PhD theses were produced on topics related to Brazil. During the last decade of the last century, however, those numbers had more than tripled, to 58 and 63 respectively (National Library of Canada, 2004).



**TABLE 4. Graduate Level Theses and Dissertations on Brazil, 1927-2000**

<b>Discipline</b>	1927-1970		1971-1980		1981-1990		1991-2000	
	<i>Masters</i>	<i>Ph.D</i>	<i>Master s</i>	<i>Ph.D</i>	<i>Masters</i>	<i>Ph.D</i>	<i>Master s</i>	<i>Ph.D</i>
<b>Science</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>
Engineering					1		4	4
Geology			2	2	3		1	10
Biology							1	8
Agriculture							2	5
Health Sciences			1		2		5	2
Environmental Sciences								1
Physics							1	1
<b>Education</b>			<b>1</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Humanities</b>			<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
Arts					1		2	
Religious Studies			1			3	1	
Literature							2	3
<b>Library Science</b>			<b>3</b>					
<b>Social Science</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>23</b>
Anthropology	1		2	1	1		3	5
Economics	5	1	4		4	1	4	1
Geography	1	1	2	1	3	9	1	4
History	1			1			4	2
Political Science	2		3	1	1	1	8	1
Sociology	1		2			3	14	7
Linguistics/Language							2	3
Business							1	
<b>Social Work</b>					<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>63</b>

Sources: CALACS (1982); Libraries and Archives Canada (2004); National Library of Canada (1994).

Gains in the Sciences are particularly noteworthy, especially at the Ph.D level. As can be seen from Table 4, significant numbers of dissertations were produced between 1991 and 2000 in Geology (10), Biology (8), Agriculture (5), and Engineering (4). Overall, the situation in the Social Sciences is similar, although there is a clear preference for Masters level studies. Overall, 37 Masters theses dealt with Brazil, with well over half in Sociology (14) and Political Science (8) combined. At the PhD level, 23 dissertations were completed, with the majority in Sociology (7), Anthropology (5), and Geography (4).



such initiatives point to the real need for attracting Brazilianists in areas of critical importance such as international relations and trade, and political economy.

Funding for Brazilianist research remains a challenge, but there may light at the end of the tunnel, given the current restructuring at SSHRC, IDRC support for the Brazil Chair initiative, and increasing government emphasis on research and development support for advanced emerging economies such as Brazil. Real progress on this front, however, will likely await a significant increase in the number of researchers in Canada focusing in whole—or at least part—on issues related to Brazil and or Brazil-Canada relations.

As was suggested, opportunities for enhancing the quantity and scope of interactions between Canadian and Brazilian post-secondary institutions remain wide open, given current—and limited—levels of activity in this area. Enhanced activity on this front will rely to some extent on the interest and goodwill of university faculty and administrators. The federal and provincial governments may also play a role, however, by developing effective funding programs for exchange activity involving Brazilian institutions.

Without question, the area where the furthest advances have been made is in the graduate training area. The number of theses and dissertations on Brazil undertaken at Canadian universities has grown substantially during the past 10 years. In and of itself, this is good news, but over the next few years will also have the likely effect of increasing the number of faculty working on Brazil at Canadian institutions. This in turn will undoubtedly increase the pressure on funding agencies for support for Brazilianist research, and on the institutions themselves for the development of Brazilian studies courses and programs.



## REFERENCES — REFERÊNCIAS

Andrès, Bernard. 2003. “Québec-Brasil: Da ABECAN ao CERB (Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas Sobre o Brasil). Paper presented at the VIII Congresso Internacional da ABECAN, Belo Horizonte, 11-14 November.

AUCC (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada). 2004. “University Partnerships in Cooperation and Development.” [http://www.aucc.ca/upcd-pucd/projects/americas/Brazil\\_e.html](http://www.aucc.ca/upcd-pucd/projects/americas/Brazil_e.html).

CALACS (Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies). 1982. *Directory of Canadian Theses on Latin American and Caribbean Topics: 1927-1980*. Ottawa: CALACS.

CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). 2004. “Canada-Brazil Development Cooperation 2001.” [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida\\_ind.nsf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf).

DFAIT (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade). “Fact Sheet—Brazil.” <http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/ie-en/Display Document.jsp?did=217>.

Embassy of Brazil. 2004. “Cooperação acadêmica: Acordos entre instituições Brasil-Canada, 2004”. Report. Ottawa: Embassy of Brazil.

Hewitt, W. E. 1995. “Brazilian Studies in Canada.” *Latin American Research Review* 30: 130-45.

IDRC (International Development Research Centre). 2004. “IDRC in Brazil.” [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-11015-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-11015-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

IDRC (International Development Research Centre). 2004. “Awards Offered to Canadians or Permanent Residents of Canada.” [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-23316-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-23316-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

Libraries and Archives Canada. 2004. “Theses Portal.” <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/thesescanada>.

National Library of Canada. 1994. CAN/OLE (on-line service).

