

Chapter 1; Brazil's Troubled Rise

In the first chapter of Michael Reid's book, Brazil the Troubled Rise of a Global Power, He described to us his meetings and discussions between himself and the former president of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (Lula). Lula is a former trade union leader, the founder of the workers party and a powerful figure in the political left for Brazil, and finally became the president in 2003. Lula stood for socialism and urged the people to default on its national debt in order to get the economy back on track.

Lula was not the first to hold the ideals of socialism and economic reform close to his heart. Many of Lula's ideas and policies stemmed from and revamping of Cardoso's fiscal and monetary policies. This new approach and policies proved to be a success as he stated, " Between 2002 and 2009, 30 million Brazilians left poverty behind." In the same period of time in the last few years Brazil was lumped together with China, India, and Russia to form the BRIC countries, showing Brazil as a proponent on the global economic stage.

Lula continued to show his country as "first class" when Brazil was awarded both the 2016 summer olympic games, as well as the 2014 football World Cup. This was a certain honor for the country, being able to show off its recent growth and prosperity on the world's stage. As a matter of fact Brazil was trying to flex its muscles in more than one way. Geographically, Brazil is geographically the 5th largest country, and the 200 million people make it the 4th most populous democracy. Brazil holds the title of the 7th largest economy and the 3rd largest exporter of food. Brazil is also the 6th largest in

manufacturing power. Due to recent oil strikes and the already self sufficiency, Brazil is thought to become a big player on the global oil trade by 2020.

Even though Brazil is becoming a player on the global stage, it is not without its shortcomings. As a matter of fact Brazil has always been plagued by high hopes and disappointments. Brazil is a land of much potential, and has been noticed by natives and outsiders for years. In 1940 an Austrian writer, Stephan Zweig; who fled to Brazil to escape the Nazis, wrote the book, Brazil: A Land of the Future. A passage that is still humorously mocked by the people of Brazil is “and always will be.” As bright and powerful those words were meant to be, today they sulk as a reminder of the disappointments the country seems to constantly face.

Some key weaknesses modern Brazil faces are weak educational preferences, burdensome tax system and senseless red tape. Pension spending is high and increasing while the replacement of money back into the system seems to be stagnant. The countryside was plagued by small shanty towns called favelas. These areas are plagued by violent crimes and often violent policing. Corruption ran rampant through all branches of government and the state struggled to enforce the rule of its very own laws.

Another key downfall of Brazil is the constant growth and development while the having a restrained inflation rate and overvalued currency. In 2011, Brazil saw its economy stop all growth and stay stagnant for 18 long months before it gradually and slowly recovers. Brazil today is still faced with a corrupt government and a political class who looks out for themselves instead of the greater good of the people. This fact leads

to poor public services. Mainly educational institutes, hospitals and transportation all which are key to healthy population and an growing country.

Brazil enjoyed pulling the wool over the world's eyes, as it was the fastest growing economy for 1930 to 1980. In the 1950's with the help of then president, Juscelino Kubitschek, Brazil was promised fifty years of development in five and began its journey to become a true industrial power on the world's stage. During this 50 year span Brazil saw 5 World Cup championships, more than any other country, but still lacked a Nobel prize.

Brazil is still struggling to find its way to the power it so hopes to become since its independence from Portugal in 1822. Much like the United States, Brazilians are very proud to be from Brazil. As proud as they are they still get frustrated from the known potential it holds and the constant failure to realize and reach it.

I found this first chapter to be very informative and opened my eyes to a whole new culture. I consider myself very "American" and I know little about other areas and their people. After reading this first chapter I am excited to see what the rest of the book has in store.