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Brazilian Independence: Change and Continuity

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Summary and Keywords

Stemming from an accelerated and tumultuous process unleashed by European wars in the first decade of the 19th century, Brazil and Portugal split politically in 1822. In a sense, Brazil's independence reflects a number of peculiar characteristics within the context of the time due, in part, to three centuries of Portuguese colonization and to changes within the colonial system beginning in the second half of the 1700s. In other ways, however, Brazilian independence is linked to external events like the French Revolution, the independence of Haiti, and, above all, the wars of independence in Spanish America. The most profound and lasting consequences of the break with Portugal were the emergence of a Brazilian state and nation that until that point did not exist and that was consolidated over the course of the nineteenth century, as well as the nationalization of certain colonial institutions that were partially maintained. Historiography and national memory would later imbue independence with supreme importance as the foundational moment of the nation such that it has become a recurring theme in historical studies of Brazil.

Keywords: Brazil, independence, nineteenth century, nation, national state, Western revolutions, Spanish America

Portuguese America before Independence

On the eve of independence, Portuguese America consisted of a set of territories occupying a significant part of the South American continent bordering, to the northwest, west and south, the Spanish viceroyalties of New Granada, Peru and Rio de la Plata; to the north, the captaincy general of Venezuela, also Spanish, and the territories of Demerara (disputed by the British and Dutch) and Cayenne (French); and to the east, an immense Atlantic coastline, which made the ocean the main connection between Portuguese America and the rest of the continent, Europe, Africa, and the Indian Ocean. The nearly four million inhabitants of Portuguese America included whites, blacks, Indians and a wide

range of mestizos, in a hierarchical society where slavery (reserved for Africans, Afro-descendants, and indigenous peoples) existed alongside many forms of free labor.

Portuguese America did not constitute a well-defined political and territorial unit. It was divided into subunits called captaincies whose boundaries were not always clear, grouped around a central government that coexisted for a time with the government of a so-called *Estado de Maranhão*, further north. In the early eighteenth century, the discovery of gold in the region that would become known as Minas Gerais (ca. 1693), then Mato Grosso (1719) and Goiás (1722), allowed the Portuguese to begin regular explorations for precious metals. This led to demographic and trade flows into the continent, and to the rapid urbanization of regions hitherto little inhabited by Europeans and their descendants. As a result, these regions became connected to older centers of Portuguese settlement in areas such as Pernambuco, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, and more recent ones like Rio Grande de São Pedro. In addition to the slave trade and the production and trade of sugar, livestock and its derivative products, cotton, rice, and other minor goods, mining was an economic activity that served an external as well as domestic market. To an appreciable extent, it contributed to the spread of the colonial project into the interior as well as to the integration of the Portuguese territories.

Efforts to reform the Portuguese Empire, developed under Dom José I (1750–1777) and Dona Maria I (1777–1792), prioritized its American colonies with measures aimed at further integration. Examples of this include the administrative shift from a so-called *Estado do Brasil* to viceroyalty in 1763, resulting in the capital of the colony being moved from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro; the extinction of the *Estado do Grão-Pará e Maranhão* and its incorporation with Brazil (1772); border treaties signed with Spain (1750, 1761, 1777); the creation of key villages; and the administrative reorganization of several captaincies. In the political discourse of the time, there emerged a notion of a unitary "Brazil," though only within some Portuguese intellectual circles. This integration would remain rather limited: there was no collective Brazilian identity, but rather several regional allegiances properly articulated and subordinated to a Portuguese identity that resonated deeply for most inhabitants of the New World. This helps to explain why political protest movements such as in Minas Gerais (1788–1789), Bahia (1798) and Pernambuco (1801) were very limited in territorial scope, although the 1798 Tailor's Revolt in Bahia did involve a diverse cast of conspirators, including slaves and former slaves. These movements reflected typical tensions of the colonial world, in which grievances over taxation, challenges involved in controlling an enslaved population, supply shortages, late payments of military salaries, and abuses committed by local authorities appointed by the king were pervasive. They also demonstrated the political and ideological influence of events such as the independence of the British colonies of North America (1776), the French Revolution (1789) and other European movements, although they should not be seen as harbingers of a Brazilian national consciousness or incipient patriotism. At most, these localized rebellions sought the independence of their respective regions—in the case of Minas Gerais and Bahia—and their failures contributed little to the separation from Portugal that happened only decades later and without the direct influence of eighteenth-century events.

However, since at least the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), the Portuguese Empire confronted serious challenges as a minor power competing in the international system. Therefore, the political protest movements that emerged elicited inordinate concern from imperial authorities and were ultimately repressed by force. They did not lay the groundwork for the independence of Brazil, but they did underscore the failure of the crown's reformist policies and the structural weaknesses belying Portuguese aspirations to credibility as a political power. They also helped politicize collective identities in regions of Portuguese America where discussions over forms of government, historical examples of breaks between colonies and metropoles, and innovative prospects for the future were becoming even more frequent.

The Napoleonic Wars and the Transfer of the Portuguese Court

Of the many conflicts that galvanized Europe after the French Revolution, the resumption of hostilities between France and Britain in 1803 was crucial in creating the conditions for Brazil's split from Portugal. The Napoleonic invasion of Portugal in 1807 encountered a weak metropolis, unable to maintain its intended neutrality or to resist a conquering army that would soon reveal itself to be much less powerful than anticipated. The decision to transfer the Portuguese royal family, the imperial high command, and the seat of the Bragantina monarchy to one of its American territories vindicated a proposal that had long circulated in Lisbon, rumored on several occasions and for different reasons since at least the seventeenth century. It was a move that ushered in a new and decisive phase in the history of the Empire: under the command of Prince Regent D. João de Bragança—his mother, Queen Maria I, had been deemed incapable of governing in 1792—Portugal and its territories were formally placed under British protection and forced to reevaluate the traditional arrangements that had long sustained relations between the constituent parts of the empire.

Commanded by Jean-Andoche Junot, Napoleon's troops entered Portugal through Spain, a French ally up until that point, on November 19. The first rumors of the invasion arrived in Lisbon three days later, and the decision to move the court, overruling some of the prince regent's advisors who favored striking a deal with Napoleon, was made at a dramatic session of the Portuguese Council of State on the 26th. Finally, on the 29th, escorted by a fleet of British ships, the prince regent and his entourage left Lisbon bound for Rio de Janeiro. Junot's men entered Lisbon the following day. From that point on, Portugal was formally ruled by a regency council that received royal instructions to try to maintain good relations with the French, avoiding further conflicts. On February 1, 1808, however, Junot dissolved the council. Shortly thereafter, the Bourbon monarchs of Spain found themselves prevented from governing by their former French allies, leading to a series of popular uprisings across the country, confirming the fears underlying the Portuguese high command's decision to transfer the court. In dealing with the same threat—Napoleon's expansionist fervor—the Spanish and Portuguese empires found themselves in radically distinct situations, though both were engaged in a fight against a common enemy: for the former, the vacuum of political authority at the highest level resulted in the formation of autonomous and potentially revolutionary governments both in Spain and its American colonies; for the latter, the preservation of monarchical authority seemed capable of preserving the unity of the Empire.

On August 1, 1808, British forces that had been fighting the French in Spain under the command of Arthur Wellesley arrived in Portugal. With some interruptions, the war in the Iberian Peninsula would last until 1814, resulting in widespread death and destruction. It also created an enduring experience of frustration for Portugal since the transfer of the court to a colony undermined traditional imperial hierarchies even as the move sought precisely to maintain that balance of power in the face of an existential threat. The effects of this disruption, including political and material losses for the Portuguese and their resentment for the advantages awarded Brazil in 1808, would contribute significantly to the emergence of an alternative policy which until then had been suggested by a only a handful of writers, such as the abbots Guillaume Raynal and Dominique De Pradt: the independence of Brazil, which they argued should occur in a not too distant future, amid what they saw as an inevitable general movement of separation of the American colonies from their European metropoles.

On the high seas, the British-Portuguese flotilla heading to Brazil split up. The prince regent and part of his entourage landed first in Salvador, Bahia on January 22, 1808. His stay in that city lasted about a month, during which he signed

the royal decree of January 28, opening Portuguese ports in America to world trade. In practice, this meant the end of the colonial monopoly that Portugal had enjoyed for centuries and a boon to British commerce which, stifled by European wars, sought to expand its presence in the Americas (favorable trade terms for the British were reinforced two years later with the signing of two treaties between the Portuguese court and the British government). On March 7, 1808, the prince regent arrived in Rio de Janeiro and appointed a new cabinet, formed by Fernando José de Portugal and Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, two central figures of Portuguese politics.

Converting the capital of the Viceroyalty of Brazil into the seat of the imperial court was an enormous undertaking, although the estimated number of people who traded Lisbon for Rio de Janeiro is traditionally overestimated (if it were indeed between the oft-cited 10 to 15 thousand people, each of the 36 ships that sailed from Portugal would have had to have carried between 277 and 416 people). The process involved changes to the infrastructure of the city as well as improvements to its communication networks with other parts of the Americas, which entailed updating relations with the rest of the continent. More broadly, measures in line with the reformist spirit sweeping the empire since the eighteenth century finally provided Portuguese America with institutions that until that point did not exist or, if they did, could only be found in Portugal, such as the Medical School of Salvador (created on February 18, 1808), the Supreme Military and Justice Council (April 1), the Council of Conscience and Orders [*Mesa do Desembargo do Paço e da Consciência e Ordens*] (April 22), the Academy of Guards of the Navy (May 5), the Police Quartermaster General [*Intendência Geral de Polícia*] (May 10), the House of Supplication (also on May 10), the Royal Museum of Rio de Janeiro (June 6), the Royal Board of Trade, Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Navigation (August 23), Bank of Brazil (October 12), and the Medical School of Rio de Janeiro (November 5). The longstanding ban on manufacturing operations in Brazil and other Portuguese domains was lifted (April 1) while incentives were created to foster immigration to Brazil as the government initiated new wars of extermination against indigenous peoples near Rio de Janeiro in the captaincies of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, and Bahia.

Up until that point, Brazil had no legal press, notwithstanding a few short-lived experiments in the eighteenth century. On August 13, 1808, the government created the Royal Press in Rio de Janeiro so as to make public the crown's official decisions; edit and publish works of political, economic, literary, scientific and philosophical nature; and produce the first newspaper of Portuguese America, the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*. In 1811, the first public libraries not linked to religious orders were opened in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, and in the latter another newspaper entitled *Idade do Ouro no Brasil* emerged as well (in 1813 a third periodical entitled *O Patriota* would begin circulating in Rio de Janeiro). Along with *Correio Braziliense*, a monthly publication edited in London by Hipólito José da Costa that since June 1808 offered news and political, economic and cultural analyses to readers in Brazil and elsewhere in the world, such printed undertakings contributed to an expansion of public spaces for political debate in Portuguese America. These publications benefited from the renewed dynamism of the Portuguese Empire.

Spanish-American Neighbors and the Elevation of Brazil to Co-Kingdom

From its first moments in the new seat of the empire, the Portuguese court developed a foreign policy based upon a renewed emphasis on the territories of Spanish America. Often simplistically regarded as "expansionist," this approach actually blended aggressive elements with a more cautious touch given the uncertainties of the new Portuguese predicament. British incursions into Buenos Aires and Montevideo in 1806 and 1807, the unsettled British role vis-à-vis the Portuguese Empire, and the tenuous situation of the Spanish Empire forced the Portuguese court in Rio de Janeiro to closely monitor events in the rest of South America and the Caribbean, and to capitalize on favorable moments for intervention. Beginning in 1808, virtually every political development in Spanish America would be known in Portuguese America, influencing the course of the empire and contributing to the emergence of an independent Brazil.

The political project centered on Carlota Joaquina of the House of Bourbon is a significant example. Wife of Prince Regent João of Braganza and sister of Ferdinand VII of Spain, the king whose authority had been usurped by the French, Carlota publicly addressed Spanish political and administrative authorities in Europe and America in 1808 to propose that she be recognized as the supreme ruler of Spain, replacing her brother. In practice, such a move would favor the British and the Portuguese court in Rio de Janeiro, both of whom supported Carlota's claim, at least initially. Although rejected almost everywhere, Carlota's proposal found a favorable reception among a group of powerful River Plate traders who maintained links with ports in Brazil (one of them, Manuel Belgrano, soon became one of the leaders of the revolutionary government in Buenos Aires created in May 1810). Even in places where her claim was rebuffed—such as New Spain, Upper Peru and Paraguay—Carlota's interjection further destabilized local political arrangements that were increasingly complex and confrontational.

In 1809 and 1810, as autonomous local governments were taking shape in many parts of Spanish America, it became clear that Spain's empire might splinter and collapse. These developments vindicated the political decision made by the Portuguese crown in 1807 while at the same time underscoring the potential risk to the Portuguese Empire despite the apparent safety enjoyed in its new American capital. Spanish America thus would become a rich source of examples, fears, and paradigms to be taken up by the Portuguese Empire in a winding course of events that would culminate in the independence of Brazil in 1822. This historical experience would join other vivid examples—the formation of the United States, the French Revolution, the independence of Saint-Domingue, the Napoleonic wars, and the end of the slave trade in the United States and the British Empire—available to men and women experiencing the political upheavals of the time, developing and influencing them in various ways. At the same time, the ordeal of the former Spanish colonies elicited constant attention to what was happening along the territorial borders of Brazil, including flows of people and material as well as new political ideas.

The end of the war in Portugal in 1814 fueled hopes that the Court might finally return to Lisbon. Most of those expectations came from actors who combined commercial endeavors with political activity and who, being rooted in the Iberian Peninsula and formed mainly by those Portuguese born in Europe, had been more adversely affected by the events of 1807. In America, moreover, where divergent interests had been consolidated since the eighteenth century, not all political and economic groups composed mainly of Portuguese Americans had benefited from the transfer of the court. Indeed, clearly antagonistic positions did not yet exist between European Portuguese and Portuguese Americans in 1807 or 1814; however, the situation in which the Portuguese Empire found itself, despite the strengthening of political unity achieved by resettling the royal family, contributed to a deepening of differences and would produce new contradictions and conflicts.

The creation of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves by royal decree on December 16, 1815 aimed to recognize the fact that Brazil, the capital of the empire since 1808, had definitively outgrown its condition as a mere colony. The move created a new political entity supposedly devoid of vertical hierarchies, since Portugal and Brazil would enjoy equal status. This reform of the Portuguese Empire came as the royal court lingered in Rio de Janeiro, even as the Peninsular War drew to a close and deepened debate on the issue of whether the king and his entourage should return to Portugal or remain in the Americas. There are good reasons to believe that the creation of the Portuguese United Kingdom had been recommended to the court in Rio de Janeiro by representatives of European powers gathered at the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) concerned about the spread of revolutionary political ideas in post-Napoleonic Europe and Spanish America, which had seemingly been pacified following a period of widespread republican rule that endured in the River Plate region. One of the main issues at the time in both public debates and in conversations limited to the prince regent and his advisors was whether the royal family and the Portuguese court should return to Europe, potentially exposing their American territories to the instability that had shaken Spanish America.

The attempt to preserve the Portuguese empire in 1807 had proven successful in the short term, but the limitations of that strategy became clear as new circumstances compromised imperial cohesiveness. One such development was the growing view of Brazil as a distinctive unit, now with an added political component: the Kingdom of Brazil would, in the near future, allow for the establishment of a government and state of Brazil, both separate from Portugal.

Before that happened, however, the Portuguese United Kingdom experienced other challenges to its political existence. In 1817, deep discontent produced an open challenge to the authority of the prince regent in both Europe and Brazil. The movement for Portuguese independence from British forces, led by General Gomes Freire de Andrade, resulted in the arrest and execution of many of its participants, many of whom were also dissatisfied with the court's persistence in Rio de Janeiro and who saw the establishment of the Portuguese United Kingdom as a political downgrade for Portugal vis-à-vis Brazil. The deepening of Portuguese foreign policy toward the Americas also contributed to this sense of grievance. In January 1817, an army raised in Rio de Janeiro was received in Montevideo, starting a Portuguese government in the so-called eastern band of Uruguay, a region of the former Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, contested since the formation of the revolutionary government of Buenos Aires in 1810, and a region that had already experienced Portuguese military intervention in 1811. The actions of the Portuguese court served the interests of landowners and merchants in Rio Grande de São Pedro, the southernmost captaincy of Brazil and directly across the border from the River Plate.

In Pernambuco, one of the captaincies of Brazil most negatively impacted by the transfer of the court, an armed movement overthrew the local government and, for about three months, instituted an openly revolutionary republican order. Among its participants were a variety of unusual social groups, suggesting that in Portuguese America the politicization of men and women of low social status, those potentially freed or still in bondage, had been growing since the late eighteenth century. The harsh repression of this movement, which demonstrated connections to events in Spanish America, where in 1817 political turmoil once again erupted, demonstrated definitively that the Portuguese United Kingdom was not a stable or united political entity.

The Portuguese Constitutional Revolution and the Separation from Brazil

The political movement that began in the city of Porto in August 1820 involuntarily laid the groundwork for Brazil's independence from Portugal. Its initial goal was to regenerate and preserve the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves, considered to be in a declining state of disarray since the French invasion of Portugal and the transfer of the court to America. The Porto movement quickly gained support on both sides of the Atlantic by placing limits on royal power via the establishment of a sovereign assembly of the nation's representatives called the *Cortes Gerais, Extraordinárias e Constituintes da Nação Portuguesa* (General Courts, Extraordinary and Constitutive of the Portuguese Nation). The cortes, charged with legislating and formulating a constitution, undermined the monarchical unity desired by now-King Dom João VI (crowned in 1818). Another one of the movement's demands was that the king's return to Portugal with his family and his ministers, a change that would adversely impact political and economic interests developed in Brazil during the years in which it was the capital of the empire.

The call for a meeting in Lisbon of representatives from every province of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves—including the old captaincies of Portuguese America—mobilized several regions of Brazil, resulting in the creation of temporary government juntas, provisional oaths to the yet-to-be drafted constitution (for which the model would be the Spanish constitution of 1812, repealed by the restoration of Fernando VII in 1814 and reintroduced in 1820) and the election of political representatives. The first province to adhere to the constitutional movement was Pará on January 1, 1821. Bahia joined on February 10, and Rio de Janeiro sixteen days later amid a tumultuous and violent public assembly which contributed to Dom João VI's decision to return to Portugal. Pernambuco, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Montevideo (in the eastern Portuguese territorial band) joined in March; Maranhão, Goiás, and Rio Grande do Sul (formerly Rio Grande de São Pedro) in April; Rio Grande do Norte and Piauí, in May; Alagoas, in June; Espirito Santo and Mato Grosso, in July; Ceará, in November; and Paraíba in February 1822.

All of this agitation was due to the growth of the printing press and political publications in Brazil, resulting from decrees issued on September 21 and October 13 by the junta ruling Lisbon until the start of the cortes. The decrees also established freedom of the press throughout the Portuguese empire, applying to Brazil as of March 2, 1821. Thus, while three periodicals were in circulation in Brazil in 1820 (two in Rio de Janeiro and one in Bahia), there were, in various provinces, at least 26 in 1821, 38 in 1822, and 35 in 1823 after Brazil obtained its independence. The number of political pamphlets and publications put out by the official royal press also grew exponentially. In Portuguese America, politics and recent history had become common topics of debate, along with the future prospects of a Portuguese United Kingdom whose fragmentation could now be imagined, even if partisans of independence were still few.

The Lisbon cortes met on January 26, 1821 without the participation of representatives from Brazil. The first deputies from Portuguese America to eventually arrive were representatives from Pernambuco on August 29, 1821, followed by delegations from Rio de Janeiro, Maranhão, Bahia, and São Paulo (the latter not until February 11, 1822). The Minas Gerais delegation, as well as the representative elected by Montevideo, Lucas José Obes, was not seated. Several disagreements quickly arose between representatives from Portugal and representatives from Brazil, creating antagonistic blocks that had not existed up until that point. The cortes disapproved of the conduct of Dom João VI who, upon leaving for Lisbon on April 26, 1821, left his son, Prince D. Pedro, to govern Brazil with the support of a council

made up of two ministers and two secretaries. Another measure contributing to the development of antagonisms within the cortes was the creation of the Cisplatine Province, decided by a congress of representatives from the eastern territorial band gathered between July 15 and August 8, and controlled entirely by Carlos Frederico Lecor, the Portuguese governor of Montevideo since 1817. The decision to consolidate the Portuguese government in the region by making Cisplatin a province of the Kingdom of Brazil was contrary to the designs of the royal cabinet. The cabinet, in turn, was sensitive to the cortes's dissatisfaction with the crown's Americanist policy developed since 1808. Lecor's autonomous operations in Montevideo deepened the resentment of peninsular Portuguese delegates towards issues considered of primary importance to Brazil, but not to Portugal.

The unfolding political crisis created the notion of two opposed sides fighting within the Portuguese empire. Decrees by the cortes on September 29 and October 1, 1821 called for the return of Prince Dom Pedro to Portugal, the extinction of the court system created in Rio de Janeiro in 1808, and the organization of new overseas governments. These were met with vocal resistance in Brazil, where the idea that the Portuguese cortes wanted nothing less than to "re-colonize" Brazil was gaining ground and that therefore the latter could govern itself independently of Portugal. On January 9, 1822, Prince Pedro announced his decision to disobey the cortes and stay in Brazil (the occasion would become known as "Dia do Fico," or "Day of 'Stay'"); on January 16, he reorganized his team of advisors, including Jose Bonifacio de Andrada e Silva, in charge of foreign affairs and a central character in the independence process. On February 16, the prince summoned a council of prosecutors from the various provinces to analyze the cortes's decisions for Brazil; on June 3, he announced the upcoming meeting of a constituent assembly for Brazil; and on August 6, he made public a manifesto to foreign nations in which he justified his conduct and called for support of his government (on August 12, he appointed representatives to handle relations with London, Paris, and Washington).

Mounting tensions with Portugal, which now included the threat to send military forces to Brazil, would lead to the protest of seven representatives from Brazilian provinces—António Carlos de Andrada, José Ricardo da Costa Aguiar, Cipriano Barata de Almeida, Francisco Agostinho Gomes, José Lino Coutinho, Antonio Manuel Bueno, and Diogo Antonio Feijó—who in October 1822, left the cortes, had their passports confiscated, and embarked clandestinely to London where they issued a manifesto repudiating the cortes. Little did they know that on the other side of the Atlantic, at that exact moment, the famous "Proclamation of Independence" had already taken place on September 7. The prince regent had been acclaimed Emperor of Brazil on October 12, and shortly thereafter on December 1 he would be crowned Dom Pedro I. Over the course of fifteen years, in the midst of a dynamic political crisis with often unpredictable results, Brazil, once a cluster of Portuguese territories with little or no coordination, became a government whose claim to autonomy from Portugal made it an independent country during the year 1822. In this sense, the trajectories of Portuguese and Spanish Americas, radically different in 1808, converged in 1822, with Brazil becoming its own political entity like most of its neighbors.

The Wars of Independence and their Consequences: Change and Continuity

Not all political authorities in the territories that made up the Kingdom of Brazil accepted the break with the cortes of Lisbon and the creation of an empire based in Rio de Janeiro led by Dom Pedro I. Local disputes and armed clashes had been taking place in various parts of Portuguese America throughout 1822, motivated by the new horizons offered by a tumultuous political scene. The formalization of independence stoked regional conflicts between supporters of opposing political projects: joining the new empire or maintaining traditional ties with Portugal and the cortes. The province of Piauí only formally joined the Empire of Brazil in January 1823; Bahia and Maranhão in July; Pará in August; and Cisplatin Province in October. In the case of Bahia, Maranhão and Pará, adherence was only possible after foreign military contractors hired by the imperial government, which included the Scottish Thomas Cochrane, renowned for his participation in the recent wars of independence in Chile and Peru, put down provincial resistance. Despite the political impact of the wars that took place in Brazil between 1822 and 1823, and the death and destruction they produced, the insistence is still common—by amateur and professional historians alike—that the independence of Brazil was a supposedly peaceful process negotiated entirely by elites, supposedly in contrast to Spanish America. This is a notion made up of two components: first, a mythology created in the nineteenth century to portray a Brazil endowed with political stability and a national character opposed to confrontations and open conflict; second, a persistent and widespread ignorance of the history of the separation between Brazil and Portugal in favor of emphasizing episodes and political projects in some regions over others.

The consolidation of the Empire of Brazil required settling disputes over its territorial boundaries and formal jurisdiction. That question was still open when representatives from the various provinces met in Rio de Janeiro to draft a new constitution (the creation of the empire, after all, had occurred under a constitutional framework, although opposed to the Lisbon cortes). While in session, between April and November 1823, the General Constituent and Legislative Assembly of the Empire of Brazil legislated and produced a draft constitution, but its conflicted relationship with the emperor, mainly regarding the definition of national sovereignty and the separation of powers, undermined their work. Opposition to the emperor was echoed by, among others, the newspaper *Sentinela da Liberdade*, which belonged to Cipriano de Almeida Barata, former representative to the Lisbon cortes and one of the most radical and influential public voices of the time. By order of Dom Pedro I, the assembly was closed, several delegates were arrested, and the first Brazilian constitution would be drafted by the monarch himself and a restricted council of state. It was decreed March 25, 1824. The definition of the legal and legislative framework of the empire would occur gradually in subsequent years, but the international recognition necessary for Brazil to be admitted to the system of international relations began with the United States as early as 1824, followed by the simultaneous recognition of Portugal and Britain on August 29, 1825.

The creation of a Brazilian state and nation was made possible by independence and the broader historical context in which it unfolded. Its consolidation after 1822 would be no easy task and was far from a peaceful and linear process. The so-called First Empire extended until April 7, 1831, when Dom Pedro I abdicated the throne and returned to Portugal, leaving his five-year-old son Pedro in Brazil. It was an unstable and tense period, marked by events such as the Confederation of the Equator (1824) in Pernambuco and adjacent provinces which, under the leadership of Friar Joaquim do Amor Divino Caneca and Manuel de Carvalho Paes de Andrade, demanded that the government maintain the constitutional commitments assumed by Dom Pedro I in 1822 and partially broken the following year. The Cisplatine War (1825–1828) between the Empire of Brazil and the government of Buenos Aires was another contentious episode during this period as the latter refused to recognize the incorporation of the eastern territorial band into either the Portuguese or Brazilian empire. The war ended in a stalemate with British mediation and the formal

establishment of the Republic of Uruguay, in addition to serious economic troubles for both warring parties that would contribute to the collapse of their governments. The growing accusations that Dom Pedro I was a despotic monarch and more Portuguese than Brazilian—he was, after all, a member of the Portuguese dynasty of Bragança and was born in Portugal—precipitated his departure in 1831. Dom Pedro I's return to Portugal underscored the process of nationalization that the Empire of Brazil was undergoing as it adjusted and consolidated its institutional bases. It is therefore not surprising that the many regional uprisings during the regency period that preceded the acclamation of the young Dom Pedro II (1831–1840), although violent and impactful, were not separatist in nature or based upon divergent national projects than the one unfolding nationally since 1822, albeit with some difficulty.

The crisis in the Portuguese Empire underway since at least 1807, with some underlying causes even further back in time, created the conditions for the political split between Brazil and Portugal, a move that virtually nobody imagined or advocated at the start of the nineteenth century. The process that started in 1807 effectively carried out the separation and defined its most lasting results: the emergence of a Brazilian state and nation that had not existed before and that would consolidate itself over the next century preserving its distinctive features. The concrete expressions of this state and nation included: jurisdiction zones establishing the territorial imprint of the country; a constitution, laws, and legal codes; fiscal, electoral, and educational systems; a national army; political arrangements creating a hierarchy among the component parts of the state; international recognition and foreign diplomacy; and national symbols, civic rites, and more or less official collective memories. In addition, the independence process was strongly marked by perspectives that embraced the innovative potential of historical time, drawing from a sense of history marked by progressive distancing between the past and the future. In this sense, the self-proclaimed revolutionary nature of the independence process fits neatly into the broader political and intellectual context of the time, full of conceptual innovations that should not be considered mere legitimizing discourses manipulated by elite protagonists.

The continuities of Brazilian independence are, however, still the most common aspects highlighted by historians and non-historians. It is true that the creation of the Empire of Brazil did not abolish slavery (which occurred only in 1888, a year and a half before the proclamation of the republic), nor did it upend social hierarchies for the vast majority of the population, nor did it modify the highly concentrated nature of land distribution and its overwhelming focus on sustaining an export economy built by centuries of Portuguese colonization. It is also true that many of the political machinations that led to the triumph of independence, especially between 1820 and 1823, excluded important parts of Portuguese-American society and attended only to limited political and economic interests. Yet, given the innovations involved in the creation of the Empire of Brazil and their significance in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the understanding of this history gains depth, complexity, and consistency by replacing the simple and banal idea of *preservation* (of slavery, social hierarchies, territoriality, or monarchy) with the *recreation and reorganization* of these elements. If not seen in this light, the story of Brazilian independence silences an array of diverse voices and actors, including among the masses, who since the end of the previous century had been growing increasingly accustomed to participating in politics.

The Memory of Independence

Today, there are no Brazilian cities without some space for memory (streets, avenues, squares, parks, monuments) related to independence. The main intention of these places—to bolster a national collective memory regarding the separation of Brazil and Portugal—is complemented by obligatory formal treatments of this story in schools throughout the country; they appear, in other words, in teaching materials, media, and varied forms of cultural production. Furthermore, Brazil's main national holiday is Sete de Setembro, despite referring to an event increasingly brought into question by professional historians in terms of its importance to the overall independence process. Thus, through almost two centuries of near constant visibility, the memory of independence is an active element in Brazilian society, a seminal event in a historical culture expressed through a variety of speeches, images, and diverse social functions.

This does not mean that Brazilians, be they historians or not, interested or disinterested in history, necessarily value independence or embrace a shared interpretation regarding its place in national memory. In fact, there are great differences on this point, with many positions between two equally traditional and conventional extremes subject to easy stereotypes: on the one hand, a pro-establishment exaltation of independence as a heroic and triumphant moment in the history of Brazil; on the other, a depreciation of independence as another tawdry and mediocre episode in a national history devalued and overlooked in relation to the history of other countries. At certain moments this dispute appeared to lean one way or the other, but neither interpretation has ever fully prevailed. A good example of this contentiousness is the concerted elevation of independence promoted by the last Brazilian dictatorship (1964–1985) as well as by political groups opposed to that authoritarian regime.

Academics are hardly immune to this dispute and its many nuances, although they are currently more concerned with the ways in which they can positively influence a society often seen as uninterested in the past (which is partially true) than with recognizing the effects that their insertion in a culture of history heavily focused on independence has on themselves.

Discussion of the Literature

The independence of Brazil has received scholarly attention since the first systematic analyses that emerged during the process itself and in the years immediately afterward (as in the works of José da Silva Lisboa and John Armitage, in 1826 and 1836, respectively). With the development of a more formal historiography in 19th-century Brazil, due in large part to the creation of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute in 1838 and the canonical work of Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, the dominant view was that independence constituted a founding moment of Brazilian nationality, albeit with valuable components inherited from Portugal, which made Brazil a supposedly "civilized" nation with European features. Despite some variations, this was a consistent interpretation until the start of the twentieth century, bestowing the history of independence with contemporary political value. Another approach would

be to combine idealistic interpretations with a tradition of strong empirical, document-based investigation typical of the time in Brazil and elsewhere.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, renowned essayistic works by Caio Prado Júnior (*Evolução política do Brasil*, 1933) and Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (*Raízes do Brasil*, 1936) did not focus exclusively on independence but were responsible for consolidating it as a central theme in social thought about Brazil. Both authors encountered a historiography dominated by erudite and heavily documented monographs like *História do Brasil-Reino e do Brasil-Império* (1871), by Alexandre de Mello Moraes; *D. João VI no Brasil* (1908) and *O movimento de Independência* (1922), both by Manuel de Oliveira Lima; and *Historia do Império: a elaboração da Independência* (1927), by Tobias Monteiro. In the 1950s and 60s, the balance between these two approaches to independence—imperfectly defined and not totally exclusive—would become even more complex with the publication of critical works like *Os donos do poder* (1958), by Raymundo Faoro; *História dos fundadores do Império do Brasil* (1958) by Octávio Tarquínio de Sousa; and *As razões da Independência* (1965), by Nelson Werneck Sodré. In the 1970s, lasting contributions to the historiography of independence would come from very different theoretical and methodological inspirations, such as Fernando A. Novais (*Portugal e Brasil na crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial*, de 1979); Emília Viotti da Costa ("Introdução ao estudo da emancipação política," 1968); works edited by Carlos Guilherme Mota (*1822: dimensões*, 1972); Florestan Fernandes (*A revolução burguesa no Brasil*, 1975); José Honório Rodrigues (*Independência: revolução e contra-revolução*, 1975–1976); and José Murilo de Carvalho (*A construção da ordem*, 1980).

Beginning in the 1980s, historical approaches to the independence of Brazil experienced major changes resulting from the expansion of graduate programs in history among Brazilian universities. This growth greatly diversified the range of interpretations, which now looked beyond Rio de Janeiro and adjacent provinces in 1822 to other regions where individual cases were—and, in part, continue to be—much less known. Equally important was the professionalization of the historical field in Brazil, with increased funding and greater incentives to the formation of research groups. Finally, foreign contributions to the historiography of independence increased dramatically as well, most notably from pioneering authors like William Manning, Alan Manchester, and Clarence Haring, followed by Stanley Stein, Bradford Burns, Dauril Alden, Jacques Godechot, Leslie Bethell, Kenneth Maxwell, Richard Graham, Ron Seckinger, Russell-Wood, and Roderick Barman, among others. With all of these contributions, the sub-themes of independence multiplied exponentially as did methodological approaches, subjects, regions, and temporality. Currently, the historiography of independence is vast, varied, and undergoing rapid expansion and renovation.

Primary Sources

There are several collections related to the history of Brazilian independence in archives, libraries, documentation centers, and museums in Brazil and abroad. Most are not published or scanned but can be physically consulted at the institutions themselves. Among these, it is worth highlighting the Brazilian national archives, the national library, the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the archives of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (all in Rio de Janeiro), in addition to many state, municipal, and private archives in which there is an enormity of scarcely seen documentation that, with some exceptions, is difficult to access. Among the foreign institutions, Portuguese, Spanish, British, and American repositories have been better explored than those in Latin America, Africa, and non-Iberian European countries. Periodicals, laws and decrees, minutes of constituent and parliamentary sessions, ministerial and provincial documentation, and edited works from the time of independence can be consulted online at

the websites for the **National Library, the Brazilian House of Representatives**, and the **Biblioteca Brasiliana Guita e José Mindlin**, among others.

Valuable print publications include the six volumes of *Arquivo diplomático da Independência* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 1922; 2d ed. 1972); the thirty-one volumes of *Correio Braziliense ou Armazém Literário* (São Paulo/Brasília: Imprensa Oficial/Correio Brasiliense, 2001); two publications by the national archives entitled *As câmaras municipais e a Independência*, in two volumes, and *As juntas governativas e a Independência*, in three volumes (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1973); and the first two volumes of the *Atas do Conselho de Estado* (Brasília: Senado Federal, 1973, edited by José Honório Rodrigues) . There are also the collected writings of individuals central to independence such as: Marco Morel, ed., *Cipriano Barata: Sentinela da Liberdade e outros escritos (1821–1835)*. São Paulo: Edusp, 2008 ; Antonio Penalves Rocha, ed., *Visconde de Cairu*. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2001 ; Evaldo Cabral de Mello, ed., *Frei Joaquim do Amor Divino Caneca*. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2001 ; and **the complete works of José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva**, edited by Jorge Caldeira. Also available is a selection of political pamphlets from the time: José Murilo de Carvalho, Lucia Bastos, Marcello Basile, eds. *Às armas cidadãos: panfletos manuscritos da Independência do Brasil (1820–1823)*. São Paulo/Belo Horizonte: Companhia das Letras/Editora Ufmg, 2012.

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