

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE AMAZON TRANS-FRONTIER BASIN IN BRAZIL

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Abstract

This research seeks to analyse the international relations among the nine South-American countries regarding the sharing of the Amazon Trans-Frontier Basin, involving the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), in which there was the exclusion of French Guiana. This factor has sparked interest in further study of the Brazilian approach with the excluded country through the construction of the Oiapoque Bridge, which connects the Brazilian city of the same name with the city of Saint-Georges in French Guiana. The bridge was completed in 2011, but it has not been inaugurated yet.

Key words:

Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), Oiapoque Bridge, French Guiana.

Introduction

The Amazon Basin is a rich and extensive trans-frontier resource that has tremendous potential for economic development of the countries that share it: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela and French Guiana. Under threats of internationalization of this vast ecosystem and in order to avoid conflicts, in 1976 Brazil proposed the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), in which there was the exclusion of French Guiana.

Although there was this fact, the country is still considered Amazonian, so diplomatic relations among it and the rest of the countries is important. Thus, Brazil has sought closer relations through the construction of the Oiapoque Bridge, which connects the Amapa State with French Guiana. The project began in 2008 and was completed in 2011, however, so far it is not allowed the circulation of vehicles and people.

Finally, this research seeks to uncover the reasons for the non-inauguration of the bridge and which social, political and economic conditions in local and global scales occurred because of its construction.

Results and Discussion

Initially, the title and theme of this research were very comprehensive, in which was necessary the specification of the object of analysis.

Starting from the study of the ACT, the exclusion of French Guiana signature was discovered, boosting the study of its causes. Many literatures with different justifications were used and it was concluded that the exclusion was caused because even though French Guiana is inserted in the Amazon area and comprises a small percentage of the Amazon basin (respectively about 2,042 km² and 0.03% of the basin)¹, it is a colony of France, a central country with greater influence than the rest of the eight South-American emerging countries and when the Treaty was signed, there was a fear of the internationalization of the Amazon.²

Thus, there was the awakening of interest in the study of French Guiana participation in the management of the tributaries of the Amazon river, in which was noted recent projects of cultural exchange with an agreement of the construction of a bridge that would connect the Brazilian city Oiapoque and the Guyanese Saint-

Georges. The construction of the bridge, named Oiapoque, began in 2008 and was completed in 2011 but was never inaugurated because of federal negligence in Amapa, which has not yet installed the customs checkpoints on their side of the bridge and every year delay its inauguration.³

Conclusions

The historic federal negligence in Amapa, both for political reasons as the distance from the central government, results in non-use and non-inauguration of the bridge because of the delay of Brazilian customs checkpoints facilities and reveals the reality of the border: illegal migrants, resistance of clandestine goldfields, human trafficking and sexual exploration. Therefore, even if the Oiapoque bridge project has the purpose of approaching Brazil and France by bringing greater security of transport for their populations and control of the activities that occur at the border, the stagnation of the bridge has not brought positive points and has not remedied the problems in the region: in truly, it was evidenced the neglect of the Brazilian government on the issue.

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¹ STEINKE, Valdir A.. *Identificação de Áreas Úmidas para Conservação da Biodiversidade na Bacia da Lagoa Mirim (Brasil-Uruguai): Subsídios para Gestão Transfronteiriça*. Brasília, DF: 2007, p. 31, table 2.

² SANT'ANNA, Fernanda M.. *Cooperação Internacional e Gestão Transfronteiriça da Água na Amazônia*. São Paulo, 2009.

³ OLIVEIRA, Betiana S.. *Dinâmicas Sociais na Fronteira entre o estado do Amapá e a Guiana Francesa: um Estudo sobre Oiapoque, Vila Vitória de Oiapoque e Cayenne*. Macapá, 2011.