Programa de Pós-Graduação
Desenvolvimento Regional
Mestrado e Doutorado

DOI: 10.17058/h1b4s347

30 years of PDSA: A past that is yet to come

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Abstract
This article discusses the Program for Sustainable Development of Amapá (PDSA), implemented from 1995 to 2002 under the administration of Governor João Alberto Capiberibe. The area of analysis is the southern region of the state of Amapá, bordering Pará, described by journalist Gilberto Dimenstein as one of the routes of child and adolescent prostitution in the Amazon and home to the Jari Project. The objective of the article is to highlight the transformations brought about by the PDSA's actions in southern Amapá. The main issue is to record facts and possible evidence that the PDSA contributed to the region's socio-environmental transformation. Research in PDSA documents and literature, along with authors' notes and interviews, guided the writing of the text. Nightclubs that were transformed into schools, support for Brazil nut inter-cooperativism, and the creation of protected areas support the assertion that the PDSA promoted a revolution in the forest, in a region deep within the Amazon—the south of Amapá.

Keywords: PDSA. Southern Amapá. Sustainable Development. Amazon.

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30 anos do Programa de Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Amapá: um passado que ainda está por vir

Resumo
Este artigo discorre sobre o Programa de Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Amapá implementado de 1995 a 2002 na gestão do governador João Alberto Capiberibe. A região de análise é o sul do estado do Amapá, limite com o Pará, descrita pelo jornalista Gilberto Dimenstein como uma das rotas de prostituição infanto-juvenil na Amazônia e que abriga o Projeto Jari. O objetivo do artigo é evidenciar as transformações ocorridas pelas ações do PDSA no sul do Amapá. A questão principal é registrar fatos e possíveis evidências de que o PDSA contribuiu para transformação socioambiental da região. Pesquisas em documentos sobre o PDSA e em literatura, além de anotações dos autores e entrevistas, instruíram os caminhos da escrita do texto. Boates que foram transformadas em escolas, apoio ao intercooperativismo da castanha-do-brasil, e a criação de áreas protegidas dão sustentação à afirmação de que o PDSA promoveu uma revolução na floresta, numa região da Amazônia profunda — o sul do Amapá.

Palavras–chave: PDSA. Sul do Amapá. Desenvolvimento Sustentável. Amazônia.

30 años de PDSA: un pasado que está por venir

Resumen
Este artículo aborda el Programa de Desarrollo Sostenible de Amapá (PDSA) implementado entre 1995 y 2002 durante la gestión del gobernador João Alberto Capiberibe. La región analizada es el sur del estado de Amapá, limítrofe con Pará, descrita por el periodista Gilberto Dimenstein como una de las rutas de prostitución infantil y juvenil en la Amazonía, y que alberga el Proyecto Jari. El objetivo del artículo es evidenciar las transformaciones ocurridas a partir de las acciones del PDSA en el sur de Amapá. La cuestión principal es registrar hechos y posibles evidencias de que el PDSA contribuyó a la transformación socioambiental de la región. Investigaciones en documentos sobre el PDSA y en la literatura, además de notas de los autores e entrevistas, guiaron el proceso de redacción del texto. Cabarets que fueron transformados en escuelas, el apoyo al intercooperativismo de la castaña de Brasil y la creación de áreas protegidas respaldan la afirmación de que el PDSA promovió una revolución en la selva, en una región de la Amazonía profunda — el sur de Amapá.

Palabras clave: PDSA. Sur de Amapá. Desarrollo Sostenible. Amazonía.

1 Introduction

Starting in 1995, the state of Amapá adopted sustainable development as a government policy. The lessons learned from this experience at the mouth of the Amazon River, in one of the most protected territories of the Amazon, have become clear over time and with the necessary distance to understand their meanings, in a context very close to the Gramscian idea that it is only possible to understand a historical moment after it has ended (Gramsci, 2005).

The Program for Sustainable Development of Amapá (PDSA), conceived and implemented from 1995 to 2002 by Governor João Alberto Rodrigues Capiberibe (hereinafter Capiberibe), occurred during a period of democratic transition between appointed and elected governments. Until 1988, Amapá was under the political and economic tutelage of the Federal Government due to its status as a Federal Territory.

It was also known for harboring one of the largest deposits of high-grade manganese ore, which was exploited to exhaustion from 1953 to 1998 and destined for the countries of the Global North, the so-called "developed countries."

Capiberibe was the second elected governor, succeeding the military officer Annibal Barcellos, who governed Amapá both as an appointee of the military dictatorship (1979-1985) and as an elected official after the redemocratization of Brazil (1991-1994). In this sense, the PDSA occurred at a time when Amapá still maintained strong federal dependence, low-intensity democracy, and the condition of being a territory sacrificed for mineral commodities.

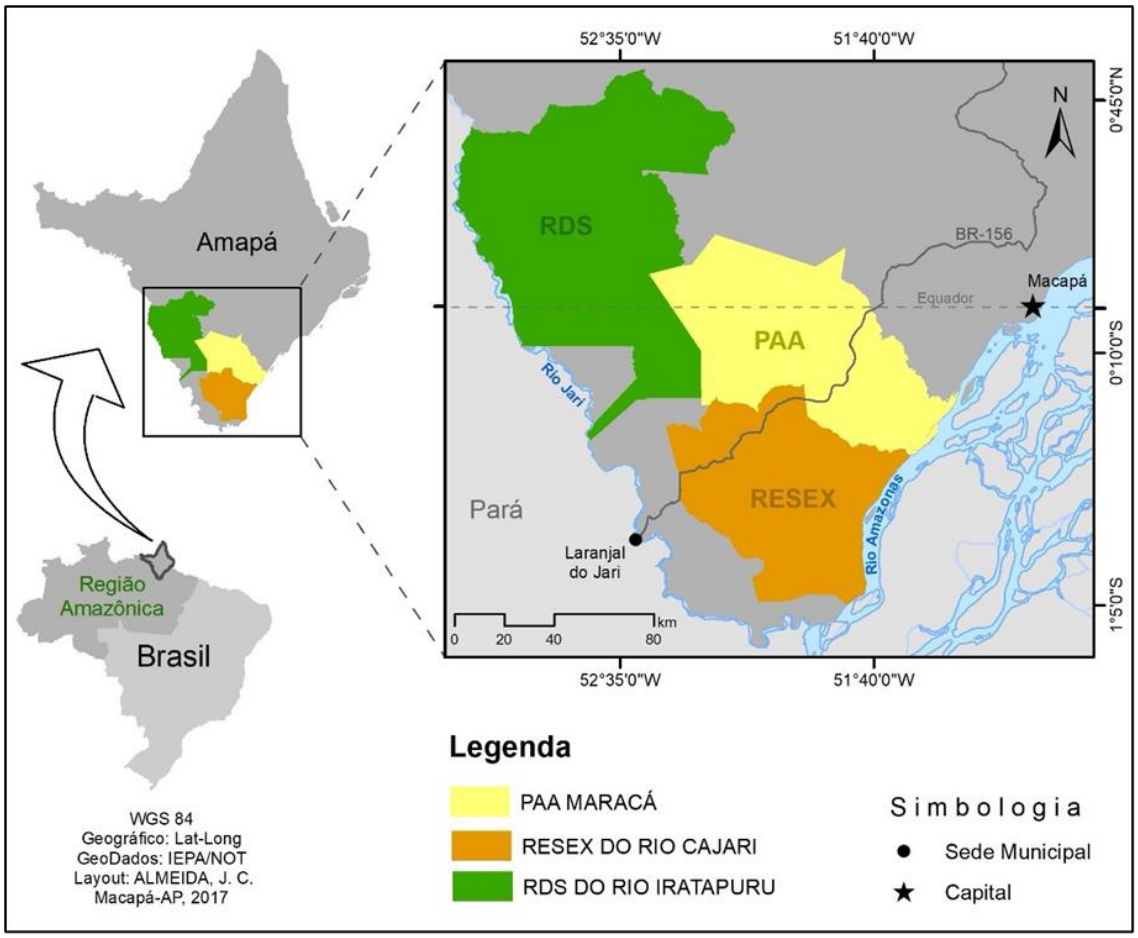
Starting in 1980, Amapá also became a protected natural area, with most of its physical space designated for the creation of federal protected areas. Approximately 100,000 km², or 70% of the total area of Amapá, have been transformed into conservation units and indigenous lands. The protected areas of Amapá constitute a fantastic mosaic of intact ecosystems, with a diversity of traditional and ancestral populations. The natural conditions were favorable to PDSA.

In the state of Acre, the Government of the Forest, or "Florestania," led by Jorge Viana (elected in 1998), also aligned itself with the principles of sustainable development. In other words, from the source to the mouth of the Amazon River, sustainable development occurred under progressive governments, while Brazil was under the neoliberal regime of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002). However, the theories of sustainable development were gaining traction, and Chico Mendes and his legacy of "'empates' in the forest" were very present in the Amazon. It was believed that it was an alternative development model for the region.

In this context, the PDSA occurred in a region deep within the Amazon, during a period of transition in the system of government—from authoritarianism to democracy—and in a condition of economic dependence on the federal government and geopolitically conditioned by two antagonistic models of development based on the extraction of mineral resources and the preservation of nature.

This article highlights initiatives that marked the implementation of the PDSA, with an emphasis on the territorial transformations that occurred in southern Amapá and on the questioning of the revolutionary nature of public policy. Figure 1 illustrates the territory in question. This is a non-evolutionary approach to local events from 1995 to 2002, based on analyses of critical development theories.

Figure 1 – Southern Amapá, with emphasis on protected areas and settlements



Source: Prepared by the geographer Jodson Cardoso de Almeida.

The text hypothesizes that the PDSA subverted the logic of authoritarianism and the progress promised by the exploitation of natural resources in an Amazonian territory historically subjected to the control of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. In this way, the PDSA established itself as a utopia of sustainable development in the Amazon, leaving a legacy for thinking about post-sustainable development that is anti-capitalist, highly democratic, and fundamentally based on ancestral knowledge and the preservation of nature.

The methodology used was guided by the analysis of PDSA documents, published literature on sustainable development, and notes collected by the authors from renowned scientists who (voluntarily) approached Amapá to contribute to and experience sustainable development at the local level. It is important to mention the information obtained from non-scientists, artisans of practices and knowledge, protagonists in the struggles for social and territorial justice in the Amazon, with a significant presence in southern Amapá. To verify information published in the text by journalist Gilberto Dimenstein and the socio-environmental projects conducted in Laranjal do Jari, open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted via the WhatsApp application, with the collaboration of one of the interviewees—a local resident who experienced the period covered by this article's research: Leonice Vasconcelos, 47 years old, married, mother of two children and grandmother of two grandchildren, as she introduced herself during the interview.

The diversity of the theme and the theoretical tensions of the PDSA experiences conditioned the decision to highlight the transformations recorded in southern Amapá, which concentrates some of the challenges to sustainable development in the Amazon: i) the existence of a large, capital-intensive project and its dehumanizing peripheralization—the Jari Project, ii) the presence of extensive protected areas, iii) riverside occupation in a risk area, and iv) international cooperation investments in strengthening environmental management—Pilot Program to Conserve the Brazilian Rain Forest (PPG7).

The text is organized as follows: an introduction, followed by a section about the theoretical framework on the PDSA, the third section describes and highlights the southern region of Amapá in a period prior to the PDSA and its transformations resulting from government actions, and then proceeds to the conclusion and references.

2 Theoretical Framework

In the 1980s, the Amazon experienced alarming rates of deforestation and wildfires, and became an unsafe environment for activists advocating for forest preservation and sustainable development. The assassination of Chico Mendes in 1988 signaled that violence would have no limits in the face of speculative interest in land and the exploitation of natural resources. The standing forest was an obstacle to the region's development, and the main culprit behind the devastation was the Brazilian state (Figure 2).

Figure 2 –Manchete Magazine from 1970 showing the "conquest" of the "forest"—the opening of the Trans-Amazonian Highway



Source: Quatro Cinco Um Magazine (2025).

Note: The northern Amazon: Here, we conquer the forest.

It is pertinent to refer to the publication of "The Limits to Growth" by the Club of Rome in 1972, which warned about the consequences of capital accumulation for the physical environment and the undermining of the planet's resilience, an issue that development economists have always ignored. The year 1972 was also the year of the

United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm (emphasis added), a period in which the Brazilian government promoted policies for the occupation of the Amazon with tax incentives for private investments, aimed at the economic development of the region, as shown in Figure 1.

Given the contradictions that permeated national politics (predatory developmentalism towards nature), in 1973, the government created a governmental structure for environmental management, the Special Secretariat for the Environment (SEMA), an agency linked to the Ministry of the Interior that conducted the planning of the development of the Amazon under the mentality of conservative modernization and economic progress (Castro; Hébette, 1989; Kohlhepp, 2025).

More than 20 years after the environmental turning point of 1972, the PDSA emerged in 1995 as a policy from a local government in the Amazon, resulting from developments of the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development** (emphasis added) held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. This conference, also known as Eco-92 or Rio-92, laid the groundwork for the sustainable development announced in the report Our Common Future (also known as the Brundtland Report) in 1987.[1]

The scenarios projected in 1972 by "The Limits to Growth," substantiated by advances in research on the functioning of the biosphere, led the countries participating in Eco-92 to sign protocols addressing problems related to climate change and biodiversity loss. Following the environmental agenda, the PDSA anticipated the public policy of sustainable development, which would only be recognized by the UN in 2012, during the **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development** (Rio+20) (emphasis added).

In 1995, Amapá still retained the air of a former federal territory, with a fluid population of 300,000 inhabitants, part of which officially belonged to the State of Pará. The floating population here is understood as a population not statistically counted by governmental agencies and which maintains a demographic relationship with both states: Amapá, which assists it with public policies due to its greater physical proximity, and Pará, due to its official geographical position.

Beyond the unfavorable demographic situation, Amapá was—and still is—facing a dilemma that lies at the heart of sustainable development: how to improve the quality of life of society without sacrificing or endangering nature? (Svampa, 2019). In this sense, the PDSA opted for nature but remained open to political negotiation for projects that use natural resources (land, water, minerals), provided they follow protocols aimed at minimizing environmental impact and greater social equity. In other words, the PDSA addressed issues that are not part of the playbook of peripheral capitalism—regulated solely in favor of the market—, such as respect for nature and the fair distribution of benefits from the exploitation of natural resources.

There are studies in the literature available on PDSA that oscillate between a critical systemic reading and the recording of an Amazonian utopia (Castro, 1998; Chelala, 2003; Leonelli, 2000; Moulin, 2000; Ruellan; Cabral; Moulin, 2007). Castro

[1] "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, 1987, p. 41).

(1998) analyzes how sustainable development and environmental management have combined in the formulation of public policies in Amapá. The author highlights the importance of PPG7 for PDSA, with synergies that strengthened actions aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of the forest as opposed to its exploitation "in its natural state." The federal government and international cooperation with PPG7 could have boosted PDSA, if it weren't for its hampered operational design and excessive controls from both donors and the federal government, Castro (1998) analyzes.

Moulin (2000) organized a book featuring dialogues between Capiberibe and interviewers (Elson Martins, João Paulo Capobianco, Rui Xavier, and Zuenir Ventura). The book, with a preface by Aziz Ab'Sáber, compares the PDSA to a "pleasant dream" that, upon waking, exposes a perverse political reality:

> The main significance of the book now being published is that most governors who call themselves democrats never engage in open dialogue with intellectuals and scientists. And even less are they concerned with the aspirations and needs of the population that finds itself at the swollen base of an extremely unequal and suffering social pyramid. There are authorities in our country who believe themselves to be the owners of all truths, knowledgeable on all subjects, and powerful enough to choose the priorities that best suit them, or that most directly serve the interests of their friends and supporters (Ab'Sáber, 2000, p. 11, our translation).

In highlighting the distinctive character of the PDSA, Aziz Ab'Sáber (2000) also reveals contradictory aspects of a society that enters the 21st century, denying science and clinging to the populism of immediate-gratification politics, for which sustainable development has remained—and remains—a distant academic rhetoric. Sustainable development requires science to think long-term, and this is incompatible with the nature of national and regional development public policies practiced in Brazil. Therefore, PDSA narratives only make sense when detached from any evolutionary bias in development, regardless of scale.

In fact, Martins (2000, p. 19) mentions that the intellectual conception of the PDSA was the work of anthropologist Mary Allegretti, an activist for environmental causes in the Amazon and very close to the movement led by Chico Mendes in defense of the standing forest. In her doctoral dissertation, Allegretti (2002) asserts her thesis on the right of forest populations to live in a rubber plantation without a boss; a phrase that gives meaning to someone who has made PDSA an adversary of the capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy that prevailed in the Amazon—and still does—, especially in the deep Amazon, such as southern Amapá.

Chelala (2003, p. 126, our translation) confirms the statement above: "The PDSA ignored colonial desires and expectations regarding the region and sought to build its own path, independent of those interests. The inhabitants of the region awaited the definitions of federal policy, and were historically disregarded by them." The author also cites a certain shortcoming of the PDSA in "not having managed to develop the productive sector, or even, not having managed to create conditions for the state's economy to develop from sustainable perspectives" (Chelala, 2003, p. 127 e 129), in addition to difficulties with public participation. This is a controversial issue among development economics theorists: whether to encourage business through state intervention while minimally maintaining the principles of sustainability.

Governor Capiberibe officially established the PDSA through Decree 2453 of August 14, 1995. The program established six guidelines: 1) Valuing Amapá's comparative advantages, 2) Economic sustainability, 3) Social equity, 4) Utilizing partnerships in project execution, 5) Decentralization of activities, and 6) Municipalization. These guidelines should have instructed the 1996-1999 Multi-Year Plan, a condition made precarious by the fragility of sectoral planning within the government structure, even more so in a context of lack of adherence of regional and national planning to the principles of sustainable development and a local culture of Cartesian planning based on budget sheets and without social participation.

Sachs (2007, p. 8, our translation) highlighted the difficulties of the PDSA regarding the lack of transversality of sustainable development across different scales of public planning, reinforcing its merely illustrative nature.

> It would be humanly impossible to advance in all directions in the short span of seven years in a small state. However, paraphrasing the title of a book of interviews with Capi, Amapá pointed the way forward for Brazil, and this in two senses. It showed in which direction solutions should be sought, not only in the Amazon, but throughout Brazil, and offered examples of concrete action with convincing social, economic, and environmental results, despite their limited scale.

Leonelli (2000) follows the same line of thought, suggesting that the PDSA could motivate Lula's government policies by setting an example of revolution in the forest:

> While it is clear that the intention is not to assign Amapá the role of a pilot project for Brazil, given that its nascent economy and very recent social and institutional formation do not have the dimension, scale, and socioeconomic complexity that would allow such an inference. But the methodology, principles, and political strategy currently in place can indeed be evaluated from a national perspective, including based on their proven practical results (Leonelli, 2000, p. 93, our translation).

During the 2002 election campaign, Lula went to Amapá to learn about the PDSA experience, visiting the Cooperative of Chestnut Gatherers of the Iratapuru River, in the south of the state. The cooperative promoted sustainability practices in a territory transformed into a Sustainable Development Reserve (RDS) by the PDSA government in 1997. The RDS of the Iratapuru River is strategic for the protection of the Waiãpi Indigenous Land. Lula's first government did not embrace PDSA, nor the principles of sustainability. The idea of regional planning only emerged in 2008, during Lula's second term, with the creation of the Sustainable Amazon Plan (PAS); however, it remained stillborn in terms of possible new directions for regional development in the Amazon.

The resumption of regional planning by the Lula government followed the model of traditional politics, embodied in the Growth Acceleration Programs and their goals of large-scale projects with significant impacts on the nature and culture of the Amazon. The sustainable development of the Amazon has been historically

maintained by the regulation of economic growth metrics and the catfish[2] that swim against regional development.

3 The libertarian experience of PDSA in southern Amapá

The southern region of Amapá is an Amazonian laboratory for sustainable development: 1) The story of the controversial Jari Project, one of the largest landholdings on the planet and a territory colonized by the exploitation of labor and the capitalist imaginary of "seeing the forest grow like a large cornfield," 2) the formation of an urban center—Beiradão—, consisting of stilt houses built over the meander of the Jari River to shelter the population excluded from the larger project, and 3) the presence of protected areas, together with northern Pará and Guyana, forms an extensive biodiversity corridor with the presence of indigenous communities and traditional populations (Chagas, Cavalcante; 2024; Sociedade Amapaense para a Natureza e Solidariedade [SANS], 2002a).

To provide the reader with context regarding the regional scenario that preceded the PDSA actions in southern Amapá, we refer to the book of Dimenstein (1992), whose text is faithful to its time, to the description of one of the main social impacts of large capital-intensive projects, and to the challenge of sustainable development in the Amazon:

> On weekends, those walkways become congested with men seeking venal pleasure. It's not uncommon for the most drunk and careless to tumble down the two meters that separate the walkway from the ground. They come from the Jari Project, built in the 1970s by the American businessman Daniel Ludwig around the city of Monte Dourado, in Pará. The project absorbed $1 billion, and today there are production units for pulp, kaolin, and bauxite, but they are managed by Brazilian businessmen.
>
> Only the river separates Monte Dourado from Beiradão, an unintentional and uncontrollable byproduct of the megaproject to transform the Amazon into an agricultural oasis, and which emerged, among other things, to provide women. Between the two sides, it is a two-minute motorboat ride, the 'voadeiras.' But they are very far apart in time (Dimenstein, 1992, p. 38, our translation).

Laranjal do Jari was part of the trafficking route for girls in the Amazon, who were subjected to the underworld of child prostitution. The girl who served as a guide for journalist Gilberto Dimenstein's investigative research is named Janaína.

> Janaína served as a guide through the labyrinthine walkways of Laranjal do Jari, in Amapá. She does not live with her parents – and does not even know where they are. She knows the main hiding places of the prostitute girls, their customs, fears, and traumas. She herself carries her childhood traumas and naiveté, despite being one of the victims of the adult world, forced into sex to survive (Dimenstein, 1992, p. 41, our translation).

[2] In 2007, President Lula referred to the "catfish" to say that Ibama was hindering national development by blocking the environmental licensing of the hydroelectric plants in Santo Antônio and Jirau.

Sandra Fogaça, a resident of Laranjal do Jari, remembers Janaína:

> We used to play together, and I didn't know she was from the nightclubs because she was so small, so tiny, that I think the owner of the nightclub let her play there. At night, she was there [...] she was a child, she must have been 11 or 12 years old [...] her name was Janaína (Fogaça, 2025, our translation).

The nightclubs mentioned by Dimenstein in the book "Girls of the Night: the prostitution of enslaved girls in Brazil" (literal translation) were closed and transformed into schools during the PDSA government, led by Capiberibe, in partnership with the municipal government, headed by Mayor Reginaldo Brito de Miranda. Two of them honored teachers who stood out in the fight for education: 1) the State School Mineko Hayashida, named after a teacher of Japanese origin who went to Amapá in the post-war period and worked as a farmer in the Agricultural Colony of Matapi and 2) the Municipal School Paulo Freire, named after the Brazilian educator who dedicated his life to fighting ignorance, reducing illiteracy, and highlighting the transformative power of education.

Complementary projects to combat violence and the crime of trafficking and child prostitution have emerged in the municipality through voluntary initiatives, such as Gangs of Peace, Junior Citizen, and Environmental Citizen. The main objective of the actions was to remove children and young people from the streets and from the control of crime. The Environmental Citizen Project received support from MMA/PPG7 and included several collaborators, such as the philosopher and poet Herbert Emanuel Valente de Oliveira, the literature professor Adriana Abreu, the professor and storyteller Christianne Rothier, and the visual artist and mime artist Jiddu Saldanha (SANS, 2002a, 2002b).

Leonice Vasconcelos, a resident of Laranjal do Jari and one of the young people aided by the Environmental Citizen Project, comments:

> The Environmental Citizen Project was an invitation for young people to reflect on everything around us, not only related to our cultural habits, but also the quality of life we would like to have. It was this special invitation to rethink our attitudes... the project helped us to have a more careful look at nature, as well as who we are in nature. It was a group of young people who interacted, played, and dreamed (Vasconcelos, 2025).

The description of slavery through prostitution practiced by the colonels of the time was also present in the unfair and violent labor system to which the people who collected Brazil nuts in southern Amapá were subjected. The "aviamento" system was practiced, a social production relationship system established in the areas of plant extraction in the Amazon, in which bosses advance services and/or manufactured products in exchange for production extracted from the forest, such as latex from the rubber tree, Brazil nuts, and essential oils, among other products. This system keeps the worker "tied" to the employer due to the cycle of debt (Allegretti, 2002; Filocreão, 2007).

The creation of the Extractive Reserve of Rio Cajari in 1990 came about after an arduous struggle for the right to lands controlled by companies involved in the Jari Project:

> The control of the Jari and Cajari region, both during Ludwig's period and during the period of national businessmen, was characterized by the violence of the Project's armed security against the existing settlers in the region, to prevent the construction or improvement of their homes, attempting to safeguard the right of possession of the lands to the large landowners (Filocreão, 2014, p. 129, our translation).

Dismantling the centuries-old aviamento system is one of the benefits of creating Extractive Reserves (RESEXs) in the Amazon and an important step towards thinking about sustainable development as a system that challenges capitalism (Allegretti, 2002; Filocreão, 2002). During the same period, in the early 1990s, work also began on the southern section of BR-156 highway, connecting the state capital, Macapá, to the city of Laranjal do Jari.

The project of the road construction was submitted to public hearing due to the significant impacts of the work, mainly because it cuts through a large area of Amazon Rainforest in protected territory: the Extractive Reserve of Rio Cajari.[3] The mobilization of non-governmental environmental organizations, led by the National Council of Rubber Tappers (CNS)[4] and the Institute of Amazonian Studies (IEA), resulted in compensatory measures for the residents of the reserve and in the alteration of the project to create a parkway.

Pedro Ramos de Sousa, one of the founders of the CNS and an environmental leader in the Amazon, describes the public hearing held on July 24, 1991, as follows:

> When we requested the public hearing, we thought it would be in Macapá, but it ended up being held in Laranjal do Jari. Since we had a great capacity for mobilization, we asked Mary Allegretti for help in raising funds to bring many people to this hearing. We managed to rent two large boats, which left from Macapá and picked up people from Maracá and Cajari. We invited Professor Orlando Valverde, the geographer Carlos Walter Porto, Maldi... we received contributions from Fearnside from INPA, and from Lúcio Flávio Pinto from Belém. Everyone sent in written contributions for us to incorporate into the hearing. Mary Allegretti brought together a lot of great people, and the audience was huge. This caused some discomfort to the government at the time[5] (Chagas, 2021, our translation).

The second measure concerning the parkway was never adopted, following administrative procedural steps in the environmental licensing process to readjust the project, and a court decision favored the opening of the road using the same engineering protocols from the military era, without any action to reduce the impacts on biodiversity.

The Extractive Reserve of Rio Cajari can be considered the first sustainable revolution in the forest of Amapá, promoting agrarian reform while protecting

[3] The Extractive Reserve is a unique type of agrarian reform and conservation unit, formulated by rubber tappers in the Amazon in 1985, which aims to protect and sustainably use natural resources, ensuring the right of traditional communities to the territories where they have always lived. Inspired by indigenous lands, the areas are demarcated as continuous territories, owned by the State, and ceded for the use of extractivists (IEA, 2025).

[4] The National Council of Rubber Tappers (CNS) was founded in October 1985, during the First National Meeting of Rubber Tappers, in Brasília. In 2009, it was renamed the National Council of Extractive Populations, retaining the acronym CNS.

[5] In 1991, Amapá was governed by Anníbal Barcellos, former commander of the Brazilian Navy.

nature. PDSA was the second revolution, as it welcomed the movement of Brazil nut extractivists so that sustainable community development could continue and not become just another production initiative in the Amazon commodified by the market.

The buyers of Brazil nuts, known as middlemen, controlled the market, setting the price to be paid to the nut collectors in the forest. The price varied according to the crop yield. The Brazil nuts from southern Amapá were destined for large traders who exported them worldwide. PDSA supported the organization of Brazil nut harvesters and promoted cooperativism in the southern region of Amapá:

> The main public investments used to develop these areas were directed towards promoting the collection, processing, and marketing of two main products: Brazil nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*) and açaí (Euterpe oleraceae), resulting in the installation of three factories for processing the nuts, one in the Sustainable Development Reserve of Iratapuru River under the management of the Mixed Cooperative of Producers and Extractivists of Iratapuru (COMARU), producing oil for the cosmetics industry; a factory for the production of shelled and vacuum-packed cashew nuts and oil in Laranjal do Jari, managed by the Mixed Cooperative of Plant Extractivists of Farmers of Laranjal do Jari (COMAJA); a factory for the production of dry, dehydrated cashew nuts with shells, in the Extractive Reserve of Cajari, managed by the Mixed Cooperative of Extractivists of Alto Cajari (COOPERALCA), and an industry for processing açaí into palm hearts in the Extractive Reserve of Cajari, managed by the Cooperative of Agro-extractive Producers of the Reserve of Cajari River (COOPERCA) (Filocreão; Silva; Lomba, 2019, our translation).

PDSA envisioned transforming southern Amapá into an industrial hub for Brazil nuts, with the cooperative production of various byproducts, from dried Brazil nuts for use in Brazil nuts, to refined Brazil nut oil (Figure 3). The principle of leveraging comparative advantages through value addition in the production and processing of Brazil nuts, with inter-cooperative participation playing a leading role, found technical and financial support from the PDSA government. Industrialization through inter-cooperatives in southern Amapá, despite favorable political conditions, faced several obstacles. Sachs' (2007) hypothesis that it would be humanly impossible to advance in all directions in the short span of seven years in a small state has been confirmed.

Figure 3 – Billboard advertising Brazil nut oil installed in Laranjal do Jari



Source: SANS (2002a).

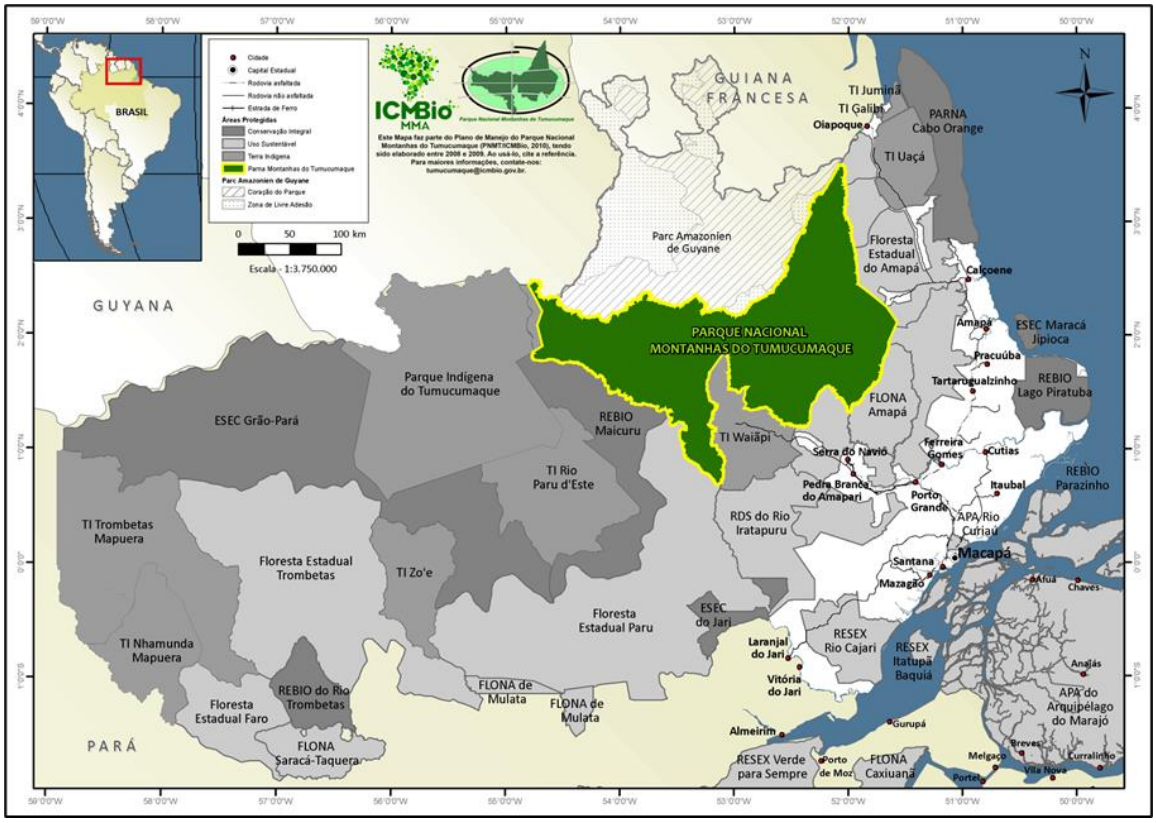
Note: From the Amapá forest to every table in the world. Virgin Brazil nut oil.

PDSA's actions in southern Amapá were conducted in line with the implementation of the PPG7, the largest environmental cooperation program on the planet, with Germany as the lead donor and the Brazilian government, through the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), managing the resources, and execution by the Amazonian states (Chagas, 2003).

Synergistic results of the PDSA and PPG7 in Amapá in favor of nature were achieved through the creation of the National Park of Tumucumaque Mountains (Federal Conservation Unit) in 2002, the largest in the world in terms of tropical forest area, with 3,865,188.53 hectares, and the Sustainable Development Reserve of Iratapuru River (State Conservation Unit) in 1997, with 806,814 hectares (Chagas; Cavalcante, 2024).

Protected areas designed to safeguard nature and forest populations were one of the most notable results of Amapá's sustainable development experience. The Amapá region, along with northern Pará and the Guianas, constitutes one of the most important socio-biodiversity corridors on the planet, encompassing more than 300,000 km² between conservation units and indigenous lands (Map 1).

Map 1 – Conservation Unit and Indigenous Lands Amapá-Pará-French Guiana



Source: ICMBio (2009).

The most protected and possibly most preserved area of tropical rainforest on the planet has been interpreted as "ultra-peripheral," "territory in silent trance," "border strip," among other meanings that individualize it in terms of territorial management, connectivity, and climate/biodiversity interaction. In some ways, the PDSA reversed the developmentalist logic of making the environmental system a subsystem of the economy, as is conventionally observed in discourses on sustainable development that sacrifice nature for the sake of economic rationality.

Furthermore, the PDSA took place in the Amazon, on a local scale, with a much more significant reception of international cooperation programs than of a programmatic agenda of national and regional public planning. The results are far more symbolic, but of an inspiring dimension, from a past yet to come.

4 Conclusion

Thirty years later, the utopias of sustainable development conceived under the coordination of Governor Capiberibe in the state of Amapá still incite academic curiosity due to the agonizing conceptual uncertainty surrounding the theme—sustainable development—and the paradigms that surround it, whether as a counterpoint—or not—to capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

PDSA promoted a sustainable revolution in southern Amapá by transforming nightclubs into public schools, encouraging inter-cooperative cooperation in the Brazil nut industry, and supporting the creation of protected areas as a strategy to

combat slavery—of girls subjected to prostitution and of forest workers—driven by the rationality of capital that is destructive to nature and lives.

Actions aimed at sustainable development must be guided by highly intense democratic processes, participatory and community democracy, by utopias as a political decision to confront the elites of institutional backwardness, by understanding and respecting cultures, and above all, by radical intolerance of all forms of oppression against freedom and nature.

Acknowledgments

To the couple João and Janete Capiberibe, "politicians past their prime, perhaps; but eternally young, like a river awaiting its flood" (adapted from "A Adiada Enchente," by Mia Couto).

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Submetido em: 09/10/2025 **Aprovado em: 23/06/2026**

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