



MANUAS: MORE SIMILAR THAN DIFFERENT

FAST FACTS	Manaus	Similar To
Metropolitan (Labor Market) Population	1,600,000	Indianapolis, Stockholm
Urbanized Area* Population	1,400,000	Sacramento, San Juan, Copenhagen
Urbanized Land Area: Square Miles	90	Hong Kong, Turin, Modesto, Halifax, Canberra
Urbanized Land Area: Square Kilometers	233	
Population per Square Mile	15,700	Tokyo, Osaka, Lisbon
Population per Square Kilometer	6,000	
Capital of the state of Amazonas 13 th largest metropolitan area in Brazil		
*Continuously built up area		

There was a time when much of the world's rubber was produced in the Manaus area of the state of Amazonas. Manaus sits at the confluence of the Amazon River and the Rio Negro, where the brown nutrition rich waters of the former, also called the Rio Solimos mix with the blue waters of the Rio Negro. The main docks of Manaus are on the Rio Negro.

I was pleased to find that the confluence of the two rivers was barely a five-minute drive from my hotel in the Zona Industrial. Just beyond the federal police inspection station lies the boat and ferry terminal with a number of options for making the trip to where the rivers meet. Tours can last eight hours, or less than one. Mine, of the shorter variety, cost the equivalent of \$10.

Rubber production has long since moved away. But Manaus has become a major producer of electronic equipment. When the federal government established Manaus as a free trade zone in 1963, the city had barely 150,000 residents. Since that time it has expanded 10-fold, one of the fastest growth rates in the world.

Manaus is not the remote, backward place that one might expect. There are reminders of the provincial past. The Teatre Amazonas and the central markets are open and unique. But Manaus is a thoroughly modern city, with virtually all of the conveniences found in other major Brazilian cities. In fact, there are strong similarities with European and North American urban areas. There are hypermarkets and enclosed shopping malls. Car washes can be found at petrol stations. Garages line the streets even in lower income neighborhoods. And the pizza is every bit as good as in Rio, Paris or Chicago.

And Manaus is experiencing many of the same trends as in the high-income world. Employment is no longer concentrated in Centro (downtown), though the public transport system is. Manaus, like other Brazilian cities, has a strong urban busway system and even has new articulated buses that look like rail cars. Centro has a large bus station, and there are large transfer stations along the busways.

The most important non-Centro employment center is the Zona Industrial. This may be the first

“Silicon Forest,” and it is certainly more genuine, since Portland’s was never a forest to begin with (though forests were nearby). Sony, Sanyo, Panasonic, Samsung and Phillips can be found here. Three high-rise buildings are under construction across the street from the Amazonas Shopping Center --- this “Millennium Center” looks like the beginnings of an edge city as would be found in Europe or America. Thus, despite its more compact urban form, public transport officials in Manaus face some of the same decentralizing challenges as in the higher income world.

There are, of course, differences. Manaus seems less affluent than the more southern metropolitan areas of Brazil and considerably less affluent than urban areas in the high income world. But, all in all, what impresses one most about Manaus is that despite the many miles that separate it from the rest of Brazil and the world, it is the similarities, rather than the differences that are most striking.



Confluence of the Amazon and Rio Negro from Police Inspection Station



Confluence of the Amazonas and Rio Negro
Brown Water from Amazonas, Blue Water from Rio Negro



Driving Toward Centro: Teatro Amazonas in Background



Main Rio Negro Docks: Centro



Amazonas Shopping Center



New Edge City (Millennium Center)
Outside Centro Near Amazonas Shopping Center



Busway and Bus Terminal (Transfer Station)



Lower Middle Income Single Family Neighborhood with Garages



Single Family Neighborhood



Rain Forest 25 Miles North of Manaus on AM-010 (40 Kilometers)



Car Wash at Petrol Station

By Wendell Cox
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