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Brazil: The Troubled Rise of a Global Power by Michael Reid

Chapter 2: The Brazilian Way of Life

Although Brazil has minimal alpine environments, it is detailed by a wide array of topographies and by a varying ethnic population (Reid, 12). The social complexities among the country are thorough and widespread. The enormity of Brazil is naturally divided by rivers, and bordered by the people. Although space and ecological differences separate the people (physically and socially), the country is so culturally rich that they are always drawn together in love and celebration.

The division of Brazil is in five regions: The south, the southeast, the center west, the northeast, and the north. The south, filled with 26 million people, takes up only seven percent of the land. Because of its temperate environment, the south was a natural attraction to European immigrants, culturally mixing the country. Although it has the highest levels of human development, it is only the second richest region (according to income per head), behind the southeast. With 77 million people, this region is Brazil's core. It features the two biggest cities in the country: Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Sao Paulo is hugely industrial and diverse. Rio de Janeiro was the country capital until 1960 and held the main port until the late 19th century, making it a cosmopolitan area (Reid, 12).

As noted earlier, Brazil's diversity in physical topography creates a complex socioeconomic state among the people. On the other hand, Brazil's poorest area is in the northeast. Sugar and cotton are grown on the coast, with heavy cattle raising inland. Aside from that, the people of the region are mainly subsistence farmers; there is minimal disposable income and market in the region. Also quite poor, the northern region entails 2/5 of Brazil's total

territory. This is Amazon Rainforest area, so the people live with many developmental and conservation policies. On a better note, the center west, being very flat, has economic growth as the country's agricultural frontline. It also has attracted much industry (Reid, 14-15).

In the late 19th century, soccer, Brazil's first love, was introduced by an immigrant's son. The country's affair with the sport is shown in admiration by statues of the man, Charles Miller. It creates an ongoing social party. The whole country even closes down for tournaments. With Brazil being rated as best at soccer, the people identify themselves with it and with certain team clubs, participating in the creation of social rivals and allies (Reid, 16). Another social norm for the country is the participation in Carnival; a giant street party that includes singing, dancing, and much preparation. Seen especially at events as such, sex and nudity are apparently embraced with a casual attitude. This probably stems from the three founding cultures of Brazil: Amerindians, Portuguese, and Africans. Also, due to the hot weather, many social happenings occur outside, especially on the beach. This is most likely why the country is consistently focused on appearance (Reid, 17-18).

Aside from all of the partying, the people of Brazil identify with and have strong loyalty to their families (Reid, 19). Together, with their families, half of the country participates in watching Telenovelas, or soap operas. The country loves these episodes, as they reflect controversial social issues. The differing cultures of Brazil make for a fun and interesting group of people. Also, different places in the country are like different worlds, focusing on what the various lands have to offer. Although Brazil is widely diverse in many different aspects, the people do come together for enjoyment over these similar interests.