

Camargo Corrêa

September 29, 2010

Contradictions in the Amazon: Bridge over the Rio Negro

This morning, the bridge over the Rio Negro in Manaus should be visited. However, due to a tragic accident at the construction site that morning, causing the death of one employee, the excursion was cancelled for that moment. Because of the great effort of the construction firm, we were nevertheless able to visit the company in the afternoon. Our condolences go out to his family, friends and colleagues.

The bridge over the Rio Negro is the first bridge over Amazon / Rio Negro in the far neighborhood of Manaus. The bridge is 3.595 m long and connects Manaus to the smaller municipalities south of the river, such as Iranduba, Manacapuru and Novo Airão. Nowadays, the main transport mode to cross the river is the ferry, but the bridge provides a 2x2 highway to the other bank. First, we were given an elaborate presentation on the bridge itself and the construction of it. This was done by two engineers of the construction department of Camargo Corrêa, which is one of Brazil's biggest private conglomerates. The presentation started with the main goals of the bridge, after that they elaborated on the requirements, subsequently the characteristics were presented. Then, the phases of the construction were shown. The presentation ended with the general benefits of the project. Other benefits besides the travel time reduction are an increase in employment during the construction, an improvement of the environment at the south of the bridge and an improvement of the growing tourism. After the presentations and the question and answer session, the construction site was visited. By bus, we went on a part of the bridge which was already built. Here, we had a good view on what was actually happening during the construction phase.

The questions that were asked during the question and answer sessions had mainly to do with the phases other than the construction, because the construction phase was clearly described during the presentation. Questions that were asked had to do with the relocation of the local population around the ramps of the bridge, the compensation for the losses of the ferry owners and the capacity of the bridge in the future. Unfortunately, these questions were not in the scope of the construction firm, but of the local government. However, they tried to answer these questions as good as possible. The, mainly poor, local population was moved to better houses. Ferry owners are not compensated for their income loss, which is the reason of their demonstrations over many years against a bridge. The bridge is built for the future and so the bridge is designed to fulfill in the demand for at least 20 years. With these answers, we gained more insight into the sustainability of the bridge.

We can conclude that the excursion was very interesting and helps us to complete our research about the sustainability of the bridge. The excursion ended with a nice photo of our group together with the representatives of the company, with on the background the astonishing sunset above the Rio Negro. We would like to thank the company for their useful information.

