Brazil: Social Institutions, Economic Statistics And Activity

Introduction

Brazil is a country located in South America, also known as the Federative republic of Brazil. The national language of Brazil is Portuguese, they have over 211 million people making it the world's fifths largest country by area and the 6th most populous. Brazil is the largest country in both South America and Latin America. Brazil's federation is composed of 26 states, the federal district, and 5,570 municipalities. Brazil is known to be one of the most multicultural and ethnically diverse nations.

Brazil is thought to be advanced emerging economy, with the world's ninth largest GDP by nominal measures and eight by PPP measures. Brazil has been the largest producer of coffee for the past 150 years, making them one of the world's major breadbaskets. Brazil has the largest share of global wealth in Latin America, it is classified as an upper-middle-income economy by the World Bank.

Social institutions

A. Family

Families is Brazil are often much larger and closer than your typical American family. For example, it is not uncommon to find both the nuclear family (husband, wife, and children) and the extended family (aunts, uncles, grandparents, and godparents) all living together under one roof. There is a feeling of closeness and importance within the Brazilian family. Grandparents often live with their kids and are not typically found living within nursing homes. If the adult children do decide to move out on their own, it is almost always after they have married and move in with a spouse. This importance in kinship and family is seen throughout the entirety of Brazilian culture, in both professional and casual social interactions.

Today, both the mother and father contributed financially to the family dynamic. While there has been an increase in women's responsibilities outside of the domestic home setting over the last twenty years, fathers are still seen as the main authority figure. Wives and children are expected to be submissive to the father figure. However, with the increase social and economic support for the working women, more and more women file for divorce against violent and unfair spouses. This has caused a slight shift in the usual Brazilian nuclear family as more children grow up with separated parents. Fifty years ago, many marriages in Brazil were still arranged by the parents with women having little say over the matter. Outside of the unusually rich family, arranged marriages seem to no longer exist within Brazilian culture. With both men and women alike being able to marry whoever they please too.

B. Education

Education in Brazil sadly seems to be in decrease, with fewer and fewer children making it to high school every year. Brazil has both public and private schooling, with public schools being funded by the federal government. Despite this funding, public schools often lack basic things

such as heating and plumbing with school buildings often shown signs of neglect. Elementary school starts for children at age seven and runs into fourth teen years of age. High school then starts right after for children age fifteen to seventeen. While public schooling is free, attendance is not enforced as many families live in poverty and have children work to bring additional funds to the family. Due to these facts, only about thirty-three percent of school children make it to grade six. Brazil has a literacy rate of 92.05% in 2019, a decrease over the past few years.

Brazil does have both privately and publicly funded Universities available for students who graduate high school. A Bachelor's degree in Brazil takes around four to six years to complete. Some of the best known and highest quality universities in Brazil are The College of Medicine of Sao Paulo and The Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

E. Social organization

Brazil is a country with disproportionately distributed wealth. Meaning the few people to be considered rich or wealthy, are extremely so and hold most of the country's money. Over 21% of the country lives in poverty, often without basic features such plumbing. These people make up the lower class. The middle class, with an average income only slightly higher than that of the lower class. The upper class on the other have an average income extremely higher. Brazil's population, whether rich or poor, is very diverse. You will find families who can trace their family history all the way back to Europe. As well as other nationalities from South America and native Brazilian people.

C. Political system

Brazil has a democratic government, set up very much like that of the U.S. where every citizen between the ages of 18 and 69 is obligated to vote. Much like the United States, the government consist of an executive branch, a legislative branch, and a judicial branch. The president of Brazil holds executive power and serves terms of four years. Brazil also has a Federal Senate and Chamber of Deputies', very similar to the U.S. House of Representatives, which make up the legislative branch. The Supreme Federal Tribunal makes up the judicial branch and serves Brazil in a similar fashion to that of The Supreme Court to the U.S. This government was created in the 1980's and has served the country in helping control many sectors of the economy such as power and water facilities. The Government also places many taxes upon its citizens, such as personal tax, fuel tax, real estate tax, corporation income tax, etc.

Since the creation of the government, three main political parties have been in and out of power. They are the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB), the Liberal Front Party (PFL), and the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB). Another much smaller party, the Communist Party of Brazil (PC), presents great opposition to the current government in place. Brazil's local government is divided into 27 states and more than 5,500 municipalities, much like a county from the U.S., each with its own mayor. These much smaller local governments are tasked with handling smaller more localized issues while following the laws and structure of the larger federal government.

D. Legal System

The legal system in Brazil is very similar to our own in the U.S. with it being founded in civil law. The Supreme Federal Tribunal makes up most of the governments judicial branch. There are also five regional courts of appeals, a National Council of Justice, the Superior Court of Justice and special courts that exercise the power of the judicial branch. A code of laws is created by the legislative branch that includes property rights, patents, and trademarks. Advertising regulations are controlled by the government and National Advertising Self-Regulation Council (CONAR). CONAR is, however; a self-regulatory agency and as such cannot impose fines. Marketing laws usually only affect abs targeted at children.

Economic statistics and activity

In 2019 Brazil was 9th in the world in nominal GDP. Brazil's currency is called the Brazilian Real, and they had a GDP equivalent to $1.868 trillion USD. Over the past 3 years they have had a steady growth of GDP per year between 1.1% and 2.0%. With the total GDP growing, the GDP per capita has also been increasing since 2016. By the end of 2020 the estimated GDP capita in Brazil will be $11,730. USD. Around 61% or working aged people in Brazil have a paying job. This is around 7% less than the world average. Among the employed people, the average household income was around $35,000 USD in 2019. The most popular way Brazil is split into different income classes is by the A-E system. Its 5 different classes all made u of percentages of the Brazilian people's incomes. A is considered the upper class, B and C the middle class, and D and E the lower class. These classes are decided by gross monthly income per house. Around 70% of the country falls under the Middle class. The lower class is made up of over 26% and that leaves around 2% for the upper class. The richest parts or the country are Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Brazil. Among those three regions an average of 3.4% of the people make up class A, the upper class. The lower class is made up of an average of 17.7% in these regions, almost 10% less than the national average. The North and North East are by far the poorest areas in the country with almost 50% of the people in these areas classified in class D and E.

Despite a low number of people in the country being classified in the upper class, Brazil has very rich mineral reserves. Some of these minerals include iron, copper, granite, magnesium, and bauxite. In 2010 they were recognized for being the largest mineral producer. Brazil has an abundance of oil and are one of the leaders in the world when it comes to hydropower. The biggest source of minerals or resources comes from iron ore. They have the 5th largest iron deposit in the world. With the all the resources and minerals in the country it creates many opportunities for employment. Almost 95 million people were employed in December of 2019. Over 60% of men are employed and over 56% of women are as well. The current unemployment rate is around 11.5% in Brazil. For the employed men and women, a minimum wage of $788 Brazilian Real (BRL) per month is in place. That is equivalent to just under $150 USD. By law no one should work more than 44 hours per week. Working conditions are set by the federal government, no states have authority in working conditions. The three most common sectors of work in brazil is services, industrial, and agricultural. Over 70% of employed people in Brazil are in the service sector. This is followed by around 19% in the industry sector and 10% in agricultural. Over the years more and more privately owned businesses have been acquired. According to many articles this has hurt the economy as the private companies seem to be corrupted.

Brazil has been consistently exporting more that they import in the past years. In 2017 they

exported over $217 billion USD and imported around $153 billion USD. The top three trading partners for Brazil are China, USA, and Argentina. There biggest exports are iron and soybeans. These two combines for over $45 billion USD a year for the country. The biggest imports are oil and different kinds of vehicle parts. These two costs them more than $16 billion USD a year. The current rate of exchange in Brazil is the Brazil Real (BRL) like stated before. This is currently the only exchange rate here and it is $5.35 BRL for every $1.00 USD. In 2015 Brazil had a huge recession and inflation rates fell to an all-time low. Since then, it has increased. In 2016 it grew a big percentage of over 8%, followed by 3.4% in 2017. Since 2017 it has been very consistent and is expected to be right around 3.4% again in 2020.

With Brazil continuing to keep up their exporting they are going to need to improve transportation around the country. They have a very weak railroad system that will not continue to meet the exports needs for the years to come. They also need to improve roads and highways. Brazil has over 1.7 million kilometers of roads. That is equivalent to over 1 million miles. Of the 1.7 million kilometers only 96,000 of them have been paved. That is just over 5% of their roads being paved. Leaving the other 95% in rough shape in the form of dirt or gravel. Even with many roads not being ideal, driving is the most popular way to get around with over 80% of people and products traveling by road. With the lack of good rail systems almost 60% of freight is moved across the country by trucks on the road.

The rail systems are not the only thing that is behind in Brazil, communication is well behind in some parts of the country. Central and East Brazil are booming with LTE, 4G, 3G, and many different digital TV services. Very similar to the USA, but other parts, mainly the north lack not only all the previous services but basic telephone lines to make calls. In 2019 studies showed that 84 million adults in Brazil owed a smart phone and that 140 million people had access to the internet via smart phone or computers. That is the most people in a Latin America country with access to the internet and 4th in the world. This number is expected to continue to increase in the future.