

# Introduction

## An Attempt to Grasp the Moment

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In a near-mythological conversation in the 1960s, James Reston, a celebrated columnist for the *New York Times*, stated, “The people of the United States will do anything for Latin America except read about it.” He was promptly answered by Sol Linowitz, U.S. ambassador to the Organization of American States, who rebutted, “I don’t believe that. I believe they will read, but I think reporters will do anything for Latin America except write about it.”<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, at least in terms of Brazil, neither assertion is true, but the result is often problematic. That is, many Americans who want to be well informed will read about Brazil, and many reporters on the spot are writing about it, but there is a considerable problem about what is read and who is writing it. There are spectacularly talented and knowledgeable journalists covering Brazil, but far too often, what drives the news is the superficial and the sensationalist—a glance not just at ephemera but at the most obvious or compelling aspects of them.

This book is an attempt to offer the reader something else. We attempt to grasp the moment, the historical moment in which Brazil is emerging among the great powers. For centuries, Brazil has had one of the largest land masses among the world’s countries; for generations, Brazil has had the fifth-largest population. For decades, Brazil has had the largest industrial plant in Latin America. Now, it is a global contender. For most of the past twenty years, Brazil has had one of the ten largest economies in the world; in 2012 it was sixth, behind Germany and France but ahead of most European nations, including Britain. It

is a significant nuclear power. Its diplomatic role, independent of the United States for some time, has reached beyond Latin America to the Middle East and to the United Nations. Yet it is also a nation that was marked in mid-2013 by spontaneous demonstrations concerning basic public services and the corruption of its public servants; it is a society with an extraordinary gap between its richest and its poorest citizens. While no book can explain all of this, this one will go a long way toward searching behind these headlines to probe the interlinked contexts without which they cannot be understood.

The idea for this book came from an idea for a collaborative conference, and the idea for such a conference came from Celso Castro, the director of the Center for Research and Documentation of the Contemporary History of Brazil (Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, CPDOC), the preeminent historical research center in the nation, affiliated with the prestigious Getulio Vargas Foundation (Fundação Getulio Vargas, FGV) in Rio de Janeiro.<sup>2</sup> Noted for years as the best archival center for post-1930 Brazilian historical research, under Celso Castro's leadership CPDOC has also created one of the top educational programs in Brazil. As part of this, CPDOC has been reaching out throughout the world to make contacts and alliances. In 2009 Castro, who had spent a year of research in the 1990s at the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida, contacted Philip Williams, that center's director, about setting up a formal relationship. The cooperative agreement that followed was immediately associated with a planning seminar to conceive and organize a conference in which both centers' faculties could collaborate.

As it happened, Manuel Vásquez, a professor of religion at the University of Florida, had just proposed to Philip Williams the possibility of using one of the Center for Latin American Studies' annual conferences to discuss Brazil's current impact on the world. Thus, Celso Castro's proposal met with natural sympathy and immediate support. The conference that followed, "Emergent Brazil" (February 2013), was planned by both centers' faculties. Faculty members from the two centers co-chaired almost all of the panels and in many cases were speakers as well.

Each center's potential for a conference on contemporary Brazil was clear. CPDOC's mandate speaks to the origins of the Getulio Vargas

Foundation, which has sought since 1944 to serve the nation by advanced training in public administration and research in the social sciences and economics. The FGV's schools and programs have expanded over the years until it has become, in effect, one of the foremost universities in the nation, with alumni in the most conspicuous positions in the public and private sectors. CPDOC itself, founded as a history archive and research institute in 1973, has focused on the era associated with Getulio Vargas, probably the single most influential Brazilian statesman of the twentieth century. In 2003 it launched its Graduate Program in History, Politics, and Cultural Legacies; in 2006 it inaugurated the Advanced School for the Social Sciences (an undergraduate program). The latter has only recently won first rank in a national survey by the federal government's Ministry of Education and Culture.

The University of Florida's claims to general Latin American expertise go back to the early twentieth century. Its Latin American center's origins in the Institute for Inter-American Affairs date to 1930, making it the oldest such Latin American studies center in the United States. Specifically Brazilian interest was signaled with the university's first course in Portuguese, taught in 1914. By the 1920s, Brazilian institutional affiliations and research focusing on agriculture had begun; by the 1940s and 1950s, Brazilianists at UF were present in the social sciences and humanities as well. Indeed, the advanced and varied quality of Brazilian research at the university is indicated by the fact that more than three hundred graduate degrees concerning Brazilian research have been earned there by Americans and Brazilians since 1953. After the 1971 appointment of Charles Wagley, the celebrated anthropologist of the Amazon, as graduate research professor of anthropology and Latin American studies, the center hosted its first conference associated with Brazil, "Man in the Amazon," in 1973. The increased strength of Brazilianists in the humanities is signaled by the leadership for the next Brazilian conference, "Black Brazil," in 1993, chaired by Larry Crook, a scholar of music, and Randal Johnson, a scholar of literature and film, and featuring colleagues across the social sciences and humanities.

At present, the center's Brazilianist strength is suggested by established, flourishing affiliated programs such as the summer program in Portuguese (1982), the Florida-Brazil Linkage Institute (1986), the Tropical Conservation and Development program (late 1980s), and

the Brazilian Music Institute (2001). Most significantly, its Brazilianist strength is signaled by the center's faculty and affiliate faculty. To give an example, in 2013 the center's first steering committee meeting for the 2013 conference "Emergent Brazil" was made up of senior faculty with degrees in agricultural engineering, anthropology, economics, history, literature, political science, religion, sociology, and urban planning.

In effect, both centers' faculties, in seeking to ally their strengths and to call upon colleagues from other universities, public life, and public policy, had the expertise, reputations, and connections to put together eight panels featuring twenty-four presentations over two days, drawing upon people from Australia, Brazil, Britain, and the United States. The fifteen texts derived from those presentations represent the insights of people who, in almost every single case, have devoted their careers to Brazil.

The reference to "the moment," like the title "Emergent Brazil," points to the purpose of the conference and this anthology. At a time when so many outside of Brazil were hearing about the nation because of its hosting the World Cup and the Olympics, we felt we had the opportunity and the obligation to explain contemporary Brazil with informed, compelling studies from a variety of angles. Such an endeavor to capture the meaning of the present has its dangers—like many others, we too were surprised by the mid-2013 movement in the streets. Yet, again, we like to think that anyone interested in why such a movement might occur would find much to think about here. The anthology provides a grasp of context to provide the backdrop for such an occurrence; indeed, we were immediately able to call upon one of our number, Fernando Lattman-Weltman, a political scientist with the required expertise, to provide a preliminary assessment of what had happened. Moreover, the reader will find, in aspects of the chapters by Eakin, Campello and Zucco, Wood and Ribeiro, Cavalcanti, and McCann, key elements informing the movement—a new, engaged democratic culture, rapid social mobility, hungry material and educational aspirations, a tradition of elite political manipulation and corruption, a fluctuating economic context, persistent urban crime and fear, and cynicism about public service and public servants alike. While good journalists refer to many of these elements, the researchers involved in

this anthology can address them with the depth that comes from years of broad, scholarly reading and deep field research.

What this anthology brings to bear on such a current event is also evident more generally. The book, by bringing colleagues together from so many different disciplines and callings, provides an integrated effort in which echoes and references among chapters will occur naturally as the reader explores the different perspectives and foci provided. The celebrated Brazilian musician Tom Jobim once quipped that “Brazil is not for beginners.” Here, at least, the beginner and the scholar alike will find a good deal that addresses many of the most important complexities of the half-continent to which we have devoted ourselves.

## An Overview

The anthology provides an introductory couple of chapters on contemporary Brazil (Part I, “Brazil, Yesterday and Today”) and then moves on to three approaches. The first approach, evident in Parts II and III, tends to go from the outside in, to show the ways the larger world has affected Brazil and thus to introduce the reader to Brazil’s internal development and character. The second approach, clear in Parts IV and V, emphasizes the ways Brazil’s domestic realities and production are influencing (and may influence) the larger world. The third approach, seen in Part VI, addresses Brazil’s new role as an actor on the global stage.

In the introductory two chapters, Eakin’s, the first, leads off with a magisterial history of how Brazil got to the present. It provides a superb survey of two centuries of development, explaining a society and a nation reaching up and out to the world and suggesting some of its unique characteristics today. Lattman-Weltman’s, the second chapter, is an essay on the mid-2013 movement that inserts the June Days of 2013 into that historical trajectory, deftly pointing to what is truly new and what speaks to recurring patterns in Brazilian political life.

The next two chapters begin the approach from the outside in. They part the drapes on the current political scene, dominated by the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores, the Workers Party), and the impact Brazil’s global economic role has on it. One chapter zooms out to suggest the global economic influence on Brazilian politics: Campello and