Brazilian Culture

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Portuguese basic conversation

- Bom-dia! (morning)
- Boa tarde! (afterrnoon)
- Boa noite! (evening)

- Meu nome é .... Qual é o seu nome?
- Muito prazer!

Portuguese basic conversation

- Oi, tudo bem?
- Tudo bem!
- Como você vai?
- Eu vou bem.

- Few important words: cerveja, chopp, bar, praia, futebol.

What do you know and/or what did you learn about Brazil?

- Politically?
- Economically?
- Socially?
- Racially?
- Culturally?

- What are the latest news about Brazil?

Who is this guy?

Race

- Brazil became the final destination of more than one-third of all the African slaves brought to the Americas

- Constant flow of Africans in the colonial period created a black majority in Brazil by the early 1600s

- Scarcity of white women & lack of state supported racial discrimination → racially mixed population

Race

- Mulattos became a substantial portion of the population by the late colonial period (and was later transformed in the main national figure)

- The complexity of race relations in Brazil → mulattoes seldom think of themselves as blacks & census has an array of colors (branco, negro, pardo, mulatto)

Race

- At the turn of the19th century, Brazil's African heritage obsessed intellectuals → they postulated immigration to "whiten" the country

- Gilberto Freyre (1930s) → Brazil's African heritage made the country a unique one, produced a "lusotropical" civilization with a racial democracy in which blacks, whites Indians, and mulattoes mixed and mingled harmoniously → the notion of racial democracy became incrusted in Brazil's national psyche

Race

- Lack of state laws supporting racial segregation and Gilberto Freyre's myth of "racial democracy" helped to reinforce the notion that racism was non-existent in Brazil

- However, statistics show that blacks have lower standards of living → half of the black population lives in poverty, 30% are illiterate, blacks earn two-and-one-half times less than whites

Race

- Millions of European immigrants (Italians, Germans, Polish, Russian) helped to populate the Southern countryside and the Southeastern cities in the 19th century

- Asians → began to arrive in 1908 to work on the plantations of São Paulo and the south. São Paulo and the Japanese neighborhood, *Liberdade*

- Indians → most live in reservations and for centuries the populations have decreased steadily

Religion

- Colonial period → Portuguese imposed Catholicism on Indians and Africans
- Empire → Catholicism as the official state religion, but the constitution (1824) guaranteed religious freedom
- Despite limited political power, the Church had enormous cultural influence in the 19th century

Religion

- Traditional Catholic values permeated Brazilian culture

- Even today Brazil is the largest Catholic country in the world

- Indian, African, and European religions mixed → survival of African religious rites and the development of several cults with African and Indigenous roots

Religion

- African slaves were forced to accept Catholicism, but continued to worship their goods secretly

- Syncretic religions → *Candomblé* in Bahia and *Umbanda* (*Macumba*) in Rio de Janeiro → Yoruba and Bantu groups

- In the *Candomblé* and *Umbanda* practicioners worship the *orixás* and they coexist with traditional Catholicism

Religion

- *Candomblé* ceremonies take place in a *terreiro de candomblé* and they are presided by a spiritual leader → *babalorixá* (male) or *yalorixá* (female) → the basic ceremony derives from the Nagô (Nigeria) nation

Religion

Oxalá (Jesus)

Xangô (God of Thunder and Storms, Justice and Wisdom): Saint John

Religion

Iemanjá (Godness of Sea)
Virgin Mary

Exú (Caretaker of the Crossroads, messenger between Gods and men)
Satan

Religion

- The last two decades has seen the growth of a new religious trend → the Evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism → movement is conservative & focuses on individual achievements and capitalist values

- The main followers of Evangelical and Pentecostal movements are from the urban *favelas* (shantytowns)

Class

- class problem → a huge disparity between the rich and the poor → 30% of the population live in abject poverty, making less than $ 100 a month → "Brazil is a rich country full of poor people." (Eakin *Brazil, The Once and Future Country* 105)

- the "social question" has been a problem since the early colonial period → Brazil was a hierarchical society in which social mobility was extremely difficult

Class

- In the rural setting, the backlands of the Northeast → the oppressed majority (landless peasants) are dominated by a powerful minority (landowners)

- power of the landowners → to control access to land and the landless labor force and deny peasants access to the political system

Class

- In the 1960s Brazil became an urban society; today 75% of Brazilians live in urban areas

- despite industrialization, the structure of land ownership remained almost intact → escalation of violence in the countryside

- In the city → shantytowns (*favelas*) with millions of unemployed or underemployed

Class

- Lack of basic health care, sewage system, and running water

- "geography of hunger" → highlights the class and regional inequities → hunger is a major problem

- children enter the public school system, but there is a staggering drop-out rate → they must move into the labor force

Class

- poor, hungry, uneducated → growth of the *favelas* in the cities

- shantytowns have experienced growing of social tensions and violence, becoming the focal point of the drug trade

- drug lords control the drug trade in the main *favelas*, often employing children and teenagers → 45 million children live in extreme poverty

Afro-Brazilian Music

- Brazilian music → represents Brazil's cultural and racial mixing
- Brazilian musical styles are dynamic and diverse
- Samba → Musical form created and sustained by the black & mulatto working classes in Rio de Janeiro
- It dates from early twentieth century

Afro-Brazilian Music

- "samba" → the word comes from the Angolan "semba" that refers to the "umbigada" navel-touching "invitation to dance". It was originally a part of many African circle dances

- Origins of the samba are unknown, but some historians believe it was brought to Rio de Janeiro from Bahia by slaves & freed blacks in the late nineteenth century, but it was in Rio de Janeiro that samba developed

Afro-Brazilian Music

- Samba became a voice for those who had been silenced by their socio-economic status and a source of self-affirmation in society

- Today, samba is at the core of Brazilian national identity

- Samba is tied to another popular festivity, the Carnaval

Afro-Brazilian Music

- "Bahia is the most black part of Brazil. The majority of the population is black, and we have the traditional African religions still, we could say, untouched. Although they have all these fusions with Catholic myths and liturgy, they still have the whole ritual structures intact, so it gives to Bahia a very different atmosphere and cultural environment." Caetano Velloso

Afro-Brazilian Music

- *Afros* and *Afoxés* → groups that play during Bahia's *carnaval*

- *Afros* → more informal. Groups born within the lower classes, from grassroots movements. E.g. → *Olodum*

- *Afoxés* → they mix their cultural celebration with Afro religious elements. E.g. → *Filhos de Gandhi* (Gandhi's sons)

Brazilian Rap

- This multi-cultural nature of hip-hop allowed this cultural and to be appropriated and used in other nations

- Today, Brazilian composers & singers mix traditional Brazilian music with new urban musical genres, especially rap

- Brazilian rap mainly criticizes racism and the poor conditions of Afro-Brazilians

Afro-Brazilian Music

- Brazilian rap was born in the poor areas of the periphery in the city of São Paulo, but soon spread to other cities, such as Rio de Janeiro. Rap adapted to the landscape of the city, fusing the laid *carioca* life-style with controversial themes, such as urban violence, social and political critique, and the drug traffic.