

SUMMARY HISTORY OF BRAZIL

By Joey Willemsen and Bart Leferink

Historical overview map of Brazil

In this historical overview map of Brazil, the Meridian of Tordesillas, borders of the capitanias (as introduced by King João of Portugal in the sixteenth century), routes of the bandeirantes, current borders of Brazil and important cities are shown. This map will help to clarify the described history.

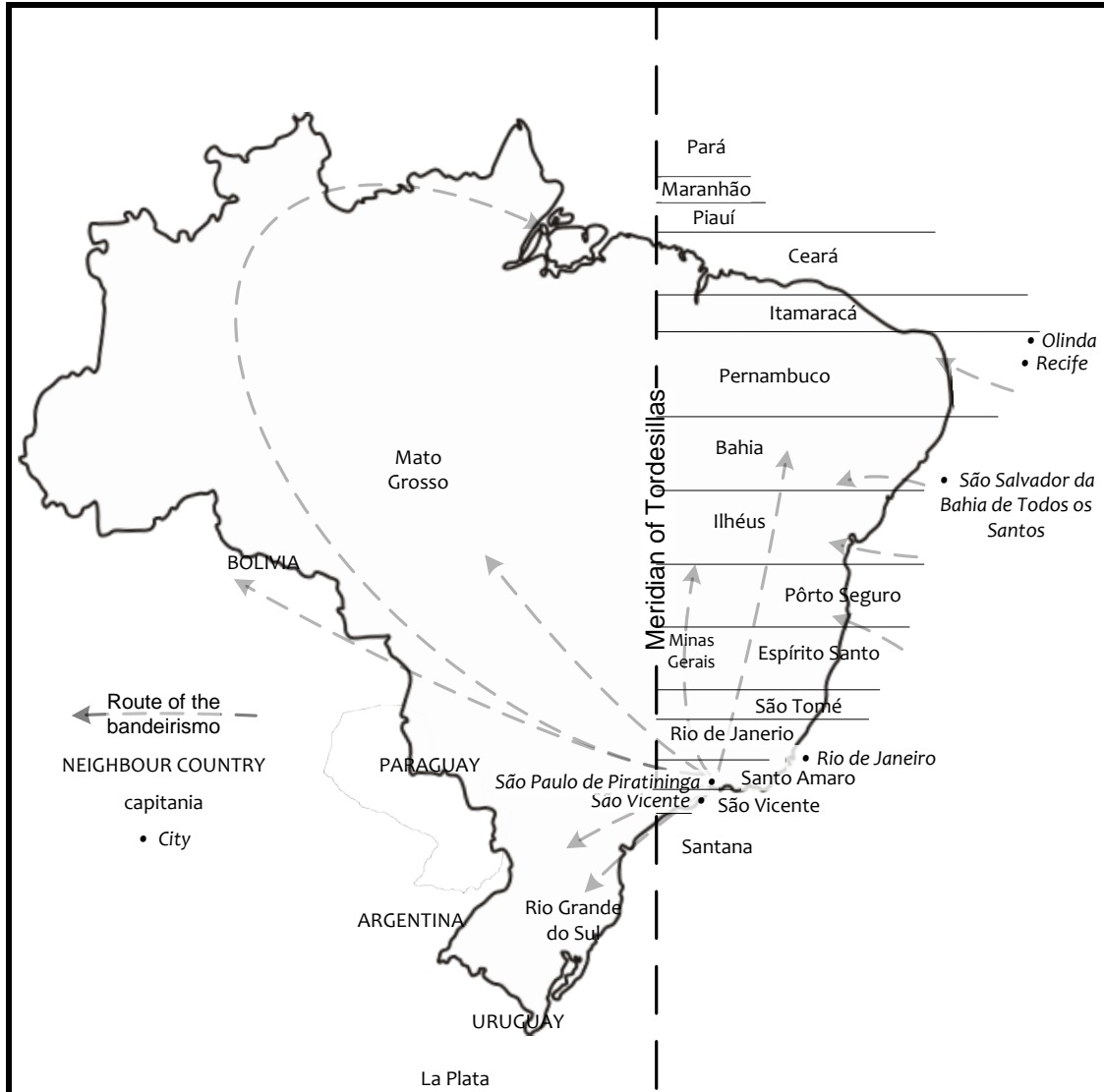


Figure 1 Historical overview map of Brazil. (Based on C.M. Schulten, 1966 pag. 1)

Pre-colonial history

By the time the Portuguese arrived in 1500 AD, the area of what is now Brazil was already populated for thousands of years. Researchers found evidence of human presence there 50.000 years ago. Most of the indigenous peoples were Tupi-Guarani Indians, but the population was quite diverse. Unlike the Inca's and the Maya's on the west coast, Brazil's early inhabitants never developed a highly advanced civilization. The Andes and the mountain range in northern South America formed a rather sharp cultural boundary between the civilizations. The indigenous Brazilians left only a few clues for archaeologists to follow, like pottery and skeletons. For this reason, very little is known about the indigenous people of Brazil.

By the time the Portuguese arrived in 1500 AD, there were probably between two and four million people in what's now Brazil, in over 1000 tribes. Today there are fewer than 200,000 Indians left, most of them live in the hidden jungles of the Brazilian Amazon region.

The Portuguese discovery (1500)

In the fifteenth century the Portuguese reached Madeira and the Cape of Good Hope. But it wasn't only the Portuguese who were exploring the seas. The rivalry with the Spanish (who discovered America in 1492) was great, and could easily escalate in a sanguinary conflict. For this reason, both countries decided to sign the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. In this treaty, a demarcation was made between which lands would belong to Portugal and which to Spain. The Tordesillas meridian was located 370 leagues (approximately 2000 km) to the west of the Cape Verde islands. The lands to the east of this meridian would belong to Portugal, the lands to the west to Spain. Six years later Portugal could, as a result of the treaty, claim the area of what is now Brazil (see figure 1).

When Vasco da Gama returned from his expedition in 1499, Portugal wanted to send a second fleet to India. In March 1500, 13 sailing ships started their way to, ostensibly, India, under command of Pedro Alvares Cabral. Vasco Da Gama advised Coelho to avoid the corner of Guinea, due to unfavorable winds. On the 22th of April 1500 Cabral moored his fleet near the current Porto Seguro.

After the news reached Portugal, more expeditions to the new land would follow. The main reason for this was the presence of dye-wood, or brazilwood (*pau-brasil*). The presence of this timber was so important, that the Portuguese mentioned the new discovered land to it: Brasil. After 1520 permanent settlements were created in Brazil, like Pernambuco and Bahia. In 1520 sugar cane was introduced in Brazil, in 1534 the first husbandry was shipped and in 1550 great cane plantations existed in São Vicente, Bahia and Pernambuco.

To improve the colonization, king João of Portugal decided to introduce 'capitanias', or districts (figure 1). The fifteen capitanias had the right to raise taxes, to appoint officials and to speak. Among 1550 the Central Government was settled in Salvador. Jesuits moved to Brazil in order to introduce education and Christianity. The Jesuits integrated themselves with the Indians and the settled Portuguese. Their followers traveled the whole country to scatter their ideas. In 1552 the first Bishop arrived.

Due to the merger of Portugal and Spain (the Iberian Union) in 1580 the Portuguese could easily expand the Brazilian area in both the south and the north. Brazil became Portugal's most important colony, even more important than those in Asia. Export products were sugar, timber, cotton, skins and tobacco.

New Holland (1630 – 1654)

In 1621, the famous West India Company (WIC) was founded and they started to deal with Brazil. In 1630 admiral Lonck attacked Pernambuco. The city of Olinda fell; the Portuguese fled into the backwoods and started a guerilla-war. Slowly the Dutch expanded their area. They called their new colony "New Holland", but nowadays it is also known as Dutch Brazil. Governor Johan Maurits van Nassau was initially successful with political, economical and cultural activities. But the Portuguese didn't surrender. The last Dutch stronghold in Brazil, Recife, fell in 1654. Nowadays you can still see the remains of Dutch fortifications in Recife. These fortifications are called fort De Bruyn, or Do Brum, and fort Frederik Hendrik, known as Cinco Pontas (Pentagon).

Gold rush

Halfway the seventeenth century, the *bandeirantes* started to explore the inlands, set out from São Paulo (figure 1). The *bandeirantes* were united in a *bandeira*, a kind of cruising village that could contain hundreds of people. Their main purpose was to search for Indians, to be used for slavery. Due to these expeditions the Brazilian territory was expanded with the states of Goiás, Mato Grosso, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. The *bandeirantes* were keen to make important inland roads into Brazil. After 1680, the area of what is now Uruguay was added to the Brazilian territory. It is thought the *bandeirantes* killed or enslaved among 500.000 Indians.

The biggest discovery of the *bandeirantes* was gold, especially in the Minas Gerais region. Due to the gold discoveries, the inlands were explored again, and became even inhabited by the Portuguese. By 1710 the

population had reached 30,000 and by the end of the 18th century it was 500,000. About one third of the two million slaves brought to Brazil in the 18th century, were sent to the goldfields. Brazil started also to play an important role in Europe. The gold export reached its maximum in 1760. After this peak the importance of the goldfields decreased. Many of the gold hunters ended up in Rio de Janeiro, which grew rapidly.

The reign of José I and Pombal (1750 – 1777), Tiradentes

In 1750, the new borders of Brazil were officially set in the Treaty of Madrid, which meant the Treaty of Tordesillas was expired. In the same year José I became king of Portugal and Pombal became his prime minister. Composers and artists started to show their artistic expressions, especially in Minas Gerais. Also lots of churches were built. Lisbon however did not want to give too much power to the Brazilians. For that reason universities and printing press were missing.

Pombal introduced several reforms. In 1763 the Central Government was moved from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro. The power of the Jesuits was reduced, Indian slavery was abolished in 1758 and Portuguese became the main language in Brazil, instead of Indian-languages like Tipi.

In the meantime people were dissatisfied about the government. Economic decline was explosive and taxes were high. In 1789 the dentist Joaquim da Silva Xavier, better known as Tiradentes (Tooth Puller), started the first organized movement that fought for independence, called Inconfidência Mineira. Unfortunately Tiradentes' plans were foiled and he was hanged in Rio de Janeiro in 1792. Later Tiradentes became a national symbol of resistance.

The arrival of Dom João VI (1808 – 1821)

When Napoleon marched up to Lisbon in 1807, a very important period of Brazil and even whole Latin-America began. The prince regent of Portugal Dom João VI decided to establish his government in Brazil. The arrival of Dom João meant the Brazilian colonial era was over. This caused turmoil in whole Latin-America. The Spanish colonial empire collapsed and lots of Spanish colonies became independent republics. This could also happen in Brazil, but the presence of Dom João provided unity. He introduced printing press, universities, banks and libraries which Brazil never had before.

In 1815 Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, but Dom João showed no sign of abandoning Brazil. In 1816 João's mother died, and Dom João crowned himself as king of Portugal and Brazil. Brazil became the only New World colony ever to have a European monarch ruling on its soil. In 1821, Dom João decided to return to Portugal. His son Dom Pedro stayed and became regent of Brazil.

The Empire of Brazil (1822 – 1889)

The government in Lisbon paid little attention to Brazil and wanted Dom Pedro to return to Portugal. During a tour through Minas Gerais, on 7 September 1822, Dom Pedro received the message from Portugal to dismiss all of his ministers and reign further with new ministers appointed by Lisbon. The story goes that, on the banks of the Ipiranga River, Don Pedro shouted "Independência ou morte!" (Independence or death!). With the same breath Dom Pedro I declared himself as the first emperor of Brazil. The independence of Brazil was a fact. In 1824 the first constitution was proclaimed, which would remain in force until 1889.

In 1825 Pedro I had to deal with his first warfare, between Brazil and Argentina. England, anxious about its trade business with both Brazil and Argentina, mediated. Hereby a new independent buffer-state was born, called Uruguay.

Meanwhile, the criticism on the government in Brazil was growing. In 1831, after nine years of reign, Dom Pedro abdicated, leaving his five year old son Dom Pedro II to take over. Of course Pedro was too young, so the parliament chose three regents to govern until 1840. In 1840, the sixteen year old Dom Pedro II became the second Emperor of Brazil. Pedro II was a well-educated man. Instead of importing slaves, lots of European workers came to Brazil in 1854.

Abolition of slavery was a key problem in the history of Brazil. The presence of slaves was necessary for the economic development. Landowners were anxious about their social wealth, and some Brazilians were afraid the abolition of slavery would cause unrest and maybe a revolution. Most people though, were advocate for

abolition. In 1888 the Emperor announced the abolition. After that, lots of ex-slaves leaved the plantations and the crop could not be harvested. Landowners did not receive any compensation from the government, and felt resent towards the Emperor. The support for the monarchy crumbled and the economic system led to serious economic problems. In the same period the republican unity grew among the people of Brazil. Disagreement with the church and the rising power of the army induced a threat for the monarchy in Brazil. Protagonists of the army waited for their chance to overthrow the monarchy, and declare the republic. On 15 November 1889 Emperor Dom Pedro II abdicated, and the imperial family leaved to Europe. The republic of Brazil was a fact.

The old republic (1889 – 1930)

The old republic, also known as the República Velha, lasted from 1889 till 1930.

Constitutionalist Revolution

In 1889, General Deodoro da Fonseca became the first president of Brazil and declared Brazil a republic. The presidency was alternating between São Paulo and Minas Gerais. This regime was called “Café com Leite” (‘coffee with milk’), which were the most important agricultural products of those states.

In 1891, a constitution was made which established a federation governed by a president, a bicameral National Congress and a judiciary. The country’s name became the Republic of the United States of Brazil. The constitutional system, however, wasn’t equal to the reality. In reality, the control of patronage was in the hands of the locally dominant oligarch. An oligarchy is a form of government in which the power rests with a small elite group. So the central government didn’t rule locally, but exercised control through the local oligarchies.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, a lot of countries enlarged the right to vote. Brazil however, reduced this right.

Economy

After the second industrial revolution in ‘developed’ countries, Brazil began to export primary products to Europe and North America. The most important export products were coffee, sugar and cotton. The Brazilian producers specialized in the export products and neglected the domestic consumption, so the country had to import as well a lot of products (e.g. four-fifth of the grain needs was imported).

Brazilians used primitive and non-mechanized equipment, the living standards were filthy and the average life span was 28 years. Brazil wasn’t able any more to compete with the technologically superior Anglo-American economies.

The Brazilian economy was divided in some regional economies that exported their own products to Europe and North America, but it didn’t have an integrated national economy anymore. Because of the lack of overland transportation, the internal economic integration was impeded and the regions were allocated on their own.

Because the competition was strong, Brazil lost a lot of foreign markets. The Northeast lost foreign markets regarding its sugar and the Amazon regarding wild rubber. The economies of the South, were not dramatic, but their growth was steady. The only real power left, was in the Southeast, in the states São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, which exported coffee.

World War I

Since the end of the 19th century, a lot of immigrants arrived in Brazil. All the different nationalities had lead to communistic and anarchistic ideas and had led to massive protests and strikes which were repressed by the government. During the first World War, there were mainly two groups. The first group wanted to join the Entente, and the second one worried about the fighting. Therefore, Brazil decided to remain neutral. However, Brazil wrestled with a lot of internal economic problems that the president Venceslau Brás decided, it would be better to divert attention. This could be done by focusing on an external enemy and create a feeling of patriotism among the citizens.

In 1917, one of the Brazilian civilian ships was sunk by the German Navy which created an opportunity for the president to declare war on the central powers.

Post World War I period

Because of the war, the British were temporarily unable to export to Brazil and Brazilian had to manufacture a lot of products on its own. The exchange rate against foreign currencies declined which made Brazilian products cheaper in the Brazilian markets. This helped to increase the ranks of the new urban middle classes. Because coffee was a nonessential product, world coffee demand declined.

After the war, Brazil was hit by a wave of general strikes. The diverging interest between the coffee oligarchs and the urban sectors was becoming larger. In 1920, the urban middle class rebelled against the president which was the beginning of a wrestle by the urban middle class to seize power from the coffee oligarchies.

Great depression

Short after the U.S. stock market crash in 1929, the coffee rate dropped almost 60%. Because of the depression and the tension between northeastern sugar barons and landowners and the Southeastern coffee oligarchies, a coup was inevitable. In 1930, a military junta took control and soon after that, Getúlio Vargas became president.

Populism and development (1930 – 1964)

The era between 1930 and 1964 can be divided into two main periods, namely the Estado Novo, the ‘New State’ (1937 – 1945) and the Brazilian Second Republic (1945 – 1964).

Estado Novo

In 1930 Vargas became president of Brazil. As a candidate, Vargas had promoted the middle class concerns, so oppose the primacy of the coffee oligarchy and the elites. This “people against the elites” policy is called populism and was one of the most important features of the policy of Vargas. Opposition arose among the coffee oligarch. It is not surprising that Vargas had used a dictatorship and that the long career of Vargas shows a lot of abrupt shifts in alliances and ideologies when you take into account the large tension between especially the North and the South.

In 1932, the coffee oligarchs tried to retake the government. After that, Vargas tried to recover support from the ‘fazendeiros’ and the coffee oligarchs. Therefore Vargas made use of appeasement and had to turn against its left-wing. As a result of this appeasement to the ‘fazendeiros’, Vargas was threatened by the ‘latifúndios’.

In 1937 Vargas denounced the existence of a communist plot to overthrow the government. This false denunciation was part of a plan, named Plano Cohen. This denunciation was a pretext to make sure people would understand and favor the coup of the Estado Novo.

During the Estado Novo, there was a lot of Urban Planning which had a powerful effect on Brazilian architecture. One of the best planned cities, Curitiba, received its first planning in the Estado Novo.

After the start of the second World War, Vargas stayed neutral until 1941. After the sinking of Brazilian ships, Brazil had to declare war on Germany and Italy. At the end of World War II, Vargas was deposed. His replacement was José Linhares.

Brazilian Second Republic (1945 – 1964)

After the deposition of Vargas and the election of Linhares, general Dutra was elected and served from 1946 to 1951. In 1950, Vargas returned in the politics as a candidate of the Brazilian Labor Party and was elected in 1951. Vargas had a difficult time because of the economic crisis, congressional opposition and the impatience among his supporters. In 1954, Vargas committed suicide. In 1956, Kubitschek became president and changed the capital of Brazil into Brasília.

In 1961, João Goulart (also known as Jango) became president. In 1964, a lot of strikes, an inflation rate over 75%, the indiscipline of military and the fact that the leftist people were discontented, made evident that Brazil was facing a possible leftist revolt and a coup in 1964 made Brazil be reigned by a military government.

Brazilian military government (1964 – 1985)

The coup of 1964 had led the military to seize the power and reign directly from 1964 until 1985. Castello shaped a bipartisan system. On one hand there was the government and on the other hand the opposition. Meanwhile, Castello gave the executive power to change the constitution and remove anyone from office. So, anyone who opposed the government, was removed from office.

Not everybody was happy about the military government and a guerrilla movement was created. Meanwhile, Brazil was trying to get rid of the Third World country identity and the foreign policy began to be labeled as “national interest diplomacy”. Brazil’s main demand became the collective economic security. Brazil would try to lead Third World countries and began to spend more attention to less-developed countries.

Distensão

In 1974, General Ernesto Geisel became president and changed the strict dictatorial reign. His political program was called ‘distensão’, which means a relaxation of authoritarian rule. His goal was to make the country a democracy. In 1979, Geisel made General João Figueiredo president. João Figueiredo remained president until 1985. At that time, Brazil wrestled already with high inflation. In the table below, the inflation rate is shown between 1981 and 1990.

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Inflation	100%	100%	138%	192%	226%	147%	228%	629%	1,430%	30,377%

In 1985, Tancredo Neves was elected president. He was the first civilian president in 21 years under the electoral college system which was set up by the military. However, before the inauguration, he became ill and died shortly afterwards. José Sarney was his successor and from there on, Brazil was ‘ruled’ by the civilians.

SHORT OVERVIEW HISTORY OF BRAZIL AND THE NETHERLANDS

In the table below, a short overview of the most important aspects of the Brazilian history is shown and compared to the history of the Netherlands.

BRAZIL		THE NETHERLANDS	
Polity			
1500 – 1807	Brazil is a Portuguese colony	1482 - 1585	Habsburg Netherlands
1630 - 1654 ± 1650 - 1700	Dutch Brazil Bandeirantes	1588 – 1795	The Netherlands were a republic: Republic of the Seven United Netherlands
1707	First civil war	1568 - 1648	Dutch Revolt
1758	Abolishment Indian slavery	1602 – 1799	Dutch East India Company (VOC)
1789	Inconfidência Mineira	1621	Foundation West India Company (WIC)
		1630 – 1654	Dutch Brazil
		1637	Beginning of Slavery
1808 – 1822	Throne of Portugal in Brazil; collapse of the Spanish Colonial Empire	1795 – 1813	"French-Batavian Period"
1815	Kingdom of Portugal and Brazil	1798	First constitution
		1813 - 1815	Start Monarchy Princedom of The Netherlands
		1815 – 1830	Start Kingdom of The Netherlands
1822 – 1889	Brazil is a monarchy	1830 – now	The Netherlands as what it is now
1824	First Constitution	1848	Start democracy
1825	Brazil-Argentina war	1863	Abolishment of slavery
1865 - 1870	War of the Triple Alliance		
1881	145,000 people were allowed to vote		
1888	Abolishment of Slavery		
1889 – now	Brazil is a republic	1917	Suffrage for all men
1889 - 1930	Brazil is a constitutional 'democracy'	1919	Suffrage for women
1920	3% was allowed to vote	1951	Foundation EGKS; beginning EU
1945 - 1964	Brazil second republic	1975	Independence of Surinam
1964 – 1985	Brazil reigned by a military government		
1985 – now	Brazil is 'ruled' by civilians		
Position during wars			
1807 - 1815	Napoleon in Portugal; annexation of Portugal to France, Brazil became independent	1795 - 1813	Napoleon in The Netherlands; annexation to France
WWI	Brazil joined the Entente, but didn't want to be involved too much	1914 – 1918	World War I; The Netherlands were neutral
WWII	Brazil signed an agreement with America and turned against Germany	1940 – 1945 1949	World War II The Netherlands lost Dutch East Indies
Economy & Sociology			
1530	Start export sugar cane	17th century	Dutch Golden Age: strong growth of economy
1760	Peak Gold export	1839	First railway in The Netherlands
± 1800 - now	Coffee export by 'fazendeiros'	1880	Port of Rotterdam
After 1964	Increasing inflation	1945 - now	Multicultural The Netherlands
± 1700 – now	Multicultural Brazil		

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