SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON PRESS: A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE
1990 - 1994

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER II
AMAZONIAN SCENARIO: FAILED POLICIES, UNDEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING AND PRESSURE FOR DIALOGUE 8

CHAPTER III
DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY-MAKING: NEWS MEDIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING 40

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH DESIGN 105

CHAPTER V
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEWS: CONTENT ANALYSIS 127

CHAPTER VI
PRESS COVERAGE OF AMAZÔNIA. A JOURNALISTIC PERSPECTIVE: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS 200

CHAPTER VII
SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF AMAZÔNIA: LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS 269

CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION 329

APPENDICES

A. CODING SCHEDULE
B. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

REFERENCE LIST
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Abstract

This study analyses how sustainable development issues are constructed in the Amazonian press over a five-year period between 1990 and 1994. Drawing on a constructionist framework, the research focuses on two regional newspapers' coverage to assess media roles in processes of policy-making, journalistic perceptions and practices and the construction of discourses within the context of the new ideology of sustainable development. The analysis identifies themes, actors, language and discourses revealing of an Amazonian perspective as the environment rose on the public agenda in the years before and after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. During these years, conflict originating in the rise of social movements is an underlying factor identified in the regional news. Using a combination of methodologies, the research comprises analyses of nearly 700 news items, 30 interviews with journalists and language and discourses appearing in the regional press. Trends in the coverage identify environmental, political and economic news framing. The most prominent themes are: the environment and development, Indian matters, health, and political and border affairs. Official sources are the most prominent actors in the news. The research shows how some issues take prominence and others are undermined in the coverage. Analysis of journalists' perceptions of news influence in policy-making, their reporting strategies and source relationships throw light on the context of news reporting and on the articulation of social and cultural definitions of the Amazon in the news. Links between news construction and wider social, political, economic and cultural processes become apparent as language and discourse analyses reveal different narratives emanating from the articulation of the concept of sustainable development. Among the main discourses identified in the news are the nationalist/developmentalist, the preservationist, the negotiating and that of the excluded.
Chapter I

Introduction

This is a study on how sustainable development is constructed in the Amazonian press in the early 1990s. The principal aim of the research is to identify how meaning about development and the environment has been built in regional newspapers. The introduction of sustainable development concept in the regional policy circles forced a new element in the media coverage of Amazônia. Given the impact of development in the environment, themes relevant to the debate and decision-making came to prominence in the press.

Following a world-wide trend which attributed the environment an importance never observed before, the press took on the role of mediating public debate in the region. Long standing development issues of regional concern remained part of the daily news with an added environmental frame typical of the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is to understand such framing and the process of meaning-attribution in the discussion of sustainable development that this study has been carried out. In this context, the identification of major actors and discourses is pursued through the application of various methodologies.

Throughout the past thirty years issues related to regional development, as reported in the press, have undergone trends resulting from political, social and economic changes in the Brazilian society, as a whole, and in the Amazon region, in particular. At first, mostly during the 1970s, coverage was concerned with major investment brought into the region through large scale national and multinational projects. The military regime ruling the country at the time carried out major infra-structure projects such as the opening of roads and the construction of dams. Although criticised, such projects were also said to bring progress. Most importantly, according to the official discourse, such initiatives would ensure territorial occupation and, thus, resolve national security matters.

In the 1980s, once infra-structure was available, there was growing migration and intensification of the exploitation of natural resources. Such activities increased conflicts in the region for reasons of disordered land occupation and confrontation with indigenous
peoples. It was also in the 1980s that the military dictatorship ended. The period of
censorship and repression of political rights began to end and organised social movements
were able to express their concerns more openly.

The press was no longer the exclusive arena for official versions of regional matters. Civil
society had, by then, organised itself to denounce the consequences of the occupation and it,
too, presented accredited sources. Scientific experts played such a role and lent their voices
and research results to back social movements. The media in their turn opened the way to a
debate that took on far more various views than those allowed in authoritarian times.

By the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, a more balanced discourse emerged from official
sources and activist groups. Such discourse has its basis in a newly introduced terminology,
the concept of sustainable development. The new approach to environmental and economic
matters, argued for rational use of natural resources combined with respect for ecosystems.
The tenets in the concept emphasise that the rational use of natural resources serves as
means for economic growth and improved quality of human life for present and future
generations.

Sustainable development has been argued as the most reasonable way to deal with the
Amazon's natural and economic diversity. Similar to what happened in the early years of the
region's occupation, policy is said to be designed aiming at the improvement of standards of
living. Now, though, as the concept of sustainable development is based on democratic
principles, it implies as well as demands social participation, dialogue and action.

As a result of the need for information on policy-making, it is important to understand how
dialogue takes place and how the media influences such processes. It is this study's
argument that the media play a major role in establishing the meaning of social problems in
the Amazon. It is the media that process most information which empowers society to
debate its problems and potentially influence policy-making. The principal aim of this study
is to identify how the press built issues of sustainable development between 1990 and 1994.
Sustainable development is a concept that extends from purely economically or environmentally-oriented concerns. It encompasses political, economic and social interests in a thorough and complex manner hardly seen in other subjects (some examples of issues carrying such a wide range of perspectives are strategic defence expenditure, freedom of information, State and private sector accountability). Sustainable development implies access to information; rational use of resources; endogenous knowledge-based production and decentralisation of decision-making. These characteristics strengthen planning based upon reliable information and participative management that ultimately are essential elements in the exercise of democracy.

In the 1970s and 1980s, planning required knowledge built upon the Amazon resource base as well as accurate information. With the introduction of the concept of sustainable development, strategies and State action established new forms of social control. As an element of democracy, dialogue is a fundamental requirement in policy decision-making. It is in this scenario that this study reveals the processes that underlie the role of communication in the development of areas such as the Brazilian Amazon.

In this context and given the importance of Amazônia to Brazil and the world, it is relevant to understand the overall schema within which regional actors process meaning. This research attempts to understand the scheme shared by audiences and journalists working in the Amazon as expressed in the public arenas of debate including the regional press. The importance of this study lies in the investigation of a regional perspective in the process of making sense out of the Amazon.

An earlier study identified the major issues or themes relating to sustainable development in the Brazilian Amazon. Other studies have content-analysed national media for matters of the environment. This research identifies coverage of sustainable development from the regional press perspective. A combination of methodologies has been chosen involving content analysis of the newspaper material, interviews with journalists and language and discourse analyses.
From a constructionist approach where meaning is socially constructed in public arenas such as the media and journalists manufacture the meaning of social problems, the research aims at identifying how major regional newspapers cover issues of sustainable development. Journalists' understanding and meaning building regarding the concept of sustainable development also constitute targets of this investigation. In this context I have explored the professional perception of news impact in policy-making, reporting strategies as well as journalist/source relationships. Besides revealing the processes of construction of meaning around sustainable development issues, this work explores to what extent media are seen as cultural indicators on policy issues in the Amazon region. Finally, I identify and analyse discourses emerging in the news coverage of regional issues.

By concentrating on social matters and not limiting the analysis' interest to media only, research acknowledges an "interactive and parallel, rather than unilinear" character to such a framework. In this approach, research extends observation from actors to an analysis of how some issues take shape and how others are undermined or left out of the coverage. In order to answer the research questions, the study covers the period from 1990 to 1994, pre and post years of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as Rio 92.

The regional press was chosen for its ability to reveal local voices and local perspectives as well as for its potential to provide more in-depth coverage. Two newspapers were selected, one in each of the two major cities in the Amazon: O Liberal, in Belém, and, A Crítica, in Manaus. The analysis of newspaper material was conducted based on a coding schedule, which includes categories such as themes, actors, type of news, page classification as well as textual elements from headlines and photo captions. It is equally necessary to observe the frequency with which certain words appear as to analyse the context within which language is used. Alongside the content analysis and the interviews, language analysis tools were applied to identify who is speaking, what they are saying and what they mean. The analysis

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1 Hansen, 1993.
2 SONAR software was used to analyse the text originated by the interviews as well as by some categories in the content analysis schedule, such as photo captions, cartoon lines, headlines and main constructs.
3 Davis, 1985.
applies Whatmore & Boucher's\textsuperscript{4} (1993) model of narratives to identify frames of discourse within the coverage.

This study is dedicated to broader social and cultural nuances. Content analysis draws a scenario of the media agenda regarding development in the Amazon. Language reveals the perspective of the press in the process of making meaning of regional issues. The analysis of press coverage and that of journalistic perceptions include an effort to build a wider framework within which news about sustainable development are constructed in the Brazilian Amazon. It is hoped that links between news construction and wider social, political, economic and cultural processes become apparent as the discussion of findings is presented.

The work has a total of eight chapters. Following this introduction, chapter II presents an overall Amazonian scenario. This section attempts to bring to light the issues that have most affected the region in more recent times. It presents the geographic scenario and the political organisation locating the study and its boundaries. In the chapter, I introduce different perspectives and interpretations constructed about the Amazon which are relevant to the discussion of discourse narratives built around the region. Historical, economic, political and social aspects are also presented in the discussion of the origins of the region's occupation and of the policies implemented throughout time. Media scenarios are also introduced in chapter II. I have drawn the media scene from its relations with the State, especially in contemporary Brazil, when the country experienced authoritarian rule and subsequently made a transition towards democracy. The role of the media and that of the press in particular is discussed in both national and regional contexts.

Chapter III outlines the theoretical framework on which the research has been based. It presents a discussion of major theories of media and democracy, and those regarding development as well as the environment. The theoretical framework draws upon a constructionist perspective of media in their role as public arenas of social debate. The scope of theories employed in this study also reaches out to those related to social movements and democratisation in settings such as Latin America. Such theoretical tools allow for the

\textsuperscript{4} Whatmore & Boucher, 1993.
identification and analysis of media frames and discourses as they appear in the regional press in the first five years of the decade. Themes, actors and narratives are analysed on the understanding that they comprise the wider construction of reality around regional problems such as those related to sustainable development.

The research methodology follows the theoretical framework and its detailing is the main purpose of chapter IV. In this section, I introduce the research design. Methodologies and the combination of content analysis, interviews and language and discourse analysis are discussed more thoroughly. This chapter is fundamental to introducing the main research questions and to presenting the instruments by which the study was carried out.

Chapters V, VI and VII, comprise the complete report and discussion of findings. In chapter V, findings originated in the analysis of media content are presented in their totality. From the most prominent themes representing the whole idea of sustainable development to the most prominent actors, this section provides the description of the main categories identified in the study. The chapter assesses how the media have constructed regional matters of development and environment under the light of the newly introduced concept of sustainable development. I identify and discuss the media framing of issues, the presentation of news and the overall contexts in which news appears.

The analysis of interviews is presented in chapter VI. It represents the complementation of the content analysis in that it allows for the identification of the wider contexts within which news is produced. Overall journalistic practices and strategies reveal the more comprehensive frame of meaning construction around issues of sustainable development in the Amazon. As actors in the debate of social problems, journalists are key players. Thus, their professional outlook is fundamental to identify trends and tendencies in the news. These professionals are instrumental in understanding how meaning is attributed and spread in enlarged arenas such as the media.

As the last and conclusive stage of the analysis of findings, chapter VII introduces the identification and discussion of major frames of narratives observed in the news about the Amazon. Mostly articulated by regional actors, discourse takes shape in media arenas as a
means to reveal interests, understanding and tendencies within given segments in the contemporary regional scene. As this study set out to identify processes of meaning making around regional matters from the perspective of those more directly involved, this comprises a most important part of the research. The identification of local voices in the arenas of debate about social regional issues is fundamental to make the case that democracy is to be consolidated in the region. Processes of policy-making have never from so close a point allowed for the participation of regional actors. Their perspectives built around frames of discourses reveal the diversity of views inherent in democratic societies. Such perspectives also establish a background for many of the decisions to be made in the Amazon and about the Amazon in the next millennium.

Chapter VIII brings the conclusion of this research. It highlights the major findings and places them within the trends observed in the contemporary regional scenario. It evaluates the outcome of the study in the given scenario of the Amazon in the whole of its complexity. This section assesses problems faced in the analysis. More importantly, it signals avenues for further research. The dynamics of the Amazon is in itself a challenge and constitutes a major task for researchers in the field of communication, the environment and development studies.
Chapter II

Amazonian scenario: failed policies, undemocratic decision-making and pressure for dialogue

Introduction

In this chapter I present an overview of regional issues. By discussing political, economic, social and cultural aspects, I introduce the scenario which is later analysed on the basis of news coverage, professional practices and discourse-building about the region. Such processes set the context within which media and journalistic roles are discussed. This scenario provides the framework for the analysis of social problems as they appear in media arenas. Major themes arise in the news, the complexity of relationships among actors is analysed, and discourses develop against the regional background.

Firstly, I introduce the physical setting. Then, I examine the location of the study and the symbolism within which the region has been involved throughout history. Aspects of history, economy, politics and society are described in an account of the Amazonian trajectory. Underlying importance for the region such as those of land ownership and use and the implications of Portuguese colonial heritage are explored. In the next sections, other political and economic aspects are discussed in more detail, including the implementation of public policy and the recent authoritarian regime led by the military in Brazil. Arriving at what is fundamental to this study, I discuss the meaning of redemocratisation and its importance in establishing dialogue. In this, I detail media scenarios both national and regional and their role as public arenas of debate.

The geographic scenario: places, peoples, biodiversity

Located in South America, Brazil is the largest of the Latin American countries with an area of 8.5 million square kilometres and the only one to have Portuguese as its official language. Its economy is among the biggest in the world. Brazil is a country overflowing with contrasts

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1 Besides the specific references used throughout the elaboration of this chapter, an overall source was that of the Brazilian Statistical Annual Report (Anuário Estatístico do Brasil, 1995), published by the Ministry of Planning and Budget.
and contradictions at all levels from profound landscape differences to an incredible variety of cultures as well as an absurd inequality in income distribution. As Lewis (1992) says in his comparison of the Arab World to Latin America, despite the differences among States, this is “a group of countries linked by a common language and culture, a common religion, a common history, a common sense, even, of destiny, but not united in a common polity.” (p. 101). Since the ideals of Simón Bolívar and José Martí to unite Latin America as one powerful Continent did not find support, regional geopolitical divisions have established boundaries between eight nations considered as Amazonian.

There are five major regions in Brazil. The Amazon Basin area in the North of the country is the largest virgin area in South America. The Amazon comprises a territory of more than seven million square kilometres and approximately 25 million people. Tropical humid ecosystems comprise the ecology of Amazônia as it lies on the borders of seven countries - Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela. Sixty percent of this area alone is located in Northern Brazil. Amazônia represents 35 percent of the South American territory.

When comparing Brazil to the other seven Amazonian countries, one notes many similarities in their handling of regional affairs and decision-making processes. There are also many differences, for instance, in the degree of occupation and the extension of damage inflicted throughout the region. Of all countries, Brazil is the one which has most intensely occupied the region and exploited its natural resources. As will be seen in detail, an authoritarian regime brought developmentalism into the region that has resulted in extensive environmental damage.

For the purpose of this study, the region in question is the area situated within the Brazilian boundaries. The Brazilian Amazônia has acquired throughout time, two main different forms of political organisation. One classification is that of political nature, the classical Northern region, comprised of the states of Pará, Amazonas, Amapá, Rondônia, Acre, Roraima and Tocantins in a total of 3,8 million square kilometres. Another classification is that Amazônia Legal “of Statutory Amazônia ... constitutionally defined for purposes of development activities.” (Mendes, 1992, p. 20). With an existence justified to accommodate planning
strategy, *Amazônia Legal* is constituted by all of the above mentioned states and the state of Mato Grosso\(^2\) and part of the state of Maranhão.\(^3\)

The main focus of this research is on two of the Amazonian states: Amazonas and Pará.\(^4\) Their political and economic relevance in the region is a decisive factor in this decision. The first two geopolitical units to emerge from Colonial times, these two states represent the major forces in the region. It is therefore of relevance to provide a more detailed scenario of these two Brazilian political units.

Amazonas State territory holds some 1,5 million square kilometres with a population of 2 million of which half is resident in Manaus, the state's capital. Manaus is located on the Negro river, one of the main tributaries of the Amazon located in the middle of the basin. Pará State has an area of 1,2 million square kilometres and is by far the more populous in the region with 5 million of which 1,2 million live in Belém. The capital sits on the Bay of Guajará on the delta of the Amazon river. It has been for its strategic location, the main entrance to the region before any roads were ever planned to connect the North to the rest of the country.

The Amazon mostly consists of lowlands covered with rain forest, criss-crossed by rivers. The Carajás\(^5\) mountain range, located in Pará's south-eastern portion, contains one of the world's largest mineral reserves, rich in iron, manganese, copper, nickel and bauxite. Though the economy is still mainly extractive, industry is well established in the region.

Overall, numbers and physical characteristics are always emphasised to provide a glimpse of the vastness of the Amazon. The Amazon river flows a distance of 6,762 kilometres from its source in the Peruvian Andes to its delta. It has some 1,000 tributaries stretching to an area equivalent to 80,000 kilometres in length. It is the largest river system in the world.\(^6\) The region's controversial nature rises even from what one might take as the most simple

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\(^2\)Otherwise, part of Brazil's Central-Western region.

\(^3\)Otherwise, part of the North-eastern region of Brazil.

\(^4\) The two newspapers targeted in this study are published in the capitals of these states: *O Liberal*, in Belém, Pará, and *A Crítica*, in Manaus, Amazonas.

\(^5\) Carajás is a region targeted by many policies among which the exploitation of mineral resources and agriculture have had major impact. A whole programme dedicated to the use of resources in this region was designed by government in the late 1970s and early 1980s and became known as Greater Carajás Programme. It includes the Carajás Project for the extraction of mineral resources by Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD), a once State-owned and now privatised company.

\(^6\) Source: Embratur (The Brazilian Tourism Board) and found on <www.rdg.ac.uk/StUnion/Brazil/geographical.html>
geographical facts. Aragón (1994) emphasises the contribution of the Amazon basin to the world’s fresh water: the equivalent to one fifth.

Symbolism: fantasy and reality

The Amazonian scenario of crisis and conflict can be traced as far back as Colonial times when the region was no more than an inhospitable area with which conquerors of all types were fascinated. In the words of Ianni in the preface of Gondim’s (1992) book, *The Invention of the Amazon*: the Amazonian world “... is a metaphor of the New World, of the other world, the place of fascination, exotism, wonders.” On the importance of Amazônia in the world’s imagination, Ianni argues that “Even when the reality is of another nature, when one finds that facts contradict imagination, even so, the search for paradise seems to take precedence.” (In Gondim, 1992).

The destruction of Amazônia is more threatening to the World as the region is regarded with fascination and as the last of the Planet’s resources. Destruction, though, is not an exclusive problem to the Amazon. It is as much part of the reality as “elsewhere, in Central America, in the Congo Basin, in Southeast Asia, but without provoking the same tumult and consternation.” (Hecht & Cockburn, 1989, p. 1). To the authors “What imbues the case of the Amazon with such passion is the symbolic content of the dreams it ignites.” (p. 1). More resembling delirium, dreams representing such symbolism have worked both to the advantage and disadvantage of the region. Perhaps the symbolism in which the region is wrapped has many empirical reasons. For Mendes (1992), such a construction of the Amazon comes with no surprise given the region’s vastness:

It is no wonder that a region with these characteristics and [this] magnitude has been present in the imagination of mankind at all times. It was the location of [the] El Dorado of the Spanish *Conquistadores*; the Breadbasket of the World (Humboldt); the Hidden Paradise (Euclides [sic] da Cunha); Green Hell (Alberto Rangel, 1927); Immature Vastness (Alfredo Ladislau, 1924); the Harmonious Organism (Bluntschli, 1964); the Red Desert (Goodland & Irwin, 1975); or merely The Jungle (Ferreira de Castro), which adds up to the meaning of the term Hyleia.7 (p. 21).

From the days of the first expeditions up and down the Amazon basin, to the contemporary crisis of environmental, social, economic chaos, many are the perceptions underlying the meaning of the Amazon. Although marked by an international perception which sees

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7 “Euclides da Cunha, Alberto Rangel, and Alfredo Ladislau were Brazilian writers. Ferreira de Castro was a Portuguese novelist. All wrote during the first decades of the twentieth century.” (Mendes, 1990, footnote on p. 21).
Amazônia as an exotic space, the same alien perspective emphasises deforestation problems and their consequences to the world climate, to the biodiversity and to native populations (Becker, 1992). As for the national perspective, Becker says that Brazil thinks of the Amazon frontier as an alternative space for peasants expelled from older agricultural land with the flow of nordestinos\(^8\) to Eastern Amazônia and southerners to Western Amazon. It was, according to the author:

the size of it and the difficult access to the region, the unavailability of information during the authoritarian regime, the velocity of occupation and non-systematisation of various and fragmented research studies that led to the perception of the Amazon as a rural area. (Ibid., p. 523).\(^9\)

Myth is very much part of the region but so are practical and real constraints such as those summarised by Becker (1992). In addition to a speedy urbanisation process, the Amazon frontier expansion is a phenomenon which is part of the overall process experienced by the country. To understand today’s Amazon is to observe the phenomenon of its occupation as part of “... Brazil’s insertion in the global capitalist system in the period post-Second World War in a context of national developmentalism.” (Ibid., p. 531).

**Historical, economic, political and social perspectives**

The history of Amazônia is marked by long periods of extractive economy and mercantilism since the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil in 1500 (Messias Franco, 1992). One of the most important periods in this economy based on such primary activities took place during the Rubber Boom. Between 1840 and 1910, the Amazon held the monopoly on the product. It was only in the mid-twentieth century that this basic economy experienced some change.

The arrival of Europeans in the Amazon basin was the direct result of Iberian conquests in the New World. The Amazon estuary was taken by Vicente Yánez Pinzón who named it Rio Santa Maria de la Mar Dulce, “the fresh water sea or river-sea” (Mendes, 1992, p. 22). The year was 1500 and, as had been established between Portuguese and Spanish through the Treaty of Tordesilhas (1494), the land located between the Cape Verde archipelago and the meridian located 370 leagues to the west (46° west) belonged to Portugal (Mendes, 1992). All the land to the west of that imaginary line belonged to Spain.

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\(^8\)**Those from North-eastern Brazil.**

\(^9\)**My translation.**
The union of Portuguese and Spanish Crowns between 1580 and 1640 allowed the penetration of the region by Lusitanians (men of Portugal). Thus, even after the Restoration, the region belonged to the Portuguese though the right of possession (utis possidetis) which allowed the belligerents to keep what had been, by them, acquired. The Treaty of Madrid signed in 1750 settled the matter. In the hands of the Portuguese, the Amazon had come to represent 60 percent of the independent Brazil in 1822. (Mendes, 1992).

The travels of Francisco Caldeira de Castelo Branco and Pedro Teixeira after the union of the Crowns facilitated the Portuguese possession of the region. Caldeira Castelo Branco founded Belém at the Delta of the Amazon in 1616 and Teixeira sailed up the river in 1638. The Spanish such as Francisco Orellana and Pedro de Ursa and Lope de Aguirre explored the region in the opposite direction (west to east).

The Indian population at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500 is estimated to have been five million inhabitants. As described by Hannum (1990), “The history of genocide and exploitation, coupled with deaths from European illnesses, is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that Brazil’s Indian population today is approximately 220,000, or 1.5 % of the total Brazilian populations.” (p. 412). Believed to have been in the region for “more than ten thousand years B.C.” (Mendes, 1992), the Indians no doubt suffered the effects of colonisation. According to Mendes (1990), “The contact between Europeans and natives started the process of decimation and deculturation ... in a process largely resembling what occurred all over the Americas.” (p. 23). In total, there are 206 Indian nations in Brazil. Today, the Indian population between the states of Pará and Amapá does not reach 17,000. They belong to four main family groups: Tupi, Jé, Karib e Aruak.

**Land problem: the hand of the State**

Public policy concerning the Amazon is seen by many scholars as episodic, “spasmodic” and suffering from the long known disease in administration: the lack of continuity (Messias Franco, 1992). The author traces the history of the Amazon and divides it, similar to what

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10 Other sources such as CIMI (Missionary Council of Indigenous Population) and FUNAI (the Brazilian government agency in charge with Indian affairs) estimate the remaining population in 320,000 Indians in the whole of the country (O Liberal, 19/4/97).

11 Source: CIMI, as published in O Liberal, 19/4/97.
Santos (1984) had done before, in two distinct periods. The differences between the authors’ classifications will become clear as the scenario unfolds. They are more of a methodological nature as Messias Franco’s second phase stops in the 1950s and Santos’ second phase carries on until contemporary times.

In Messias Franco (1992), one first moment of developmentalist policy reaches the region through the action of the Marquis of Pombal, appointed War and Foreign Affairs Secretary, in 1750, by Dom José I, King of Portugal. The Marquis, a powerful figure in the Portuguese Crown structure, created the Royal (or General) Company of Grão-Pará and Maranhão which kept the monopoly of navigation and commerce, exporting rice, timber, salt and cotton as well as the trafficking of African slaves. Messias Franco’s second period is characterised by the rubber cycle.

It is necessary to discuss the role of land property as it is the major underlying issue of the Amazonian history and important in the region’s current crisis. Possession of the land has been an unsolved matter in the region’s history. It is important to highlight the origins of the land property legislation in Brazil as it has a direct impact on the continuing state of conflict since the Colonial times (Santos, 1984) until the contemporary crisis in Amazonia and the rest of Brazil.

Santos (1984) divides the “short history of the Amazon” into two stages. The first phase is comprised by the years when Brazil held the status of Portuguese Colony and for Santos the classification starts in 1616. This year marks the start of the first period with the foundation of Belém and covers two centuries until two years after Brazil’s independence in 1822. The second period starts in 1824 and runs until nowadays. During the first period the most important trend related to the rise in the concentration of large stretches of land in the hands of individuals. It was the start of the era of the latifúndio.
Economic activity in the region was of a two-fold nature between 1616 and 1824. The first type was based on extractive activities which different from today’s “contributed little to a dynamic economy [that of the country as a whole at the time]” (Santos, 1984, p. 442). The second nature of economy in the region was based on the missionaries’ (mostly Jesuits) initiatives in agriculture and cattle raising. Their resulting profits were reinvested in the established villages.

The *sesmarias* law arrived in Brazil with the Portuguese. During Colonial times, the Crown conceded large grants allowing the use of land. It was a provisional arrangement under which the beneficiary would have to comply with certain conditions, otherwise the land would go back to the hands of the Crown. The inequality in land ownership started given that only those with extensive capital and abundant work force (usually enslaved Indians and later on Africans) were be able to comply with the requirements of productivity. Thus, only the elites were able to maintain the land. Big property in itself reinforced slavery as the land grants demanded intensive labour (Santos, 1984).

Faced with the abundance of land, there was no specific limit to the amount of land held in a *sesmaria*. Inequality in the distribution of land already constituted a source of complaint at the time. With the increasing pressure for land exerted by migrant families “pushed off lands granted to individuals by the Crown” (Santos, 1984, p. 443), the need for reform was already felt. With the arrival of Dom João VI, King of Portugal to Brazil in 1821, the decision to expropriate uncultivated land was delayed until the Convocation of the General Constitutional Assembly in 1824. Although intended to do so, the declaration of independence of Pará in 15th August 1823\(^{16}\) did not stop the granting of land under the *sesmarias* system. The system continued in the region until 1824. With the 1824 Constitution, the illegalities committed by grantees were officially recognised and they were now guaranteed the right to private ownership. Unless grantees received compensated, the land could not expropriated. (Santos, 1984).

A second period of the history of the Amazon is marked by the occupation of the abandoned extensive portions of land originated in the *sesmarias* system. There seemed to have been little public “will to control its own properties” and the unoccupied lands “lent themselves to

\(^{16}\) A direct result from Cabanagem, a native revolution which freed Pará from Portuguese rule for a period of five years.
occupation by both small and large posseiros,\textsuperscript{17} or squatters" (Santos, 1984, p. 445). Thus, came into existence the region's first small farmers. The demand for labour to work in the latifúndios into which the sesmarias had been transformed was far from met after Pará's emancipation. Indians were no longer enslaved and as they moved into the hinterland escaping subjugation, they, themselves away from their tribal living, were in need of land to subsist (Santos, 1984).

The land problem had not subsided with an Imperial Law and "at the time of the proclamation of the Republic,\textsuperscript{18} land tenure in Pará was still in disarray ... The simple occupation of land was the principal method of acquiring land by peasants and large landowners alike ..." (Santos, 1984, p. 448). There had been earlier attempts to force land occupiers to legalise tenure, but costly legal fees prevented many small farmers from legalising their land occupancy. Again only big landowners could pay for the fees and had enough resources to pay for the land.

With the rise to the status of a Republic, a new Constitution was proclaimed in 1891. It endorsed private property and guarded from expropriation of uncultivated land unless compensation was put forward. In Pará, the state legislation again benefited the retention and extension of the latifúndio. Only this time the greater pieces of land were composed of native rubber groves. (Santos, 1984).

**Public policy: a State take-over**

Government after government has attempted to develop Amazônia. There are many historical events which reveal the official line of discourse. One of them is President Getúlio Vargas' Amazonian speech delivered in Manaus, in 1940. In Wagley's (1990) words:

... he announced the determination of Brazil to develop the Amazon. But World War II intervened, and it was not until 1965 that the isolation of the region from the rest of Brazil was ended by the completion of the Belém-Brasília Highway.\textsuperscript{19} (p. xiii).\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} Emphasis added. Those who live on the land without holding its title.

\textsuperscript{18} The Brazilian Republic came about in 1889 via a military coup.

\textsuperscript{19} The Trans-Amazon Highway was not the first major road opening. In the 1950s, government, not yet taken by the military, but already full of ideals of grandeur and development, opened the Belém-Brasília highway. It was the first terrestrial connection of the Amazon with the rest of the country.

\textsuperscript{20} From the preface to Lisansky's (1990) book.
Until the decision to build the Belém-Brasília highway in 1956, the peasantry and large landowners faced separate legislation and their matters were dealt with by different government agencies. Among many of the consequences of the opening of the road, one of more immediate but also of lasting effect was the increase in the size of public lands. Immigration was largely stimulated and this brought to the region individuals from all of the country’s regions making a direct impact on the diversity of interests stemming from various social backgrounds (Santos, 1984).

More recently, land speculation has become wide spread and public lands which had been sold in a total of 35,000 hectares between 1949 and 1953, almost doubled that figure between 1954 and 1958. By 1962, the Brazilian economy had “entered a crisis that cut off other investment options. In addition, inflation rose at a rate that continually increased the cost of material goods.” (Santos, 1984, p. 452). Thus, to transfer capital to Amazônia in the form of land purchased from government was a bliss of an investment allowing for the maintenance of value as well as carrying the potential for an increase in value (Ibid.). Official initiatives of development continued to take place and the year of 1953 marked the set up of SPVEA, the Superintendency for the Economic Valorisation Plan of the Amazônia.21 It was seen as a starting point of the more recent development strategies in the region.

Many distortions have developed throughout times to define the profile of poor and less cared for regions in the country. In one way, the condition of “poor” is no more than an irony. One of the richest states in Brazil in terms of its natural resources is the State of Pará. But the riches have created an increasing social debt, only accentuated by ill-fated occupation. The failure to maintain the work force in the hinterland brought it to the urban areas where deep poverty is an understatement of reality. According to Aragón (1994), migration22 in the Amazon area has contributed to the worsening of the concentration of land ownership, rural violence and drug trafficking. It is also a fact that rural families forced out of the hinterland by the above factors, have intensified the swelling of urban areas.

21 This agency was transformed into SUDAM, the Superintendency for the Development of Amazônia, in the 1970s.
Who is indebted to the Amazon?

Aside from the centuries-long economic and social debts, another major debt of development policies is that with the environment as a whole. The Amazon basin covers 7.5 million square kilometres, an area affected by high levels of humidity and containing the largest flood-plain forest in the world. Surrounded by the Andes in the west and the Guyana and Brazilian Shields formations to the north and south, the area has very poor soil. Ninety percent suffers from the deficiency of phosphorous, 50 percent from low potassium reserves and 24 percent is affected by poor drainage and flood hazards (Hecht & Cockburn, 1989). According to Foy & Daly (1992), among the greatest components of the Amazonian environmental crisis are "... deforestation,\textsuperscript{23} loss of biological diversity, threats to survival of the remaining Amerindians, and the contribution of rainforest clearing to carbon dioxide induced climate warming." (p. 55).

The development of the infrastructure, mainly the construction of roads, opened the doors to a wide range of primary economy activities. Fiscal incentives and tax holidays comprised a major part of public policies. These instruments attracted investment to the Amazon and facilitated much of the consolidation of extractive activities. Pará is the state with greatest level of environmental damage carried out in name of development.\textsuperscript{24} The state exports iron ore, timber, bauxite, gold, china clay, black pepper, silicon, shrimp. Of the total 470,000 square kilometres of deforested areas in Legal Amazon, 160,000 square kilometres are located within the state's limits.\textsuperscript{25} Deforestation is concentrated along the roads and in areas such as Southern Pará.

According to the Instituto Socioambiental (Social-Environmental Institute), Pará State produces "64 percent of the total of 1 million cubic metres per year in volume of timber exported between 1985 and 1990."\textsuperscript{26} (p. 81). Because "There is no mahogany left outside Indian land" (Ibid., p. 81), Indian territory constitutes the target of loggers.

\textsuperscript{23} "Significant deforestation of Amazônia started in the 1970s with the construction of highways and deliberate governments attempts to develop Amazônia (Mahar, 1979). Deforestation statistics gathered using RADAM [Radar in Amazônia] Landsat satellite images estimate that the total cleared area increased from 0.9 per cent in 1975 to 2.4 per cent in 1978, to 4.0 per cent in 1980. The deforested area of 125,000 square kilometres in 1980 was estimated to be 600,000 square kilometres in 1988, 12 percent of Amazônia Legal." (Foy & Daly, 1992, p. 55-56).

\textsuperscript{24} O Liberal, 15/11/96, 25/12/96.

\textsuperscript{25} National Institute for Aerospace Research (INPE), as appearing in <http://www.inpe.br/amazonia/desflora/html>, in August, 1996.

\textsuperscript{26} My translation.
An overall assessment of environmental damage in the region was carried out by a team of experts and published in the Brazilian Report\textsuperscript{27} for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio 92. A detailed table is produced where major potentially damaging activities are listed such as gold prospecting, industrial mining, agriculture and cattle raising, construction of hydroelectric power dams (Balbina and Tucurú, are the most important ones) and roads (Belém-Brasília, Trans-Amazon, Santarém-Cuiabá, among others), installation of a variety of industries such as those of electronics in the Manaus free trade zone,\textsuperscript{28} aluminium and pig iron production (this industry alone consumes annually the equivalent to 700,000 tons of vegetal coal),\textsuperscript{29} hunting and fishing and internal migration.

Among the major types of degradation, the document lists: air and water pollution, landscape, vegetation and animal life destruction, desertification, socio-economic impacts such as the rise of urban populations to as much as 40 percent rise in cities in the 1970s and 1980s in what can be characterised as a demographic explosion, population displacement, disordered occupation of land, rise in energy consumption, drastic reduction of animal stock (particularly turtle species), extinction of a number of aquatic species, continuing burning of forest areas, propagation of endemic diseases, destruction of Indian culture.

So is the Amazon manageable? Sustainable? With the social and environmental debts acquired, this is hardly the case. In what Guimarães (1991) calls ecopolitical pessimism and optimism, there are different ways of approaching the future. According to the author, there are no material impediments in putting sustainable development practices in place. Problems seem to arise from the framing of social problems within the tenets of national security. In this context, "'national' interests take precedence over policies for the environment. On the international level this leads to die-hard upholding of sovereignty, thereby hindering multilateral action to deal with environmental problems." (Ibid., p. 111)

The inheritance from the Portuguese of a system of land distribution favoured a reduced number of land proprietors resulting in serious environmental damage. Such distortion has been reinforced throughout Brazilian history. Concentration of land in the hands of a few is by

\textsuperscript{27} "O Desafio do Desenvolvimento Sustentável" ("The Challenge of Sustainable Development"), published by a Brazilian Government special commission, in December 1991.
\textsuperscript{28} Implemented in 1967.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Pará Desenvolvimento}, n. 20-21, jun. 1987.
far the most important factor in the country's unequal distribution of income. According to the economist Joelmir Betting, the concentration of land nowadays is greater than that of income. Fifty percent of private land belongs to 2 percent of owners (Veja, Dec. 1996). Back in the mid 1980s, Santos (1984) had already argued that economic growth observed in Brazil in the second half of the 1970s and its numbers "... question the drastic concentration of landholdings and of income ... Nor ... reveal anything about the rapid increases in land conflicts ... in rural Amazônia ..." (p. 454).

Messias Franco (1992) argues that the Post-Second World War years constitute the beginning of the "integration of Brazilian Amazônia in the national development process." (p. 585). This argument leads to the analysis of the concept of development extensively discussed in the theoretical framework chapter. For now, it is important to recall Maybury-Lewis' (1984) analysis who argues that assimilation and integration are two completely different stages. He calls on Amazonian countries to "tolerate the idea of different customs without considering them as a bar to citizenship." (p. 132). The author also outlines arguments on the meaning of development in the specific setting of Brazil as he argues that "The Brazilian model ... is close to being regarded as some sort of a Western disaster ..." (p. 130). For him, the argument that development "must go into Indian lands and if necessary annihilate the Indians to get at the resources" (p. 130) has proved totally flawed. Maybury-Lewis argues that "This particular ideology is a poor justification for the dispossession of smallholders or the elimination of Indians." (p. 131). To say that the Amazon of the 1950s was forced into the "national development project" might be, then, closer to reality.

The contemporary authoritarian element

Interest in exploiting the Amazon had been long-standing in Brazil. Little remained accomplished toward such a goal until the late 1950s. But the worst of all developmentalist attempts came in contemporary times. The greatest of impacts felt in the region came at the time the doctrine of National Security was embraced by the country's military in the 1960s.

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30 My translation.
31 The contemporary scenarios of Brazil and of the Amazon have been based on a collective work "Ditadura, Democracia e Amazônia" ("Dictatorship, Democracy and Amazônia"), written by a group of Brazilian students, including myself, for an International Postgraduate Degree in Development of Amazonian Areas, at the Federal University of Pará, in 1988/89. Full reference provided under Galvão et al. (1988).
The organisation of the Brazilian State was worked out from the original French school of counter revolution developed from the Algerian War. Such a doctrine was adopted by the military education maintained by the USA in Panama. It served the purpose of disseminating the principles of National Security to countries in South America thought to be at risk of being taken over by communist, socialist rebels. Later on, in the early 1970s, Brazil's National Security Council (CSN) intervened as a guerrilla movement was found in action in Southern Pará and Northern Goiás (Santos, 1984, p. 455). The CSN was in charge of approving projects to be implemented in the region and, after the guerrilla period, kept its power.

What was a regional administrative matter of government, became one of military intervention (Santos, 1984). The newly introduced doctrine was seen as a tool for enforcing authoritarian rule and breaking the autonomy of member-states of the Brazilian Federation. The extent of the dismantling of what was a North American model of federation led to the appointment of governors until then elected via direct vote. This was one among many consequences of the authoritarian military regime which came to power with a coup in 1964. The effects were mostly felt in regions which, due to economic reasons and lack of political leadership, had less influence on political decision-making.

The government created structures to exercise control over local governments and launched a variety of initiatives which became known as the *Great Projects*. The agencies were set up consistent with the development concept and discourse in place at the time. All agencies in charge of regional affairs received the name of Superintendency for the Development of the Amazon (SUDAM), Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE) and that of the Central -Western (SUDECO). These were and still are the three poorest regions in the country.

The official strategy to develop the region and occupy its territory did not stop at the reorganisation of government-centralised powers. There was growing centralisation of decision-making in federal government hands. Whole plans to occupy the "emptiness" of regions such as the Amazon were put forward. As the argument for the need to defend the region from being taken from Brazil altogether and a for a more real need to take pressure for land out of regions such as that of the South, the Amazon was seen as the perfect choice for
occupation. To develop the region meant to open roads, establish minimum infra-structure for new settlers. The region was also seen in its dimension of "warehouse" allowing provision of raw goods from timber to minerals and water resources that played a major role in the production of energy for exploitation purposes. The 1970s marked the officialisation of the spontaneous migration movements in the region. The officialisation came with the centralised approach where agencies such as INCRA, FUNAI, ITERPA, GETAT proliferated as an outcome of the National Plan of Integration (PIN).

The lack of an appropriate assessment of the quality of soil mostly employed in agriculture was one of the many pitfalls of this effort of colonisation. Yet another myth had been cultivated that of Amazonian soil fertility and suitability for agriculture. As a result of the incentives policies "... the region disintegrated ... Substantial new migratory flows headed to Amazônia ... Between 1970 and 1980, the regional population grew at an annual rate twice as high as that of the nation as a whole ..." (Mendes, 1992, p. 28). Lack of maintenance of the installed infra-structure of roads, schools and medical assistance represented yet other pitfalls of the colonisation project. Criticism originating in international arenas and regarding the destruction of regional ecosystems arose.

In 1974, the creation of POLAMAZÔNIA was an attempt to remedy the disorganised and unplanned fashion of occupation. The idea was to create activity-oriented niches of development. Based on cattle raising, timber exploitation and mining, among others, the new programme explored what were seen as the potentials of the region's resources as a form of justification for the tampering with the Amazonian ecology.

According to Castro & Acevedo (1989), the passage of the nineteenth century saw the consolidation of an extractive economy based on rubber collection. Political compromise built between the local oligarchy and national groups was consolidated in the form of land property rights. Consolidation also became a fact in the control of commerce and transport as well as that of a work force employed in the extraction of rubber. These activities represented

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32 Besides the Belem-Brasilia and the Trans-Amazon, the transport system was expanded with the opening of other roads such as the Cuiabá-Santarém and the Northern Perimetral.  
33 National Institute for Colonisation and Agrarian Reform.  
34 Land Institute of Pará State.  
35 Executive Group for Araguaia-Tocantins Land Affairs.
symbols of economic and political power and added to the “rigid centralisation of decision making”.

The centralisation of power had also weakened the local oligarchy. Traditional elites had become fragmented with the diversification of economic activities, the increasing urbanisation and moves towards industrialisation in the previous three decades (Emmi, 1988). The disordered colonisation and cattle raising and mining activities taken forward by corporations partially dismantled the local oligarchy. It would take time for them to recover. This recovery would be in the forms of alliances with some of the economic interests newly arrived in the region.

There were many regional actors who suffered the consequences of changing times: small farmers had their right to the land taken away again; the Amazonian peasant; the caboclo, suffered the consequences of capital expansion in the region which pushed them away from traditional production activities; and Indian territory was targeted by small farmers, land speculators, large corporations as well as informal labour represented by loggers and gold prospectors (Santos, 1984).

Overall the government was sending out equivocal signs. Legislation as well as the goals of the National Integration Programme (PIN) were said to be in favour of small farmers. But major action was taken revealing the paradoxical nature of decisions. According to Santos (1984), “... two undertakings symbolise conflicting multinational project on the Jari river, and the simultaneous creation of small-farmer colonisation programme along the Transamazônica highway. Economic, ecological, and administrative problems plagued both.” (p. 456). The Land Statute did nearly nothing to legalise land property and was mostly inept at ensuring threatened property rights. The judicial system failed the small farmers in the hinterland: “with the exception of the judges and juries, all other actors within the legal structure function on the basis of remuneration from the individual or firm involved.” (Santos, 1984, p. 457). The constituted power, the police, is of no help as they “generally connive with

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36An early project was the Jari scheme, set up in 1967 by the American billionaire, Daniel K. Ludwig. “Occupying some 3.6 million hectares of land near the mouth of the River Amazon it had, by the early 1980s, built up a diverse range of operations ... Ludwig put his total investment in Jari at US$ 600 million .... However, owing to a combination of economic setbacks attributed to substantial shortfalls in rice and timber due to the limitations imposed by the fragile environment, together with the growing public concern over the secretive nature of Ludwig’s operations, Jari was eventually purchased in 1982 by a consortium of twenty-two Brazilian businessmen ... (Hall, 1989, p. 8). Emphasis added.
thugs, are prone to the excessive use of force and nearly always work against peasants.” (Ibid., p. 457).

Santos like other scholars saw what the future was preparing: “Ultimately the rural workers in Brazil will demand the substitution of the traditional judiciary for a corps of specialised magistrates.” (Ibid., p. 458-459). The organisation of the Landless Workers Movement (MST), considered one of the most important and active social movements of the century in Brazil and with increasing action in Amazônia, wants more than that. It demands a total shake up of the land structure in Brazil. They are themselves making that take place, forcing the government into acting to ensure their right to a plot of land. “As it [MST] defies property rights and threatens the structure of power, [MST] carries the spirit of an authentic social revolution.” (Klintowitz, 1997, p. 52).

Criticism and debate in many arenas

The opening of Brazilian society with redemocratisation gave rise to the articulation of information flows based on the co-operation between NGOs, grassroots and environmental movements in the country and their counterparts in Europe and North America. As a result, debate about regional affairs has taken over the public arenas to an extent never before observed. As Gross (1990) puts it, such debate is expressed in “... an increased media coverage of Brazilian Amazon affairs and public familiarity with the apparent crisis in the Amazon at least with its symptoms if not with the causes.” (p.2).

Increasing advocacy of sustainable development, criticism of international agencies investment in the Amazon and growing media and diplomatic pressure cornered Brazil in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Supported by a nationally and locally organised civil society, many voices have risen to criticise government measures. The Amazon had been transformed “into cause célèbre all over the world. Pictures of forest fires in areas of dense forest circulate in the press and on the television screens of all countries.” (Mendes, 1992, p. 29).

37According to Gross (1990), “... between 1964 and 1985, 1104 rural workers and their supporters (lawyers, church workers, community activists) were assassinated ... A substantial proportion of these murders occurred in land disputes in Amazônia ...” (p. 22).
Individual critics have always been present in the discussion of the region’s affairs, but the deconstructing of local oligarchy added to by the conflicts in the interior, gave rise to social movements such as those of the rural workers. The organisation of syndicates and the support of institutions such as the Church\footnote{D. Pedro Casaldáliga one of the most active bishops in the region has published many works discussing the role of the Church in the land conflict. See reference list.} allowed for social reaction (Santos, 1984; Castro & Acevedo, 1989; Gross, 1990). At the same time, the military had identified the weakening of the regime and the pressure for amnesty which finally came in 1979. The signs of economic failure had started to show: “Large sectors of business and industry had begun to dissociate themselves from the government, and previously docile politicians had become rebellious.” (Guimarães & Amaral, 1988, p. 126).

The abertura (opening) of the military regime in its first steps towards democracy had to allow room for civil society in the region to manifest itself against the absurdities of government policy. As the regime began to fall, the opposition took advantage of the mood of change. At the local level, more specifically in Belém, the rupture in the right wing party became a reality with the rift between its two major leaders, Jarbas Passarinho and Alacid Nunes. The governor’s election brought to power opposition candidate, Jáder Barbalho, with the political support of Alacid Nunes.

But the regional struggle had different fronts, the Indian communities, the rural workers and civil and professional entities such as the regional sections of Brazilian Association of Anthropology (ABA) and of the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science (SBPC) and at the local level the Professional Association of Amazonian Geologists (APGAM), the Professional Association of Sociologists (APS), the Belém Neighbourhoods Commission (CBB), and the Paraense Society for the Defence of Human Rights (SPDDH).

Locally, the period of re-democratisation is marked by direct elections of governors and mayors. The electoral campaign widened the debate of regional affairs. Autonomy was slowly returning and the states were regaining the revenue resulting from taxation and royalties charged over the exploitation of natural resources. The elaboration of the states’ new Constitutions in 1989 also created the atmosphere and the necessary space for the discussion of local diverse interests.
According to Mendes (1992), public debate of Amazonian affairs in international arenas has had its impact locally. The environmental movement "... has had repercussions in the preparation of the new Brazilian constitution\(^{39}\) ..." (Ibid., p. 30). One of the most recent episodes took place in 1989 when the Xingu river hydroelectric complex was stopped\(^{40}\) (Gross, 1990; Mendes, 1992). Overall, there has been continuous questioning of development policy in the Amazon expressed in public arenas such as the media.

Several authors mention the media pressure as a most relevant component in the discussion of Amazonian affairs (Ferreira Reis, 1963; Gross, 1982; Feldman, 1989; Castro & Acevedo, 1989; Ozório de Almeida, 1991; Gross, 1990; Kosinski & Pádua, 1992; Mendes, 1992; Schmink, 1992; Palmer, 1993; Beltrão, 1994 and 1996; Andersson & Pertoft, 1996). In an analysis by the Brazilian government (CIMA, 1991), it is noted that "Until 1970, the discussion of environmental problems was rarely present in the press ..."\(^{41}\) (p. 87). According to this assessment, "The environment was not news because social awareness needed political expression" which was gained from the second half of the 1970s when "small groups of militants in major cities of the country emerge to denounce urban degradation problems and to protect the remaining native vegetation." (Ibid., p. 88). At the same time, "the Amazon became the object of concern of environmental groups in the South and Southeast [of Brazil], who transformed the region in symbol of struggle against a lifestyle which implies the destruction of nature." (Ibid., p. 88). The action of such movements marked the beginning of the construction of the environment as a social problem within the Brazilian public domain. This was mostly possible through their increasing use of media channels to voice their concerns.

Public opinion has become a centre argument to those studying the Amazonian scenario. In 1971, a national circulation weekly magazine, \textit{Realidade}\(^{42}\), published the following results of Brazilian perception of the Amazon:\(^{43}\) 67 percent of the sample "believe the Amazon is danger of falling under foreign control"; 42 percent think \textit{Cabanagem} is a type of housing construction\(^{44}\) when in fact it "is the name of the biggest bloodshed in Brazilian history of political rebellion"; 46 percent think that the Amazon holds less than 30 percent of Brazilian

\(^{39}\) The Constitution dates of 1988. It is currently being revised.

\(^{40}\) See chapter VI for journalistic views on the matter.

\(^{41}\) My translation.

\(^{42}\) October 1971, Year VI, n. 67.

\(^{43}\) Poll carried out in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre, located in the Southeast and South regions of the country.

\(^{44}\) \textit{Cabana} in Portuguese means shack, hut.
territory; 61 percent think the Trans-Amazon highway cuts through or is located close to Manaus when in fact the highway and city “are as far apart as Rio and São Paulo”.

Twenty years later, according to information published in the Brazilian Report to the UN Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development (CIMA, 1991), national and regional election polls in 1989 and 1991 that carried questions on ecology revealed: that the environment as a problem came after inflation, health, education and unemployment; that in rural areas, the demand for industrialisation was far greater than concern shown to environmental matters as a result of industrial development; that among the environmental issues of greater concern, deforestation appeared as the primary concern in both urban and rural areas (Ibid., p. 157). A study undertaken in 1989, considered the construction of the highway connecting the Brazilian Amazon to Peru and the Pacific Ocean. In the findings, the majority of interviewees expressed concern about the protection of the environment, criticised the government action in the area and was convinced that what motivated international interest in the protection of Amazônia was the exploitation of Brazilian natural resources (Ibid., p. 157).

By 1989, with the results of the general elections when the right wing candidate Fernando Collor de Mello won over the Workers Party candidate Luís Ignácio (Lula) da Silva, international interest was again taking major proportion over the on-going problems in the Amazon. The assassination of rubber tappers leader, Chico Mendes, originated an outcry. As Feldmann (1989) puts it: “The preservation of Amazônia is an imperative of ethical and constitutional nature and in no way conditioned to any external order.” He was referring to the press coverage of an alleged campaign orchestrated by “First World countries in favour of the internationalisation of Amazônia ... and the re-enactment in Congress of the ‘The Amazon is ours’ (similar to what had been done in the case of an oil) campaign by representatives of all ideological orientations ...” According to the author, himself a member of Congress, “the nationalist wave allows for public opinion to believe that all efforts to denounce the devastation of the region is part of a conspiracy against the Brazilian State and our sovereignty over the Amazonian territory.”

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45 Roughly 600 km.
46 From an article Folha de São Paulo, 3/8/89. My translation.
47 Folha de São Paulo, 3/8/89.
According to Ozório de Almeida (1991), in the 1980s, the process of occupation of the Amazon was transformed into a comprehensive and complex affair. The expected agriculture expansion was not so much true in the Amazon as it became the case in the Central Western region of the country. Nevertheless, the demand for land became politicised and the violence and conflicts increased. The National Plan for Agrarian Reform (PNRA) proved incapable of settling interests. The landless were already a rising force and “The permanence of the posseiros ... demonstrates the extent of the local oligarchy powers.” (Emmi, 1988, p. 163). Ozório de Almeida (1991) adds to this scenario by saying that “Simultaneously, the transformation world-wide and the national economic crisis, reduced federal government ability to gather resources both internally and externally to proceed with building of more infra-structure.” (p. 607). Such dependency on external (private) capital and international organisations loans whether associated or not with local investment called attention to Brazil’s increasing problems. According to Ozório de Almeida (1991): “The more frequent presence [in the region] of business, non-governmental organisations, scientists, as well as journalists and opinion leaders, both national and foreign, increased the volume and diversity of activity and information about the region.” (p. 607).

Nationally, the growth of a specialised press and the increased television and radio coverage of the environment is more noticeable from the 1980s onwards (CIMA, 1991). This is true as the environmental theme became more prominent in the news. Before this increase in interest about the issue, environmental issues were not as explicitly mentioned in the media. The theme appeared only in a subtle form, incorporated in the discussion of Indian and land ownership issues.

After the hype of the Rio 92 Summit, came the impeachment of Collor de Mello and his deputy took office. Itamar Franco, the new president, faced many periods of crisis. One of these moments of crisis was the massacre of Yanomami Indian in 1993 which ultimately triggered the creation of a Ministry of the Amazon headed by a diplomat. The new minister, Rubens Ricupero, was seen as a strategic choice as he knew the intricacies of the Amazonian diplomacy as he had been a key player at the time of the signing of the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty (ACT). The diplomacy was also put to work as the Brazilian image was

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48 My translation.
badly damaged in international eyes. This was a bad omen if the country were to get any external financial aid to deal with the Amazonian problem of devastation.49

Amazônia in focus: Brazilian and regional media scenarios

If it is true that no other part of the Earth has attracted international interest as much as the Amazon region, it is not a world effectively possessed. And when we say effectively possessed, we are referring not to the political possession, almost symbolical which the Amazon nations (Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador [sic], Colômbia and Venezuela) exercise. We refer to a domain from which results the utilisation of nature and its transformation from a page of the Genesis into a region humanised by the positive and enterprising presence of men. (Ferreira Reis, 1963).50

In the Amazonian scenario, a theme strikes a chord over and over again: land, land, land, conflicts, ownership, use, management, abundance, concentration, lack of.51 The agrarian crisis (Hall, 1989) is the underlying issue in all of Amazonian matters today: "... by adopting a blatantly latifúndio-biased strategy during the 1960s ... the Brazilian State has made violent rural conflict an inevitable feature of life in the Amazon Basin." (p. 9).

But many other themes comprise the whole of what has come to be called the question of Amazônia. As Mendes (1992) says "... within Amazônia itself and outside the region, discussion is rife ... questions the motivation involved in the attitudes towards the question of Amazônia and the attitudes themselves." (Mendes, 1992, p. 31). As discussed by many of the authors to whom I have referred in the construction of this Amazonian scenario, public opinion, decision-making, interest, discussion and policy are key elements to understand and assess the state of affairs in the region today.

Much of the future of the Amazon is in the hands of those who are able to reconcile decades of environmental, economic, social, cultural devastation with the need to ensure the use of natural resources in a manner that allows for economic growth, social justice and assurance of continuing resources. To achieve such a goal implies debate where all segments of society can

49Any attempt to introduce new policies was not seen until 1995 with the new government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The Ministry of the Amazon conducted the restructuring and the National Council of Amazônia (CONAMAZ), a deliberative body which took on the reviewing the policy for the region.
50From the volume 1 of Amazônia-Bibliografia, 1963.
51Aside scholars in the field such as José de Souza Martins, Octávio Ianni, Barbara Weinstein, Alfredo Wagner Berno de Almeida, Roberto Santos, Marianne Schmink there are many other sources on land matters from the CPT (Pastoral Land Commission), to authors such as Lisansky (1990), Andersson and Pertoft (1996) with relevant studies in the field.
be heard or are able to make themselves heard. Becker (1992) argues that Amazônia was “born heterogeneous, constituted by an overlapping of various activities ...” (p. 530).52

The renewed wave of democracy that swept Latin America had reached Brazil after a long 25 years of military dictatorship. The result of contradictory and damaging policies was increasingly noticed. At the same time, social movements repressed during the regime re-emerged. The overall political and social scene was favourable to strike public debate and the practice of denunciation, common in 1970s, took a new breath in the 1980s.

Now, more than denouncing, social actors demanded participation in the decision making. As acknowledged by the Brazilian government in 1991, “The social imbalance and the unstable character of Latin American democracy have been the consequences not so much of insufficient resources or of the lack of economic dynamic forces, but of forms of distribution of available resources ... This eminently political challenge is to be faced through the building of alliances of various social groups in order to obtain the consensus necessary to reform public institutions.” (CIMA, 1991, p. 155).53

The media after the dictatorship seemed, among many, natural channels for the voicing of concerns and discussion of alternatives in the form of a number of proposals originating in the academic, in the political and other social arenas. According to a Brazilian polling agency, Datafolha, an opinion poll carried out in five capitals, in 1992, revealed that television among social institutions carried 80 percent of Brazilian society’s trust. In second and third position came radio and newspapers (Ramos, 1995). This is far from ensuring the voicing of the wide array of interests in society. As Caiafa (1994) argues, the press was bound to become “more and more dependent on advertising54 as the cost of newspaper production rose due to introduction of sophisticated technology.” (p. 81). This was a fundamental aspect in the loss of the critical ability of the press. The new tendency to commercialisation and depoliticisation was to remain in the contemporary Brazilian major press (Muniz Sodré, 1990).

52 My translation.
53 My translation.
54 Lavieren (1995) states that “A newspaper that cannot print public advertisements will go bankrupt, for the state is the largest advertiser in the market”. (p. 191). Though, speaking of markets in Argentina, this also applies to Brazil and most Latin American countries.
The developments in the press do not only relate to structure and organisation, but also have effects on the definition of the news agenda. With the increasing interest over the Amazon expressed internationally, Brazilians were ready to take part in the debate about regional issues. Such debate took place in many different arenas and had an even greater diversity of faces and interests at play than it had in the past. The environment had finally been constructed as a social problem with the many implications it carried such as increasing poverty. The exploitation of natural resources had proven inadequate to address the country's and the region's centuries-long problems. Moreover, the extraction of resources had brought destruction to one of the last world reserves. It was natural that the world felt threatened. What could be said of those who have to survive in the hinterland of the Amazon basin? There resides the bulk of the controversy over the exploitation of natural resources in the region.

It has been the social character of the environment problem that has pushed the theme into the news agenda. The media were forced by these developments and other of even more dramatic kind to add the environment to their news agenda. Some have made this more obvious by adding the theme to already existing science sections or else creating whole new sections dedicated to the environment. Others have continued to report on environmental issues as they had always done along with matters of health, infra-structure, economic activities. Only, now, news carries more emphasis on green issues and, thus, problems are more obviously identified as environment-related.

The more comprehensive picture of media systems in the country and in the region must be taken into account in the discussion of the Amazonian problem. It is important to provide an overview of the media scenarios in Brazil to locate the Amazônia in perspective. As observed by Straubhaar (1989), under the classic model of Siebert, Schramm and Peterson's four theories of the press "a number of very diverse systems are lumped together." (p. 140). In Brazil, the success of the corporate model of state and society influence the role of the media in various ways. As Straubhaar argues:

... aspects of corporatism seem to be combining with aspects of democracy and mass mobilisation politics in ways that shed light on the role of the media in constructing or undercutting ideological hegemony in heterogeneous, class-divided societies of Latin America. (p. 140).

In this resides the relevance of media analysis within the Brazilian and Amazonian contexts. Though, Straubhaar (1989), Guimarães & Amaral (1988), Amaral & Guimarães (1994) and
Motter (1994) study developments in the television sector within the new democratic times in Brazil, they provide some arguments which contribute to the understanding of the contemporary state of affairs of the country's media. The authoritarian regime recognised the importance of searching allies in the media and with rare and historic examples of resistance, many media complied.

One must consider that Brazil is quite distinct in the Latin American media scenario in the scale and form of its media structures. Television is a classical case of influence over policy-making levels (Straubhaar, 1989). According to Caiafa (1994), the private sector controlling the media and the government, though with different interests, support each other. The first needed the blessings of the regime to expand and the latter needed the media to disseminate its discourse of national integration. In the author's opinion, this is very much the underlying ideology in the country's media which is in line with the State's discourse about the Amazon.

For a variety of reasons discussed in detail in the Research Design (chapter IV), the press has been elected as the medium under analysis. The print medium is the most traditional and elitist among the media in Brazil (Morais, 1994; Sodré, 1968). It came to the continent as the new Colonial governments needed to record events and proclaim laws. Newspapers were intensely political right from the outset. Used to voice interests related to specific political factions, they could align with the government or exercise opposition in key events of the Brazilian political history (Melo, 1973). In moments such as the struggle for independence from Portuguese rule or the abolition of slavery and more recently in the resistance against military rule, the opposition role of the press has been remarkable. In this latter, the small press had a particular important role, playing a cat and mouse chase with censors and police who halted circulation (Kucinski, 1991).

For a country of Brazil's proportions (8.5 square kilometres and 160 million inhabitants), a most striking feature of the press is the relatively small circulation numbers. The newspapers with the largest circulation are Folha de Sao Paulo (530,797), O Globo (404,204), O Estado de Sao Paulo (390,760), O Dia (341,957). The considerable low circulation is due to the country's very dimension and the resulting difficulty and costly distribution conditions

55 Brazil's media is largely private and commercial.
56 Source: IVC (Circulation and Verification Institute), April 1996.
especially in more remote regions such as the Amazon. Thus, there are no national newspapers. According to Cole (1996), there are 323 daily newspapers published in Brazil.

Another striking characteristic of the media in the country is that of monopoly (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994). The press is part of networks owned by traditional media dynasties (Muniz Sodré, 1991; Caiafa, 1994): Chateaubriand's Associated Daily Newspapers with newspapers in almost every Brazilian state, the Mesquita Brothers, owners of O Estado de São Paulo, the Octávio Frias de Oliveira Group, owner of the Folha de São Paulo, and the Marinho's Globo enterprise, owner of O Globo. Each of these groups owns some other kind of media be they radio, television network/stations, publishing houses and news agencies. According to Muniz Sodré (1991), this is the perpetuation of a type of power inherited from Portugal: the enterprise is based on family interests but open to political alliances. Concentration of media ownership is point put as one of the most threatening, factors in the recent redemocratised Brazil (Lima, 1993a, 1993b & 1996; Motter, 1994; Amaral, 1994).

There are several national news agencies mostly owned by major southern newspapers such as Agência O Estado de São Paulo, Agência Folha, Agência Globo and Agência Jornal do Brasil. Agência Brasil is the federal government owned news agency. International news come through Associated Press (AP), Reuteurs and Agence France Press. A prolific market of magazines targeting specific segments as well as an array of media formats such as video, cable and satellite television, film and theatre represent a considerable part of the Brazilian media scenario.

**Local/Regional media**

I loosely use the terms local and regional media or press throughout the study. The character of the media in each distinct region of the country is of a local coverage and distribution. This applies to both Belém and Manaus. Circulation of Belém's newspapers in Manaus is extremely restricted and the opposite also applies. Though, local, they are sites to some of the most pervasive regional perspectives. O Liberal, the Belém-based newspaper, is representative of the affairs of the Eastern and most troubled portion of the Amazon. The Manaus-based, A Critica, covers affairs of the Western Amazon.

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57 Exception made to the South-eastern media which cover national news more thoroughly and disseminate that information through news agencies and television network news.
Founded in 1616, Belém is strategically located on the delta of the Amazon river. A convenient setting under colonial government eyes, the city early became an important reference in the Amazon. Manaus founded more than a century later, in 1755, stayed under the jurisdiction of the Grão Pará Province for a century, gaining autonomy in 1850 when the Capitania do Rio Negro acquired the status of Province.

Belém developed its commercial vein as a port of export and import of goods which, to some extent, it still holds today. The opening of the Amazon to international navigation did not happen until December 1866 (Santos, 1980). Since the days of the Barão de Marajó's 1895 accounts of the flourishing Belém in the nineteenth century, much has happened in the region. From the times when the facility of communication meant boats up and down the river as well as in the Atlantic to both Northern America and Europe, today's reality involves a plethora of media with satellite dishes and mobile phones present in the Amazonian hinterland. Many of the consumption standards of the rich countries have been introduced such as shopping centres and a variety of electronic equipment. The latter much facilitated by the production of electronic goods in the heart of the Manaus free trade zone (Albuquerque Barbosa, 1996).

At the end of the last century, Belém was "a city with 100,000 inhabitants, eight avenues, 87 streets, 64 travessas, 17 planned squares, 11 churches, 3 docks, 26 public buildings ... one great opera house, the best in Brazil ..." (Barão de Marajó, 1895, p. 389). In the city, a number of publications circulated among which five daily and two weekly newspapers (Ibid., p. 390).

The flourishing of Belém as the capital of the Province of Grão Pará was also revealed in the articulation of political life. In this, "... newspapers were the sewage of the political hatred ... discussion hardly ever escaped bitter language, defamation and insults." (Barão de Marajó, 1895, p. 386). A more contemporary author contributes to this impression: Albuquerque Barbosa (1996) reports on the foundation of the first newspaper in the region, O Paraense, in March 1822. "Born at the heat of the moment of political definitions" (Ibid., p. 2), the

58 José Coelho da Gama Abreu, Baron of Marajó.
59 The account dates to 1894.
60 Emphasis added. Smaller streets.
61 My translation.
62 My translation.
newspaper fits the classic classification of political journalism. In Pará, according to the author, "the press experienced great development in the beginning of the Imperial Period by dealing with the political struggles and the city's life as well as the Province's business." (Ibid., p. 2). Maybe more subtle than then, but not far from fitting the pattern, today's newspapers reveal the same "political creed ... animosities ... frequent struggles and ... armed intervention" (Barão de Marajó, 1895, p. 386). The Barão de Marajó also points out that, as time went by, there were improvements as "The press was directed by writers more knowledgeable of the good practice of polite discussion ..." (Ibid., p. 387).

By the time Manaus became the capital of the State of Amazonas, it was, according to Baena (In Barão de Marajó, 1895), a village of "eleven streets and one square" (p. 392) where the headquarters of the government along with the military hospital constituted some of the most important buildings. The population was of a total of 20,000 inhabitants of very diverse ethnicities (Indians, Europeans, African slaves and a whole array of mixed individuals). The city held a public library and a telephone station and many public monuments including "a meteorological observatory holding the most perfect instruments brought from Paris and London." (p. 393). Other construction was on the way. Observing the city's economic growth at the time, the Barão de Marajó considered that Manaus had the potential to become "one of the greatest cities in South America". (Ibid., p. 393).

The first Manaus newspaper was founded almost three decades after Belém's O Paraense. It was named Cinco de Setembro in homage to the date of Manaus ascent from comarca63 to the status of Province. The readership was rather small as until the 1850s, most people in Amazonas spoke Nheengatú, an Indian language (Albuquerque Barbosa, 1996). Confirming other impressions exposed in this chapter, economic development caused the press conditions to flourish in Amazônia. According to data collected by the author, there were 347 titles edited between 1851 and 1908 in various towns and cities in the region.

Consonant with what has been the case in the rest of the country, in the nineteenth century, the regional press already played "an important role in the diffusion of ideas of progress as it related to the consumption of goods characteristic of the country's modernity." (Albuquerque Barbosa, 1996, p. 3). According to the author it was the arrival of the twentieth century that

63 Something of the equivalent of County status.
allowed the press to acquire a more informative approach. Perhaps resembling the patterns described by Ortiz (1989), Muniz Sodré (1990) and Caiafa (1994), it is in the first decade of the century that the press starts to lose its critical vein. The incorporation of the telegraph and the importance of the stock market to the regional rubber economy brought about the connection of the Amazon with the rest of the world (Albuquerque Barbosa, 1996). Other media such as the theatre - culture introduced with the building in Belém and Manaus of opera houses⁶⁴ - and photography were also noticed at the time (Ibid.). Radio was started in Belém in 1925 with the Rádio Club do Pará, the first in the region. Television came much later in the 1960s (Ibid.).

In the Amazon region, distribution costs faced by national circulation newspapers⁶⁵ have, among other factors, allowed for the establishment of a local press. The pattern of chains and family-owned business, such as what in the South, is repeated in the two major cities in the Region, Belém and Manaus. Businesses are family-oriented in regard to administration and to the parochial approach as to what is covered by the media they own. They have usually started with newspapers and have, throughout the years, expanded acquiring other media and have established themselves as chains.

The Maiorana family owns the only daily newspaper in Belém, O Liberal. The Sistema Romulo Maiorana de Comunicação (Romulo Maiorana Communication System) also owns the local Globo affiliated station, two radio stations (AM and FM) as well as an advertising agency. The Calderaro family owns a similar chain in Manaus, including a publishing house and the only daily newspaper in the city A Crítica.

O Liberal has a daily circulation of 90,000 which reaches 120,000 on Sundays, according to the Circulation and Verification Institute (IVC), in the end of 1996. A Crítica circulates some 50,000 daily and doubles that on Sundays, according to data released by one of its editors in mid-1995. O Liberal estimates a readership of 580,000 on weekdays and over one million on Sundays (Freire, 1997).

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⁶⁴ These among other buildings resulted from the rubber boom. Local elites raised many historical edifices, absolute symbols of economic power. European standards were copied as evidence of modernity. According to Hall (1989): "Magnificent private mansions and public buildings were constructed, including the US$ 2 million Manaus Opera House where Caruso performed, as well as a slightly less grandiose version in Belém. European imported goods were available to the wealthy as far up the Amazon as Iquitos in Peru. Such were the profits being made in 1906 the revenue from rubber paid off 40% of Brazil's annual debt." (p. 2).

⁶⁵ The only way the day's newspaper can reach the region is by air.
As a result of the family-run business arrangements, based on archaic models of organisation, and despite more recent attempts of professionalisation, there is a considerable level of improvisation in the administrative affairs of these media. Traditional administrative arrangements in family-run newspapers are perceived as a handicap in that they force material and economic restrictions. Ortiz (1989) sees their potential disappearance as a disadvantage. Family-run enterprises stand, according to the author, a better chance of applying creativity to news coverage than the mostly standardised press does.

The regional media today are as diverse as in any other part of the world. Connected to the world through television (network, cable, satellite), the Internet, making use of the latest technology (mobile phones are as common in Belém and Manaus as they are in London) to connect with the world, the region is maintaining its contradictions. Technology and modernity coexist with extreme poverty and disrespect for basic human rights. The contradictions also allow for the survival of alternative media such as the village market square “radio station”, an announcement service very common in the hinterland as well as in poor neighbourhood markets such as is the case in São Brás, Terra Firme and Sacramenta to mention a few located in Belém. “Voices in the speakers”, as Albuquerque Barbosa (1996) calls them, these community initiatives provide “news and entertainment” at some independent level.

The media overall and the press in particular are yet to experience major changes. Nassif (1997) argues that as a result of the political struggles, Brazil faces the next millennium with the need for a revised press. The journalist argues that “the press has a fundamental role as an element of control and improvement of other institutions.” He laments, though, that such a role lacks “journalistic quality”. Nassif places the ability to make the press change with the reader:

The reader is more demanding nowadays. The opening of markets to foreign groups will bring about the inevitable concern with quality ... There will be little space for amateurs ... for brilliantly written texts of irresponsible character which touch more the heart than they are able to inform, in the most authentic lusó-cultural tradition.67 (Ibid.)

66 Portuguese origin.
67 My translation from IstoÊ, 23/4/97.
In many ways, the regional press has looked into this new role and has tried to adjust to the new times and the greater variety of actors. At the same time, the Amazonian press has also tried to become more professional and comprehensive in its coverage of regional affairs. This has been partially possible through the arrival in the news rooms of graduates. Many argue that a University degree is no assurance of experience, but there is little doubt that systematic knowledge aids in the daily task of covering increasing complex issues about the Amazonian ecosystems. It is still a long way from achieving the standards of informative and analytical journalism.68

Conclusion

This chapter introduced a framework from which I depart to study the news coverage of regional affairs in the first half of the 1990s. By presenting broader political, economic, social and cultural aspects of Amazonian reality, I place the scenario within which contemporary problems are attributed meaning. The overview of regional history provides the necessary context within which the analysis of news that follows fits. In this scenario of the Amazonian life lie the key issues for understanding the processes of meaning construction under the influence of the regional media.

As this study set out to assess themes and actors covered by the regional press, it was fundamental to introduce underlying issues that will be further analysed in subsequent chapters. The geopolitical scene was the first step to establish the study's bearings. As I explore the relationships between the State and civil society portrayed in the Amazonian press, this chapter introduced how government proceeds in relation to the region. The hand of the State responsible for all decisions regarding the region has been confronted with new forms of social organisations at play in the region. Much of these movements' visibility has been possible through the media coverage. In discussing policy-making at earlier times, this chapter provides the background to the discussion of current trends reported in Amazonian newspapers.

I have also discussed the main characteristics of media in Brazil and Amazônia. This scenario gives the study the appropriate setting within which media roles, organisational, professional, 68These factors are discussed in detail in chapter VI which presents the analysis of interviews carried out with journalists active in the region.
and cultural developments are analysed in their impact on regional policy-making. The importance of identifying how meaning about development and environmental issues has been built in the Amazonian public arenas such as the press requires a multiple assessment of the region's history. The analysis of social institutions such as the State, civil society and the media introduces essential characteristics which connect to the current state of affairs in Amazônia as reported by the press in the early 1990s.
Chapter III
Democracy, Development and Policy-Making:
News Media and the Construction of Meaning

Introduction

As this study sets out to identify themes and actors in the news about environment and development in the Amazon's regional press,¹ I present a discussion of the main theoretical guidelines applied in the analysis. Some of the main concepts fundamental to studying the coverage of sustainable development issues in the Brazilian Amazon are democracy, development and news media. This research assesses how meaning around issues of environment and development is built in the Amazonian press. The study also explores links between media and policy-making on matters of development. Analysis of news content is viewed in the context of news production processes revealed by 30 journalists interviewed in the region. Another source of contextualisation is provided by the analysis of language appearing in the news. This latter methodological tool allowed for the identification of various narratives within development discourse in the region.

In line with Hilgartner & Bosk (1988), this study takes on the premise that media is the public arenas where discussion of social problems takes place and solutions have the potential to rise. Overall, the media are assessed in their potential as democratic institutions. In combination to that, I also consider the dynamic relations between State and civil society. It is fundamental, then, to point out what Habermas (1987b) says in relation to such dynamic processes. For him, there is a fundamental role played by audiences as “media publics hierarchise and ... remove restrictions on the horizon of possible communication.” (p. 197).

As I discuss the main constructs used throughout the work and the respective theoretical frames within which they fit, it is necessary to clarify the idea of region as it is applied here.

¹Newspapers chosen are O Liberal, published in Belém, and A Crítica, published in Manaus. Full detailed research methodology presented in chapter IV.
According to Bourdieu (1989), definitions of region and regional identity are based on objective criteria such as language, dialect and accent. It is also the result of mental representations, acts of perception, observation, knowledge and recognition, as well as symbolic representation via the use of objects such as flags, seals, etc.

Bourdieu (Ibid.) goes beyond the natural classifications applied to define the physical boundaries of a region. The author argues that there is nothing natural about frontiers, borderlines: “The frontier is never more than the product of a division which takes more or less hold on the reality of those which it groups together ...” (Ibid., p. 114). Even if the formal attempt is to make differences fade away within established boundaries, he argues that “The frontier as a legal act of delimitation produces cultural difference as much as it is a product of it ...” (Ibid., p. 115). Thus, though the Amazon is a region under the Brazilian federation, the multiplicity of cultural differences is remarkable.

Since this study targets a Latin American context, it is also indispensable to analyse narratives including those produced on the basis of their ethnic origins. Ethnicity is a factor in content, context and orientation of regional discourses. According to Barth’s (1969) definition, ethnicity is: “a form of social organisation, an organisational vehicle which may take on different contents at different times and in various sociocultural systems ...” The continuous movement of ethnic groups within and outside the “social boundary which defines the group with respect to other groups” (Ibid.), is essential to understand the dynamics with which actors analysed in this study move within the different frames of discourse identified.

Because of the official nature of the concept of region which has put together very diverse groups and, thus, interests, regional discourse is produced. Such discourse is marked by the variety of cultural values represented in the geographic and geopolitical space of the Amazônia. For Peet & Watts (1993), development discourses carry a characteristic of regionalisation for which examples coming from Asian and Latin America are of special

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1 My translation.
According to the authors, ideas and ways of thinking emerging from these settings have a direct impact on discourse-building about development. The authors recall the example of Dependency theory as it "... is part of a particular regional discursive formation containing a state-centric development discourse." (p. 236)

Authors such as Maybury-Lewis (1990) argue that development provides a frame of such an enlarged comprehensive nature that it has assumed the form of a religion against which no one is to rebel at the risk of being heretic. In the dogmatic nature of development, one adheres and is condemned to follow the religious language, the discourse. Given a neutral character, development is preferred as a terminology because it is less offensive, for instance, than accumulation or expansion of capitalism (Ribeiro, 1991). Attempts to bring local autonomy and endogenous knowledge to challenge imposed forms of development have led to the appearance of alternative models of development, among which, Ribeiro (Ibid.) argues, lies Environmentalism.5

As an ideology more or less imposed on to non-industrialised nations, development has shown over time the inability to meet social needs. Besides that inability, lie the contradictions of the obvious economic growth of some and the increasing poverty of many. Development as a concept allows for the materialisation of the main and contradictory outcome of actions and discourse based on it. Such contradictions are more readily noticed in the discrepant standards of living among various social segments. In the Amazonian rather complex and contradictory scenario, García (1992) argues that economic measures introduced by loan providers such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have made the gap between the poor and the rich even more obvious. Thus, structural problems crucial to the achievement of quality of life are "permeated by class contents ..." (p. 166).

Against this background, this chapter introduces the discussion about media, democracy and policy-making. It provides an overview of development concepts and environmental

5Anderson (1991) provides the necessary definition for two key concepts: Conservationism and Environmentalism: "While conservationism is essentially about preserving the natural environment, environmentalism embraces a whole political movement which challenges the basis of industrial man's relationship with nature" (p. 460). Within Environmentalism, "... different aspects of our relationship with nature are seen as interconnected. Rather than reflecting reality the 'environment' is a social construction and the media play a crucial role in defining how we view our relationship with nature." (Ibid., p. 461)
discourses. Focus on media is based on Palmer's (1993) argument that "In terms of ideology, what journalists say about the environment in contemporary public discourse . . . gives voice to many of the unresolved tensions within society itself over the price paid for development." (p. 160). Another point deserving attention is that actors, including journalists, who voice such concerns, are of varied nature. In agreement with authors who have analysed the Brazilian and Amazonian realities, Söderbaum (1991) says that "All actors on the public scene whether politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, environmentalists or business leaders use some kind of conceptual framework that directs attention in specific ways." (p. 31).

Development, social movements and problem construction in the news media

From the critical tradition, it is Escobar (1992a) who provides the meaning of development. It was first introduced as: "... a matter of capital, technology, and education and the appropriate policy and planning mechanisms to successfully combine these elements." (p. 20). He argues that the clear cut perspective on the meaning of development has become blurred. According to the author:

If at the level of social movement theory new social orders are clearly imaginable, in the arena of development ... the picture is blurred, adumbrating a future society where only 'basic needs' are met, that is, a 'developed' or quasi-developed society. (Ibid., p. 21).

The author assesses development as an imposition of the First World on to the named "underdeveloped" nations. It is an imposition that has gone beyond strict economic controls. In an analysis with which Peet & Watts also agree, Escobar (1992a) argues that development ideology has an extended impact in regions such as Asia, Africa and Latin America. The impact varies in form and target, but can be easily assessed from the point of view of physical and social aspects. Overall, Escobar says development is a prescription which prevents the rise of different perspectives and forms of action. In this attempt of uniformisation lies a threat as the "underdeveloped" may absorb the hegemonic development

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*Among such authors are Viola (1987), Ribeiro (1991), and Arnt & Schwartzman (1992).*
discourse, they are "placed under conditions in which they tend to see themselves as such, and are treated accordingly." (Ibid., p. 23).

In the analysis of what reality in Amazônia means and how it is put together in arenas such as the media, Social Constructionism is an appropriate theoretical frame. A constructionist approach to analysis "... reflects the notion that the world that people create in the process of social exchange is a reality ..." (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127). The task of constructing meaning and reality is in the hands and minds of all involved. Economic crisis, market demands and increased use of technology, have triggered the rise of new concepts, ideologies and strategies of development, including sustainable development.

Escobar (1992a) argues that there is an intention of restructuring "social realities in the Third World in line with the symbolic and material requirements of a new international division of labour based on high technology ..." (p. 26). In support of this argument comes the fact that some international institutions have started evaluating damage caused by the imposition of development ideology. Though not necessarily presented as a self-critique, a statement in a World Bank (1989) document provides a very specific, but comprehensive perspective of development: "... The first generation after independence assumed that development meant achieving Northern standards of living". Whether international organisations imposed standards or the new independent and non-industrialised nations embraced the foreign advice, is the crucial contradiction. The difference between what was set out to happen based on a rhetoric of growth and what has in fact resulted and why it happened in such a way constitutes relevant object of study. Though trying to make the underdeveloped share the blame, the institutional analysis demonstrates that Escobar's own is not far from being acknowledged in the nature of imposition of foreign models and alien solutions.

The failure of an alien model has made agencies such as the World Bank review its position. As Peet & Watts (1993) put it: "... the World Bank’s proposals are striking not for their newness but for their historical continuity, hence their links to what might be called a cartography of development discourses." (p. 231). In the case of the Amazon the revision of international agencies’ action in the region has forced long periods of little or no financial support. While growth was the target, money was more or less generously released though at
the cost of considerable interest rates. Now, that sustainability principles attempt to move away from economic growth as the remedy for past mistakes, financial support is no longer so readily released. Yet new demands made by lenders are to be complied with by borrowing nations.

The economic crisis experienced world-wide in the 1980s forced Latin America into a reassessment of strategies and as a result a revision of discourses (Peet & Watts, 1993; García, 1992; Tassara, 1992). During the Continent’s lost decade, the 1980s, attention turned to short-term solutions due to the pressing nature of problems of recession and debt. With the attempts of stabilisation and adjustment, neoliberal orthodoxy was introduced to guarantee the insertion in the world market economies “... and emphasise a ‘back-to-the-future’ strategy” (Peet & Watts, p. 236). These actions involved a return to metropolitan relations where exports of raw materials were again stressed.

As Escobar (1992a) argues, the 1990s no longer allow space for the intellectual and fashionable revolutionary discourses, nor do they allow for blind defence of development strategies. Rather, the new discourses are based on the crisis of development, the chaos installed by imported models. New discourses are a result of the rise of new social actors and social movements which are claiming that their voices should be heard. Peet & Watts (1993) endorse Escobar’s analysis. For them, the 1990s were faced with a completely different scenario in both the geopolitical and economic scenarios. The new geopolitical world configuration in the post-cold war era added by diminished debt worries, gave rise to “... new social actors - [and] development seemed to gravitate around the ‘balance’ between state, market, and civil organisation ...” (Ibid., p. 236).

**Constructionist theory applied to the Amazon**

Analysis based on new social movements provides a distinct approach from that of modernisation and dependency theoretical frameworks (Servaes, 1993). The association of new social movements and a constructionist frame allows for an integrated analysis of elements, fundamental to the understanding of the complexity of the Amazon. This is particularly possible as Constructionism observes action performed by audiences engaged in
meaning building (Neuman et al., 1992). The approach envisions "... a society where the blind dynamic and the imperialism of independent subsystems of economy and state are subject, to the normative restrictions of a 'life world' in which communication processes can develop again in full freedom." (Ibid., p. 145). It is the notion of active audiences and society as a whole, present in Habermas and in several authors, that will allow the demonstration of how actors have risen in the region taking on to the exercise of citizenship.  

Schwandt (1994) argues that analysis is based on understanding the complexity of a given reality from the perspective of those who live it. According to the author, "The world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings ... is thought to be constructed by social actors." (Ibid., p. 118). In this resides the relevance of observing prominent themes and actors in the regional press as this research has set out to achieve. The regional perspective of the Amazonian question is built upon the point of view of those more directly involved in regional affairs.

The ensemble of meanings and representations in society is called by many authors the imaginary (Castoriadis, 1975; Durand, 1993; Peet & Watts, 1993). Originating in the French social theory, the concept of imaginary envisages the grounds of common significance attributed to a specific theme or terminology. According to Peet & Watts (1993), "The task of 'knowing' a society ... consists in reconstituting the world of its social imaginary significations" (p. 243). The concept is viewed as a fundamental social indicator, as the "reservoir of all human interpretations" (Durand, 1993, p. 17). In that human rational elaboration and action comprise representations of people's understanding of life, the social sphere in which meaning is constructed is worth observation. In this study, I explore the various meanings attributed to sustainable development and the environment in the Amazon. Thus, I look at the regional imaginary built around Amazonian affairs.

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1I frequently use the expression and use Gross's (1990) explanation of the meaning. According to the author, exercise of citizenship in the Brazilian context "... implies that the rights of civil society extend beyond the simple right to elect its leaders, and includes not only the full range of civil liberties ..., but the right to be fully involved in democratic decision making and the recognition of the legitimacy of voluntary organisations (interest groups, campaigns, unions, neighbourhood associations) within the political system." (p. 21-22).
Collectively building of social problems in media arenas

According to Hilgartner & Bosk (1988), "The collective definition of social problems occurs not in some vague location such as society or public opinion but in particular public arenas in which social problems are framed and grow." (p. 58). Among such arenas are the news media, the three branches of government, social action groups, the research community, professional societies, religious organisations and private organisations to cite some of the more relevant to this study and given as examples by the authors.

Social movements in settings such as the Latin American continent in their various predicaments defy hegemonic practices be they cultural, political or economic (Escobar & Alvarez, 1992). In the specific case of Brazil of the late 1970s onwards, "... neighbourhood associations involved in the struggle for provision of services, housing and land, brought concerns of everyday life and the sphere of consumption into the public sphere of politics" (Rowe & Schelling, 1991, p. 185). In the Amazon, demonstrations against bureaucratised forms of distribution of subsidies to agriculture, the discussion of agrarian reform represent, among many others, the problems that mobilise social groups and the media. But there is a challenging factor which is better explained by Calderón et al. (1992). They argue that "... whenever we address social reality, looking for the social agents of change, we do not see ready-made groups of classes acting organically as such ..." (p. 34). The discussion of findings supports and emphasises such a claim.

Escobar (1992) acknowledges the existence of political debate carried out in public arenas by a variety of actors in favour of specific and collective interests. According to him, the value of analysis of this phenomenon resides in the emphasis of its character as a process. It is in the analysis of these processes that the strategies and causes of social movements are revealed as "... the means for identity-formation and, in the long run, for a counter-hegemonic formation achieved through the articulation of various movements" (Ibid., p. 38-39).

Within a framework of regional development such as that of the Amazon proposed in this study, the collective definition of social problems is based on a social constructionist
approach. In this the "... generation of meaning [is seen] as shaped by conventions of language and other social processes." (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127). Since language and social processes are shared institutions, interpretation of meaning and construction of reality involve complex relations. This view was earlier elaborated by Gergen & Gergen (1991) who suggest that:

Accounts of the world ... take place within shared systems of intelligibility - usually a spoken or written language. These accounts are not viewed as the external expression of relationships of the speaker's internal processes (such as cognition, intention), but as an expression of relationships among persons. (p.78).

By studying local actors' perspectives, it is possible to identify how resistance is organised, expressed, articulated and put forward in Amazônia. The history of the regional scenario has proven adverse to collective action as "... social groups that have a clearer understanding of the region and its problems have tended, historically, to be voiceless." (Gross, 1990). As a reaction and an expression of opposition to pervasive acts of social injustice, social dynamics gives rise to resistance. Furthermore, the meaning constructed around issues relevant to cultural traditions and identity, found in news messages discussing development and environment in the Amazon, reveals cultural differences which geopolitical arrangements unsuccessfully try to play down. According to Miller (1992), analysis points out to "... the importance of shared identity, culture, and community in movements aiming to preserve and create new social spaces for groups threatened by the instrumental and strategic actions of the system." (p. 37).

Unless seen as problems by governments, issues rise and fall in policy agendas (Solesbury, 1976; Kingdon, 1995). Prominence of specific issues in the media is not a straightforward reaction of concrete social demands but, rather, the result of value attribution by key actors present in public arenas such as the media (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988; Kingdon, 1995). In Hilgartner and Bosk's (1988) model of public arenas, social problems are defined within segments of society (the arenas).

In the study of social problems in the public arenas, the component of permanence arises as an added factor. Historic voiceless actors and resistance movements have an additional
worry: that of maintaining their claims in the public agenda. Hilgartner & Bosk (1988) point out that attention to specific issues has a limited duration in the face of competing social problems introduced in public arenas. Such a condition makes it indispensable to observe the sustainability of themes in media coverage. The authors call this the "carrying capacity" of the arenas "which limits the number of problems that can gain widespread attention at one time" (p. 56). Although the analysis introduces most elements of the Hilgartner & Bosk public arenas model, the emphasis lies on the competition of claims related to social problems; the media arenas where public debate takes place; and the carrying capacity of said arenas in the definition of which problems rise or fall.

As part of a hegemonic discourse, news, for some scholars, reflects the views of those in power. Hall et al. (1978) suggest that, "The media ... reproduce and sustain the definitions of the situation which favour the powerful ... by favouring certain ways of setting up topics, and maintaining certain strategic areas of silence." (p. 65). Media's limitations in being the democratic environment some believe they need to be are well proven in political-economy studies. News production constraints constitute yet other factors acknowledged by the authors as they conclude that "... the prevailing tendency in the media is towards the reproduction, amidst all their contradictions, of the definitions of the powerful, of the dominant ideology ..." (Ibid., p. 65-66).

In this study, analysis is based on a number of factors and actors which contribute to the overall news output. Broader political, socio-economic and cultural scenarios are considered in their totality as they influence news. There are many contradictions among these relations and, though the media in the Amazon do reproduce the discourse of those in power, as suggested by Hall et al. (1978), they also accommodate other views. This is not surprising in itself in a setting where resistance is an indispensable a way of life and a historic component. What is to be taken into account is that accommodation of issues in the newspapers pages do not result from a well designed editorial policy or from the willingness of the business to voice resistance.
The environment constructed as a social problem

The introduction of environmental issues in the news has been the result of the articulation of various forces in society. The rise of the environment in the news media is seen as closely linked to geopolitics (Dalby, 1996) but also placed within economic, social and cultural frames. As Kamieniecki (1991) says, "The environmental movement is having a growing impact on national and international politics, and there is little evidence to suggest that the movement's momentum will slow in the near future." (p. 339).

In the same tradition explored by Tassara (1992), science and the whole modernisation process lead by rich nations are criticised as responsible for the worsening of environmental problems. Questioning of the industrialisation success came in the form of numerous events of natural disaster proportions. For Caldwell (1991), the increasing impact of the environmental movement is of great historic significance. He argues that "Understood in its full context, it [Environmentalism] may be seen ... as a major change of state in human affairs - an awakening of modern man to a new awareness of the human predicament on earth." (p. 9).

International agencies have also influenced the rise of the environment as a problem. Opubor (1993) argues that the environment has become news in settings such as Africa due to the prominence given to related themes by these agencies. This is one of many factors. Similar findings to that in Africa have been argued for in Amazonian scenarios by Gross (1990) and Andersson & Pertof (1996). These authors, though, tend to point out the role of social movements born in the region as a local, endogenous force.

The episodic nature of news in combination with dramatic situations and novelty, command media attention and facilitate the access of certain themes into the news agenda (Hilgarter & Bosk, 1988). The environment has constituted no exception. Far from being the neutral theme as it was first seen in editorial circles (Lowe & Morrison, 1984) and as once believed by government (Sachsman, 1996), environmental issues are highly value-laden. For this reason, similar to development issues, the environment can be placed as an ambiguous theme accommodating of a variety of interests.
Some scholars argue that events do not get coverage not "... because of powerful interests pushing them forward but because their dramatic or narrative structure make them obtrusive and, to a storytelling, story writing reporter irresistible." (Manoff & Schudson, 1987, p. 5). Though the argument is pertinent, this analysis has chosen to expand from the analysis of journalistic practices to the whole of frames influencing news. Rather than concentrating on journalistic practices only, this analysis of the Amazonian coverage expands to various frames where news is one of them. Simultaneously, analysis takes into consideration political and economic aspects as well as culture, alongside history, the environment and development as they play key roles in the definition of the press agenda (Bagdikian, 1990; Golding & Murdock, 1991; Sholle, 1988).

Social problems result from collective construction of meaning taking place in "... arenas of public discourse and action" (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988. p. 55), these outcomes of public elaboration have an inherent political nature. Were it to be otherwise, international pressure would not have had such an impact in the debate of the Amazonian problem. As Anderson (1991) anticipated, coverage of environmental issues became "increasingly politicised" in the 1990s and could no longer be discussed "... as though they were detached from the wider global political arena." (p. 473). No other example provides more evidence of this argument than Amazônia, the development of the region and the environmental damage resulting from that process.

From local social movements and new causes such as that of the environment, development assumes different shades. The diverse nature of opinion reveals a comprehensive spectrum of actors professing very distinct interests and an even wider colouring of issues. This reinforces the suggestion by Hilgartner & Bosk (1988) that "A fraction of the potential problems are publicly presented by groups and individuals who ... come from many sectors in society and may have very different goals." (p. 57). Among the many connotations social problems have taken in the context of development one is that of populism. According to Peet & Watts (1993), populism is "...the promotion of small-scale, owner-operated, anti-urban programmes which stand against the ravages of industrial capitalism ... a particular
sort of politics, authority structure, and ideology in which an effort is made to manufacture a collective popular will and an ‘ordinary’ subject ..." (p. 237).\(^4\)

Among the many risks in the communication processes forged by and through ideology is the possibility of it being ingrained to such an extent as to no longer being critically perceived. Hall et al. (1978) argue that “Many ... forms of communication are so common, so natural, so taken for granted, so deeply embedded in the very communication forms which are employed, that they are hardly visible at all, as ideological constructs ...” (p. 65). In this Hallin (1987) adds that issues more than being ideological become natural “... to readers unfamiliar with alternatives...” (In Manoff & Schudson, 1987, p. 7).

Similar to what García (1994) argues as the underlying class factor in Latin American politics of development and the environment, Peet & Watts (1993) outline the divisions in the populist debate. As will be seen in the discussion of findings, populism is one of the colours development discourses have assumed in the Amazon of the first half of the 1990s. It rests on “... the ‘double articulation of discourse’: the dialectical tension between ‘the people’ and classes within the power bloc, and the various ways in which ‘the people’ are articulated with specific classes.” (Peet & Watts, 1993, p. 237).

In this context, it is useful to observe what Neuman et al. (1992) say about the nature of a constructionist approach to news and the need for communications theory to acknowledge the diversity of aspects within news: “Constructionism emphasises the importance of the varying character of the communications content. Different kinds of issues are interpreted by the media and by the public in different ways ...” (p. 17). Moreover, this theoretical approach is versatile in that it is applicable to any media. It “... emphasises the importance of the medium of communication, including the historical, structural, and technological character of media institutions.” (17-18).

\(^4\)In the authors' opinion, populism carries a distinctive characteristic which is helpful in understanding its appeal as a “... flexible ability to draw on liberalism, nationalism and socialism in fashioning its pragmatic, rather than political agenda” (Peet & Watts, 1993, p. 237).
Environment and development discourses

From a general idea of political ecology, sustainable development discourse has gone through cycles following the steps of the environmental movement and that of environmental news. In the late 1960s, environmental movements turned to systems ecology and ethnoscientific knowledge production in Third World societies. By the 1970s and mostly the 1980s, the turn was to analyse the production in relation to the global spheres of economy. According to Peet & Watts (1993), this came as a result of the growing force of environmental movements. It also resulted from "... a recognition of the deepening global human-induced modifications of the environment in part driven by the rapid industrialisation of parts of South America and a renewed concern with demographic growth." (Ibid., p. 239).

For Tassara (1992), the environmental crisis is a political crisis of the rational thinking. This turning point revealed that science no longer explained all phenomena. According to her, "within the available scientific representations there could be found no meaning to the social nature of the world." (p. 13). The environment is a complex system and as such has been acknowledged by Western science generating a crisis of meaning and understanding. As Palmer (1993) puts it:

"Classical science, long the instrument of modernism, is simultaneously both foundation and anathema to ecological philosophy. With a few notable exceptions, natural scientists have tended to view their roles as scientists and citizens separately. Environmentalists, by contrast, have understood these roles to be inextricably linked ... (p. 160)."

Peet & Watts (1993) point out a series of tendencies in the study of development and the environment and attribution of meaning to introduce some form of understanding to issues raised in the economic and scientific crisis. One of these tendencies, discourse analysis, is of specific relevance as it "... tackles the problem of constructing and deconstructing sustainable development" (p. 241). Based "on the plurality of perceptions and definitions ...

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9 Hansen (1993) discusses the cycles that the environment as a theme experienced through at this particular time: "... the trend started with a tremendous acceleration in the 1960s, continuing in to the very early part of 1970s, and then declining and settling for a period into the 1980s. This was followed by what looks to be a downward trend in the beginning of the 1990s...") p. xv.

Downs (1972) provides a discussion on what he calls "... systematic issue-attention cycle ... concerning key domestic problems." (p. 38). He provides a scheme of the stages in the "issue-attention cycle" as well as discussion on which problems, including ecology, are more likely to go through the cycle.

10 My translation.
and more generally [in] a concern with the social construction of knowledge ...”, this type of analysis revolves around the diversity of discourse about the sustainability concept.

Similar to the concept of development or sustainable development as suggested by Peet & Watts (1993), Environmentalism also carries a wide comprehensive nature that allows for apparent unification of a series of interests. The interests involved range from private business in the form of transnational corporations to popular social movements. According to Lynton (1989), “the green ideology ... attempts to balance egalitarianism typical to modern individualism with a holistic organic vision of nature and human community” (In Ribeiro, 1991, p. 72). Environmentalism brings all shades of ideologies under one umbrella and sustainable development as a concept has come to reinforce ambiguity of purposes. In this, partially lies the outcome of discourses derived from the debate of such issues and narratives built around the Amazonian question.

As discussed by Lowe & Morrison (1984), the environment is embedded with an important characteristic, that of an interchangeable ability to be presented as both a political and as an a-political issue. According to the convenience of those discussing the issue it can more obviously or in a more subtle manner show its political nature. As the variety of approaches and interpretations in the construction of categories such as the environment and development become clear, so do the role of different interests in public arenas of debate. By exploring themes and actors appearing in the news in the Amazon, this study assesses the definition of social problems and potential for action toward solution expressed in the regional press. In that social movements are seen as agents of conflict and potential change in the solution of pressing social problems (Castells, 1977; Klandermans et al., 1988; Klandermans, 1988; Melucci, 1988; Rucht, 1988; Escobar, 1992a), a constructionist approach has been chosen for this study. Such a frame of analysis takes into consideration a more comprehensive context within which news discourse is articulated. This is fundamental for deconstructing meaning built around issues of development and the environment in the Amazon.
In the framework of Constructionism, this study attempts to identify frames within which news about the Amazon is presented in the region. Frames are here taken, as suggested by Goffman (1974) and Gitlin (1980), for cognitive structures within which people perceive, interpret and construct their reality. Moving away from the analysis of news production processes and media-centred research tradition, I attempt to identify the elements that organise the content of news as it is delivered to local audiences. This does not mean abandoning those aspects altogether. In a constructionist perspective, different media aspects are to be taken into account. Fairclough (1995) argues that the analysis of communication processes established in the media environment is affected by economic and political aspects inherent in media systems. Also to be taken into account, according to Fairclough, are the markets in which the media act and the relations between media and government (Ibid.).

The elaboration of media texts is also a relevant element. Analysis, therefore, concentrates on aspects that allow for news frames to “obscure much that is unique about activities and events while silencing explanations, arguments, and perspectives ...” (Schlechtweg, 1996, p. 257). It is in the attribution of meaning to regional reality, particularly concerning social problems of environment and development, that this research is based upon. As Hansen (1991) says about Constructionism “… such a framework enables a recognition of the interactive and parallel, rather than unilinear processes which characterise the emergence and growth of environmental issues as issues of public concern and political action.” (p. 454).

This study’s findings lead into the construction of the meaning of sustainable development from diverse perspectives. Mostly through conflicting interests and perspectives, such a construction allows for the identification of various narratives which constitute the frames of discourses within which development and environmental issues are perceived, interpreted and pursued in the Amazon region. According to Tourraine (1988), analysis should centre in “cultural orientations common to actors who are in conflict over the management of these orientations, for the benefit of either an innovative ruling class or, on the contrary, those
who are subordinated to its domination." As it is discussed in detail in the analysis chapters, the Amazon saw in the past twenty five years the emergence of a number of social movements and of a new leadership. Of various obvious and non-obvious political affiliations, movements and leadership are voicing concerns to an extent which has not very often been seen in regional history. The trend has signalled a distancing of these new and emerging groups from traditional local oligarchy. In their origin the new leadership has no links with the traditional local elites.

Sustainable development arose as a discourse in political and policy-making arenas and "... quickly spread in to other segments within the spectrum of environmentalist ideologies" (Ribeiro, 1991, p. 75). The symbolic representation of Amazon's crucial matters as they comprise a new discourse based on the concept of sustainable development, requires the acknowledgement of the rise of social movements in their claim makers' role. Such movements express dissatisfaction with traditional State structures and their "manipulation of symbols, values and frames of meanings" (Gross, 1985, p. 65). With the official structures no longer responding to their needs, a series of movements have risen to interfere, interact and most importantly give new meanings to old matters. According to Calderón et al. (1992), "... emerging demands - regardless of which actor, sector, or segment of society voiced them - ... could not find accommodation within the prevailing institutional scheme ..." (p. 24). It is in this context that the authors argue that in today's Latin America, "social movements ... challenge the monopoly of representation, indicating ... the need for new forms of representation" (Ibid., p. 25).

**Opposing interests**

The environment entered news media arenas via the scientific discourse. Exposure of themes such as the rain forest was made possible by the use of technical scientific explanation in support to social movements claims (Palmer, 1993). The Amazon was at the centre of debates and regional media did not escape such a wave. Palmer points out, though, that the inability of classic science to cope with much more complex ecosystems facilitated

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13 My translation.
a turn into linking problems to economy as well as the framing of issues within politics be it of governments or interest groups.

In this scenario, Sholle (1988) contributes to the discussion of domination issues as they remain a central point to ideology. For the author, power gain and the exercise of power happen in intense arenas of discourse exchange. In a constructionist perspective, "... no single class or determinant defines who occupies the dominant position in this struggle." (p. 35).

As Peet & Watts (1993) point out,

For Touraine (1985, p. 750-54) social conflicts involve the competitive pursuit of collective interests and the reconstitution of social, cultural, or political identity; they combine a political force aimed at changing the rules of the game with a defence of status or privilege; but above all, conflict occurs over control of the main cultural patterns through which relationships with the environment are normatively organised. (p. 244).

It is inevitable that matters of hegemony emerge at the heart of conflicts expressed in the debate of regional problems. In this study, the expression of conflicts is observed in the news regarding overall development and environmental issues. As Palmer (1993) says when analysing Gitlin's arguments, "... news fills hegemonic interests in society and constructs compelling frames of knowledge in the news accounts." (p. 159). For Hall et al. (1978), the issue of knowledge in news is crucial. They argue that:

The media do not only possess a near-monopoly over 'social knowledge', as the primary source of information about what is happening; they also command the passage between those who are 'in the know' and the structured ignorance of the general public. (p. 64).

Opposition exercised by social movements reinvents society's "norms, institutions, and practices." (Peet & Watts, 1993, p. 244). These movements are most of the time portrayed by the media as agents of disorder. In Latin America, such movements have assumed an importance analysed by scholars such as Escobar & Alvarez (1992), Calderón et al. (1992) and Peet & Watts (1993), among many. Reality has been reinvented in resistance throughout authoritarian periods and in more recent re-democratisation times in the Continent:

A multiplicity of groups independent of traditional trade unions and political parties, squatter movements and neighbourhood councils, baselevel communities within the Catholic Church, indiginist associations, women's associations, human rights'
committees, youth meetings, educational and artistic activities, coalitions for the defence of regional traditions and interests ... (Peet & Watts, 1993, p. 245).

Though the authors consider this approach one of an over optimistic type, they use Scott’s (1985) argument that “... subordinate classes ‘have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organised, political activity,’ which is the preserve of middle classes and intelligentsia.” (p. 246).\textsuperscript{14} If for no other reason, the rise of social movements is certainly one of beneficial character in the full exercise of democratic rights in the Amazon. More resonance is found in Escobar (1992b) where he sees two characteristics in social movements: one of their cultural struggles over meaning, and another, over material conditions and needs.

How these issues materialise in the context of the Amazon is the object of the discussion that follows.

**Trends in the sustainable development concept and the Brazilian Amazon regional scenario**

Since the 1960s, Environmentalism has developed many strategies to argue for better quality of life and balance between the use of natural resources and the need to preserve life on the planet. According to Palmer (1993), “... environmentalism constitutes a revolutionary paradigm moving against the tenets of modernism and the ideology of progress.” (p. 160). But a considerable range of narratives appears in the frames within which the environment appears: from the more purist to the more flexible types. The spectrum covers from a "don't touch nature" approach, conservationism in its purest form to one of "let's use it rationally" which reveals a mix of pragmatic and developmentalist types (Killingsworth & Palmer, 1992; Anderson, 1991; Ribeiro, 1991; Dickens, 1992).

Despite the much earlier discussion of the concept dating from the 1972\textsuperscript{15} United Nations Conference on Human Environment, held in Stockholm, it was only in 1987 that the concept

\textsuperscript{14} From Peet & Watts (1993).
\textsuperscript{15} It was in 1972 that the contribution of the Club of Rome through a report known as *Limits of Growth* became public. The report was prepared by Dennis L. Meadows, Donella H. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, William W. Behrens who, in 1992, published *Beyond the Limits*. Post Mills, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Co.
was operationalised at an institutional level. It was in that year that the United Nations appointed the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission. It set the basis for long-term strategies to achieve sustainable development in its report "Our Common Future". In the document, the concept of sustainable development corresponds to one of balance between economic growth and preservation of natural resources. A broad construct, its comprehensiveness involves economic and social issues; it states the need to use resources for the improvement of quality of life of current and future generations.

After 1987, sustainable development became more widely used a terminology. It has been more and more applied to negotiating the use of natural resources under the assumption that once effectively done it will increase levels of quality of life. Interest about sustainable development needs in the Amazon Region increased as the region represents one of the last frontiers of studied natural riches. Of sustainable development, Adams says (1993),

By the end of the 1980s the phrase was widespread ... it had become an accepted part of the rhetoric of Third World and First World politicians, and had provided a potent new slogan and campaigning theme of First World environmental Non-Governmental Organisations. (p. 207).

Many interpretations are given to the concept of sustainable development. According to the emphasis attributed, the concept leans toward ecology or economy. In this reside the discrepancies in the use and application of sustainable development in discourse frames of most varied origins. The contradictions become more obvious as the operationalisation of the concept contemplates categories as distinct as intergeneration equity, environmental preservation, and yet no reference to reduction to poverty levels is made.

In Brazil, 1987 marked the installation of the Constitutional Assembly. With regard to the environment, the final document offers, among many results, no land guarantees and is appraised as nationalistic and of protectionist orientation. Recent developments in moves towards new legislation threaten Indian rights to territories even more.16

16 Decree n. 1775 allows legal questioning of some 183 already demarcated Indian areas throughout Brazil. The legislation creates conditions for reduction in the size of existing demarcated areas as well as favours the increase of land disputes and the risk of invasion of contested areas. (IstoÊ, 27/3/96, n. 1382; SBPCHoje, 1/4/96, n. 517; Ricardo, 1995).
Redemocratisation: struggle for land, identity and autonomy

In times of redemocratisation, the local networking with international environment and human rights organisations made it easy that information circulated outside the region and outside Brazil (Gross, 1990). As a result of these various factors, "...public opinion, especially that in rich countries, turned against deforestation and its consequences both at the local and global levels." (Ozório de Almeida, 1991, p. 607)."17

As Kamieniecki (1991) puts it:

The economic and political conditions commonly present in most Third World nations severely hinder the formation and operation of grass-roots movements ... Dictators and authoritarian regimes do not tolerate public protests against their policies, and they often resort to force to prevent them from occurring. (p. 348).

Though Brazil was no longer ruled by dictators, there were many official moves to restrain what was seen as social unrest and to camouflage a historical crisis which was revealed in many dramatic events in the future. Environmental issues dominated the latter part of 1988 and much of 1989. In December 1988, Francisco (Chico) Mendes, a rubber-tappers' union leader and considered a pioneer ecologist among the grassroots movements in the Amazon, was murdered. The event triggered international attention which turned to Brazil's major environmental problems: large-scale development projects, 'slash-and-burn' farming practices of cattle ranchers and loggers; the release of large amounts of mercury into the environment by an estimated 60,000 prospectors (garimpeiros). Such problems increased concern with the survival of the Indians and the rain forest itself.18

The 1990s brought new government that promised to introduce a programme to address environmental problems. Despite the appointment of an internationally-acclaimed figure, ecologist Jose Lutzemberger as Minister of Environment and efforts to refrain unauthorised gold-prospecting in the region, international criticism grew. The new environmental programme Operação Amazônia (Amazônia Operation) was considered a poor response to

17My translation.
18A regional scenario is presented in chapter II.
the region's environmental problems and damage to the various ecosystems has persisted throughout the early years of the decade.

Of particular concern to many international observers was the plight of the Yanomami Indian Tribe in Roraima State. It was estimated that, since the arrival of the *garimpeiros* to the region, 10 to 15 percent of the Yanomami's total population had been exterminated as a result of pollution and disease introduced to the area by the gold prospectors. The National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), the Brazilian government agency in charge with Indian affairs, was as in many other topics heavily criticised for its role in the affair. Once more the agency had failed to provide effective protection and support for Brazil's Indian peoples.

The disappearance of indigenous cultures has been linked to environmental problems such as that of deforestation. The destruction of ecosystems is largely done by landowners who raise cattle and need grasslands or dedicate themselves to mining and logging. Predatory activities prevent the ecosystems regeneration, precipitating soil exhaustion. Several local and international organisations have demanded the halt of such practices. These organisations have requested policy to guarantee the preservation of the humid tropic ecosystems as well as the right of those who have long populated the region. A solution that pleases all interested parties is yet to be found.

In June 1992, Brazil hosted the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The event only raised the already high interest in the Brazilian Amazon. International attention was again called upon the Amazon region when, in August 1993, 73 Yanomami were killed by *garimpeiros*. The conflict had its origins in territorial disputes prompted by the prospectors' attempts to exploit the mineral deposits of the Yanomami land.

An ever underlying matter in the region is the land occupation and ownership issue. It has throughout the years triggered conflicts and high levels of violence in the hinterland. As recent as mid-April 1996, the State of Pará Military Police killed 19 people in a road blockade in the Southern portion of the State. The dead were landless movement activists, who are organised in a struggle to the right for a piece of productive land to work on and
survive upon. Rural workers killed were members of the Landless People Movement (MST) said to be one of the most important social movements of this century in Brazil.

It is in this most complex scenario that we argue that sustainable development policy affects those who live in the Amazon and is most likely to have effects throughout the world, since the Amazon is, along with some areas in Asia and Africa, one of the last resorts of representative unique tropical humid ecosystems.19

The Brazilian Amazon experienced the peak of predatory occupation between the 1960s and 1980s. As a result the region "... has become the target of conflicting international interests ..." (Becker, 1994). This analysis is shared by other authors of works produced inside and outside the region such as Andersson & Pertof, 1996; Bendix & Liebler, 1991; Araújo, 1991 and Gross, 1990. Conflicts of this nature, according to Becker (1994):

... mix legitimate environmental concern ... geopolitical pressure associated with the valorisation of biodiversity as a source of both scientific/technological knowledge and of power, pressure which expresses the contradictions amongst the dominant powers themselves with respect to the definition of the new supranational markets. (p. 173).

A line of study in the field of geography points toward the importance of examining “relationships between economic restructuring and local political behaviour ...” where “the importance of place-defined interests as well as the broader economic and political behaviour” is stressed (Miller, 1992, p. 22). As sustainable development and the environment-centred discussions gained space in the media, it became clear that, they had strong economic and political underlying elements. It is in this scenario that the analysis of news frames and that of discourses expressed in regional news in the Amazon is relevant.

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19 Background information has been gathered from a variety of sources. Compilation has been based on Almeida, 1992 and 1994; Ozório de Almeida, 1991; Sydenstricker Neto, 1992; Aragón, 1994. Information on the Amazon was compiled from several sources among which are the newspapers targeted by the study: O Liberal and A Crítica as well as Folha de São Paulo. Other sources used are: national circulation magazine IstoÉ, The Europa World Year Book (1994) and Third World Guide (1993/94). Further discussion is presented in chapter II.
Information, policy-making and consensus-building

Based on the previous discussion, I come to the point where the links between public arenas comprised by the media invite research to establish a further link: that of media and policy-making. Spitzer (1993) offers an explanation based upon David Easton’s (1953) notion of political system. Understood as a cycle of inputs, elaboration and outputs, policy-making can be said to be under media influence at all phases. Yankelovich (1991) establishes this link in his argument of media participation in building public judgement that ultimately implies action by society in the policy-making process. As main sites of public debates, media as well as policies have a culture of their own (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). As public debate takes place in a variety of fora, the authors argue that "There is largely oral discourse used by officials who are directly involved in decision-making roles on the issue and by those who attempt to influence them ..." (Ibid., p. 3). There is also the ground where the general public acts and finally the space where media discourse take effect.

The dimension of the conflicts of interests in the region is such that there is hardly a possibility of consensus and it is very likely that policy will repeat the contradictions on which regional occupation, rather than development, has been based in the past. Claims mix and originate in developmentalists and conservationists, nationalists and internationalists, radicals and interventionists (Ozório de Almeida, 1991, p. 624) or negotiators as named in this study. According to Ericson et al. (1991), “The news media institution is pivotal to the ability of authorities to make convincing claims. It offers pervasive means by which authorities ... can attempt to obtain wider consent ...” (p. 8). It is in the public arenas constituted by the media where these claims are aired. Debate is held with the ultimate purpose of legitimising decisions in the form of consent that is essential to democracy.

Given the nature of the Amazonian problem, its international dimension is an added factor in the local negotiations for improved levels of life quality (Ozório de Almeida, 1991; Almeida, 1992 and 1994). Kamieniecki (1991) also argues that governments in the Third World pressed by debt and overall unstable economies rely on natural resources exploitation to balance the commercial scale:
... The dominance of the inside-access model of agenda building in the Third World often prevents the public from influencing environmental policy. In such instance, pressure from the international community is most likely to have an impact. (p. 349).

Sound policy depends upon many factors, one of which is crucial: access to the appropriate information and data on which to base decisions. Sustainable development has been argued in policy circles as the most reasonable way to deal with the Amazon region's complex scenario. Similar to what happened in the early years of the region's occupation, policy is said to be designed under the assumption of improvement of standards of living. As the very concept of sustainable development is based on democratic principles, it implies as well as demands social participation, dialogue and action at improved levels. In this regard, Söderbaum (1991) recalls that “In many cases our knowledge and information is fragmentary, contradictory and insufficient”. (p. 34).

The sustainable development approach implies access to information that will address the tenets of the concept: rational use of resources; endogenous knowledge-based production; decentralisation of decision-making. It is in this last principle that resides the crucial object of this study. Sustainable development requires planning and government decisions that take into consideration input from a variety of actors in the form of debate and (Becker, 1994). Thus, practices to implement sustainable development rely on management that is based upon democratic actions; otherwise they risk excluding segments of society from representation and participation.

In earlier times such as the 1970s and 1980s, planning required knowledge built upon the Amazon resource base as well as accurate information. Now it establishes new forms of social control. According to Elliott (1994), "... synergism (is) to be gained from prioritising local knowledge and needs in programmes which enable communities to improve their own welfare and that of the environment.” (p. 111). This is especially true in the Amazon where natural resources use has been managed by local communities throughout time with no threat to ecosystems. Some authors such as Gross (1990) and Ab’Saber (1995) defend the idea that if these practices were considered as alternatives and improved they would be responsive to the need of an environmentally-sound and socially equitable development.
The goals pointed out by Gross (1990) and Ab’Saber (1995) belong in a democratic society. For some, the media are fundamental in the processes of building dialogue. Masmoudi (1992), for example, argues that "In democratic regimes, media are increasingly like the mirror which reflects the general orientation of political life and the microscope which allows citizens to pay attention to different national activities ..." (p. 34). In Palmer's (1993) view there seems to be much left before society acquires a better grasp of the process. According to him, "The mass media provide glimpses of utterances with their own particular circumstance and meaning, but the whole constitutes a social process which we scarcely comprehend." (Ibid., p. 161).

**Media and democracy**

This study takes as premise that there is a link between the building and expression of meaning and democracy. Hardt (1993) suggests that:

> Theories about the relationship of language, communication, and culture typically extend into inquiries about the social (and political) nature of democracy ... the relationship between communication in society and the emergence of a democratic way of life. (p. 88).

As far as Latin America and Brazil, in particular, are concerned, democracy is a continuing exercise still in its early stages after the redemocratisation period of the 1980s. The country and, for that matter, the Amazon region, has a considerable amount of work to do to consolidate its transition into democracy. Schuurman (1993) assesses such processes very clearly when he expresses the complexity of the relationship among the main actors involved i.e. the State, political parties and civil society. In the civil arenas lies the focus of constructionist theory used here as the main source of argumentation. Constructionism concentrates on "... what motivates people to pay attention to some public issues rather than assuming that civic duty simply requires attention to all matters political." (Neuman et al. 1992, p. 18).

For Schuurman (1993) an emphasis must be placed on institutions with potential to represent society and bring it to consent to public policy. The plurality characteristic of democracy can be better expressed through the blue prints produced within political parties.
These ultimately voice the wishes of society. Schuurman believes that “The state and parliament constitute the scene where these political projects are translated, via a process of consensus and/or compromise, into policy measures.” (Ibid., p. 195).

In the study of the coverage of environmental issues in Amazônia it is necessary to use Kellner’s (1990) definition of democracy, one that involves the action of a public sphere where controversial matters are discussed and solutions found. For Habermas (1971a), the basis of democracy lies “... in an emancipated society, whose members’ autonomy and responsibility had been realised allowing for communication [to] have developed into the non-authoritarian and universally practised dialogue ...” (p. 314).

From the idea of the Agora, four major assumptions can be drawn: citizens are well informed, interested in politics, have equal rights to intervene and make decisions, and such a decision-making is subjected to public debate (Splichal, 1993). In terms of contemporary times, Keane (1991) provides a conceptualisation of democracy seen as a modern society struggle. For Keane, rules and procedures apply and must be observed in a democratic system. As a result, decisions have a collective nature and are arrived at by means of participation and influence in a wide spectrum of interests.

The definitions are acceptable so far as they constitute the abstraction of democratic ideals. The actual exercise of democratic principles constitutes the crucial problem and gives rise to the many contradictions societies are faced with today. Perhaps these contradictions lie on the forgetfulness of what other modern thinkers have made a point of a long time ago. From John Dewey to Jürgen Habermas, modern thinkers have argued that “the potential of democracy rests in the ability of society to ensure participation through communication.” (Hardt, 1993, p. 88).

**Mediating public debate**

Communication at the enlarged arenas of mass media does not necessarily accommodate the true variety of social interests. Many gain no access to the media and remain voiceless due to the dimension acquired by the media in contemporary society. Gurevitch & Blumler (1990)
say that the exercise of a free press "enshrines the democratic concept of the political accountability of power holders to ordinary citizens." (p. 273). In this bridging role of the media, much is left without due accountability. It also risks widening the gap between the decision-making level. In Gurevitch & Blumler's opinion, the decisions made in political spheres, their distance and confusion are diminished as the press accounts bring them closer to audiences (Ibid.). Kepplinger (1989) endorses Gurevitch & Blumler's argument and acknowledges the interdependence between political institutions and the media as the former increasingly use the media and the latter focus their agenda on political action.

Perhaps for this closer interdependence, Ericson et al. (1991) recall that news can also be seen as it "perpetually represents order - morality, procedural form, and social hierarchy in ways that help people to order their daily lives." (p. 3-4). In this, the authors consider less the mediating role and more the media functions as "...an active agency of social control, stability, and change" (Ibid.). This is possible given that news presents the public with what is the most acceptable in society. Control comes in the form of public action or rather than conforming to the views portrayed in the media.

In the case of the environment, Soderbaum (1991) adds to the importance attributed to formal institutions. He says that "In any society, traditional power structures will only be changed gradually and ... such changes will depend upon the importance that citizens attach to conservation and environmental values." (p. 34). In a 1992 work, Keane complements these ideas as he dissipates any illusions of a sweeping democratic effect. Democracy is not important for the possible consensus built or the sound decisions its exercise brings. Rather, democracy is fundamental for it allows citizens to review and reassess previous decisions and the unwanted outcomes of those very decisions. Keane (1991) reinforces the necessity of keeping State and civil society as separate institutions as well as the need for "mechanisms of representation", given that essential direct democracy is impossible in large state arrangements as it was in small states where citizen numbers are restricted and the agora possible.

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20 Emphasis added.
Forging meaning

Graber (1993) argues that the media are responsible not only for the dissemination of information but also for its maintenance through reinforcement of ideas they created from the outset. She says that "... in many instances the media reinforce the very images that they originally created when they were the first, and often the only, source of information and interpretation of currently unfolding events" (p. 22). Considering Entman's (1993) definition of framing, where a selection of "aspects of a perceived reality" occurs, some issues are made "more salient ... in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition ..." (p. 52).

Overall there is a concern with information circulated by the media. Among the many components that assign quality to the information provided is the nature of the themes treated in the news agenda and also the diversity of perspectives provided. In that they provide different views and approaches, the media allow the necessary continuing evaluation of social affairs implicit in democratic societies. As suggested by Curran (1991), the media play a critical role in the expression of social problems and in that they constitute a fundamental space for public decision-making. Curran says that:

The public dialogue staged by the media system should be informed by a diversity of values and perspectives in entertainment as well as public affairs coverage. By generating a plurality of understandings, the media should enable individuals to reinterpret their social experience, and question the assumptions and ideas of the dominant culture. (Ibid., p. 102-103).

In matters relating to the environment, Anderson (1991) suggests that the media are responsible for the quality of environmental information disseminated as a means to keep public interest on the issue. For her, "Television, press and radio hold an enormous responsibility in ensuring that these issues are communicated accurately, clearly and in such a way as to sustain ... mass interest in the ... environment." (Ibid., p. 459).

Several authors discuss the revival of civil society (O'Donnell et al., 1986; Ianni, 1989; Escobar & Alvarez, 1992; Peet & Watts, 1993; Jones, 1994). For Peet & Watts (1993), a resurgence of civil society has occurred as a result of the complex tangle of political interests at play and "intellectual confluences" within the development discourse. They consider that
debates about development should focus on the strategies that observe the relations between State, civil society and markets. The argument makes a clear link between various arenas which hold public dialogue. Amazônia is a fertile ground to explore such relations as it is the scene of an on-going public dialogue upon which decisions are constantly being made.

There are many contradictions on the role of the media in democratic societies. The character of media as a public sphere where society negotiates its problems is considered of an ambivalent nature. The problematic nature of the public sphere concept lies in the assumption that it is seen as neutral territory which provides access to all actors and types of information and “where discussion is free of domination by the state and where all those participating in public debate do so on a equal basis.” (Curran, 1991, p. 82).

The public arenas of debate are considered as a potential characteristic among the media functions. But as Servaes (1993) argues in discussing Habermas theory of communicative action, the ambivalence lies in two major factors: 1. the hierarchicalisation of the communicative processes “… because they create lines of communication from the Centre to the Periphery and from top to bottom”; and 2. their direct links to the rational structure of the communicative action: the mass media “are not detached …” and, thus, “remain … dependent on bipolar positions of communicatively gifted actors.” (p. 152).

Curran’s (1991) contribution to the discussion of the ambiguous and unrealistic model is useful. The author suggests that “The lingering question left by Habermas is how can this model - supposedly realised by a restricted class in the early nineteenth century - be universalised during the era of mass politics in a highly differentiated, organised capitalist society.” (p. 83). In this seems to lie the battles which democratic societies try to come to terms with when media do not fulfil the ideals of the public sphere.

Not all are sceptical and for Miller (1992), not even globalisation impedes public debate of social problems in media arenas. It actually “may … provide openings for resistance movements.” (Ibid., p. 37). Palmer (1993), though, provides evidence contrary to Miller’s argument. From news published in the USA, the author found that “What emerge in the discursive traffic about the topical rain forest are ideal conditions for the coalition and
fragmentation of moral positions, and the cultivation of public anxiety, which the mass media fails to diffuse." (Ibid., p. 157).

The elimination of the restrictions in access and the contradictions of the media arenas are not seen as problems easily solved. Curran (1991) is firm in saying that "... the public sphere cannot be re-established through a simple process of enlargement - by enabling those who were formerly excluded to participate in it." (p. 83). For Curran, one of the reasons why the debate on the public sphere is still unresolved is that it does not take into account the face of contemporary power structures (Ibid.). As long as the role of information provision focuses on individuals and not on the institutions, it will remain impossible to assess possibilities of change.

Perhaps, society is still faced with the battles between private and public communication. The discussion stood in the end of the 1960s and still stands today. Only now the debate has the added element of the globalisation effect. But even this approach lingers as a disguise of hegemony. In Alan Tourraine’s opinion “Globalisation means Imperialism only with a different name and washed from its ideological tension.”

According to Splichal (1993):

Genuine access to the media and a more equitable distribution of the media ownership, media time, and space to be based on the abolition of all limitations of rights (rather than on “negative” freedoms) of citizens were regarded as necessary preconditions for democratic reordering of the media and their social accountability. (p. 8).

Curran (1991) argues that the systematic thinking has been unable to recognise new social groups and how they relate to the media. For him, the traditional schools of thought allow no longer for the discussion of the media role in modern liberal democracy. According to Curran, "... Traditional thought ignores the building blocks of modern liberal democracy and so has nothing constructive to say about how the media should relate to them and enhance their performance." (Ibid., p. 100). He elaborates even more as he says that such social

21In an interview to Jornal do Brasil, 10/9/97.
segments have the potential to work as controls to excesses of economic and political nature. They, according to Curran:

... provide a variety of means of advancing individual interests within collectively organised society, afford a source of protection against the exercise of private economic power, organise political choice in a way that enables people to choose ...(Ibid., p. 100).

It is the furtherance of the fundamental exercise of democracy that will allow for criticism and disagreeing views to emerge. That is not possible unless the debate is extended beyond the walls of political institutions and reach society as a whole (Keane, 1991). It is precisely in the conflicting identities and diverse interests, where the understanding of Amazonian issues lie. According to Ianni (1989), Latin American democracy has a continental aspect to it. The world economic order dictated by the richer nations influences the outcome of policies and the democratic exercise of civil society. As the commercialisation of the media spheres takes place, ordinary citizens see increased restrictions in the expression of their plights. Thus, the struggle for space and time and a place in the public discussion of social problems becomes one of an increasingly fierce nature. In this, Splichal (1993) says, resides the ultimate democratisation of existent communication forms. It is not only the quantitative nature of this extension of communication processes that is endangered. The ways which the excluded and voiceless find to express their opinions provide new insights in the political arenas that impact their lives.

As suggested by Splichal, these unrepresented groups have had to enact a "process of reappropriating generic communication abilities and means" (Ibid., p. 13). In the rise of social movements lie the fundamentals of such a reappropriation as citizens act in favour of their rights and gain the public arenas to express them. Civil society is seen as a body able to counter-balance power relations traditionally implicit in political life. The organisation of civil society in the form of new social movements is the most clear evidence of the dimension power relationships have assumed especially in settings experiencing redemocratisation.
Policy and decision-making

Gurevitch & Levy’s (1985) argument on the impact of media in policy-making circles is of major relevance to this study. For them, although the importance of media contribution in framing social problems is acknowledged:

Less often recognised is the notion that the media ought to be seen as a site on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality. (p. 19).

As an element of democracy, dialogue has to take place in policy decision-making. Though the media do not and cannot, for the institution it constitutes, make policy, some, as Spitzer (1993), say that the media can influence “... policy structure, content or timing.” (p. 6). Corroborating this is Anderson’s (1991) indication that because media coverage observes cycles and “... due to the scale of public concern it looks as if the environment is likely to continue to hold a high position on the political agenda in the 1990s.” (p. 472).

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, in June 1992, was an event of such a dimension, that the media would only abide by its organisational procedures and reported on the two main themes of the meeting. According to Kingdon (1995), “… media attention to an issue affects legislators’ attention partly because members follow mass media like other people, and partly because media affect their constituents” (p. 58). Obviously, all government preparations were in the terrain of policies that would allow more influence and attention in the negotiations.22 It is not without difficulty that the environment has been kept in the news. Other more pressing issues such as the economic crisis translated into inflation and unemployment have taken the environment from high ranking position in the news agenda. Nevertheless, the environment has been constructed as a social problem of such an importance that it is very unlikely to disappear or become a less important issue. (Lowe & Morrison, 1984; Kamieniecki, 1991).

22 The Brazilian document prepared especially for the Conference is proof of that. A report produced with the collaboration of experts in each and every field of knowledge relevant to support Brazil’s case in the international arena, it acknowledges the importance of environmental issues in development settings. It reads: “The incorporation of the ecological paradigm in governmental decision-making process … constitutes more than a goal. It constitutes a biological necessity for the maintenance of natural systems which make life possible.” (CIMA, 1991, p. 14).
The environment in the public agenda

Palmer (1993) discusses the possibility of increasing environmental news. News coverage anticipates rising concern with environmental issues that ultimately is reflected in the media and calls for solution and change. But the author reveals scepticism as to the expanding nature of the environmental agenda. It is the entertaining face of news bringing novelty and excitement that interest audiences. According to Palmer (Ibid.), publics are far from being interested in repetitive themes regardless of their relevance. Perhaps this explains, why environmental and development issues became more of an underlying issue to other pressing matters after 1992. A decrease on environmental coverage in the Amazon was observed after the Conference. Rather than in the centre of the news agenda as it had been for the two previous 12-month periods, environmental themes lost space in the news agenda.

Anderson (1991) concurs with Palmer's argument by saying that the communication of environmental issues in the future "depend[s] ... upon the resources which the media and environmental organisations can command, which is in turn linked with the environment's perceived importance in mainstream political thinking and public agendas." (Ibid., p. 473). As this study unfolds, the ups and downs of environmental coverage are evident in the way indicated by Downs (1972), Strodthoff et al. (1985), Anderson (1991), Hansen (1993) and Suhonen (1993). In a study about U.S. news media coverage of environmental degradation in the Amazon, Bendix & Liebler (1991) argue that news is fundamental in its potential to influence policy-making. Mass media process most of the information that potentially empowers society to debate and influence political decisions. In this, media structures act as mediators of socio-political affairs (Spitzer, 1993).

Though Neuman et al. (1992) state that "The traditional view of the way citizens gain information from the media is dominated by imagery of a vegetative audience ...", they acknowledge the potential of media to exert considerable influence. Moreover they point out the importance of reaching to individuals in distinct publics. These citizens, in conclusion,

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23 See chapter VI for journalistic assessment.
24 Detailed discussion of findings in chapter V.
will have their ability to take action in direct proportion to their acquiring of information through the news media.

According to Hall et al. (1978):

In societies where the bulk of the population has neither direct access to nor power over the central decisions which affect their lives, where official policy and opinion is concentrated and popular opinion is dispersed, the media play a critical mediating and connecting role in the formation of public opinion, and in orchestrating that opinion together with the actions and views of the powerful. (p. 63-64).

In many instances, though, the informational role of the media and its articulating ability is overshadowed by the need to call attention to dramatic events. It is the tragedies that stir interest. In this, Solesbury (1976) argues there is a positive side. According to the author, by publicising such events, the media also manage to call attention to themes underlying them. Many have been the occasions when environmental disasters forced shifting of public and policy-makers attentions to areas of crucial relevance.

Taking a different approach from the informative function of the news, Palmer (1993) argues that news discourse leans more heavily towards myth than in the direction of information. I do not completely agree with such a sceptical view. Evidence in this study\(^\text{25}\) shows that though news reinforces myth, it also introduces insights into reality which are essential in democratic arenas. The introduction of diverse and opposing views in the news is a pervasive practice. Though news may not prescribe solutions for society's dilemmas, it has the potential of introducing various points of view. In the process of presenting such diverse opinions, news has an undeniable tendency to favour certain perspectives. If not completely "reified information", as suggested by Luhmann (In Palmer, 1993, p. 159), perhaps news rather than being informative, tends to reinforce myths as well as it "... provide[s] a set of classifications that are workable in that they establish the normal, reduce equivocality, and increase predictability ..." (Ericson et al. 1991, p. 4).

\(^{25}\)See analysis in chapters V, VI and VII.
Contradictions

It is in the contextualisation of news or lack of contextualisation that emerges a need to understand the processes that underlie the role of communication in the development of areas such as the Brazilian Amazon. Opubor (1993) calls attention to the analysis of the reporting of population and environment matters in Africa. Rather than being reported as processes, the issues’ coverage reveals a static nature and denies the unfolding nature of events. The pitfall of such practices, according to Opubor (Ibid.), is that they do not allow for longer attention span and follow up of matters which obviously lead into unsubstantiated type of news. Sachsman (1996) also attacks the lack of continuity of environmental coverage. Because the environment rose to a position of a recognised serious issue, instead of remaining a news beat it ought to have developed “into a whole department” (p. 247). Sachsman introduces one of the many contradictions implicit in the coverage of environment. As serious as the issues may be, despite a theme’s relevance, its systematic news coverage is not always there to support the public debate.

The very fact that an issue becomes more visible in the coverage only to later lose its place to another issue, is revealing of what Dahlgren (1985) calls the dialectic of social reality. For this reason, Dahlgren (Ibid.), along with Fowler (1991), argues that media processes, meaning building around social problems and the implications of perception and understanding of such problems are fundamental objects of study. The overall schema under which the Amazon region, through its more prominent actors, processes meaning of its own matters, is, therefore, a relevant research topic. In this research's framework, the attempt is to understand the scheme shared within a group of people (for this matter, Amazonian journalists and media sources) and drawn upon in the process of making sense of the world (their world, the Amazon Region).

“Democracy requires informed citizens” and “Their capacity to produce intelligent agreements ... can be nurtured only when they enjoy equal and open access to diverse sources of opinion.” (Keane, 1991, p. 176). Media as social institutions have been sought and thought of as important arenas of dialogue and as such, instrumental in democracy. That informed citizens play an active role in the solution of social problems is not a new
assumption (Suhonen, 1993a). Suhonen acknowledges the legitimacy of assessing media and the public involved in the debate of environmental issues. It is his argument that the publicisation of problems resulting from changes in the environment is necessary in order for society to seek solutions.

The identification of the nature of environmental problems is crucial to their interpretation and construction of meaning in media arenas. There are many contradictions which arise within the scenario of this social problem. Among these contradictory faces of the environment problem are its multidimension and multidisciplinarity, economic and non-economic value, irreversibility of resources depletion, extensive character, uncertainty and risk, involvement of a variety of interests, sectors and ideologies (Söderbaum, 1991).

For Gamson and Modigliani (1989), every policy issue has a culture of its own and:

> On most policy issues, there are competing packages available ... one can view policy issues as, in part, a symbolic context over which interpretation will prevail. This cultural system has a logic and dynamic of its own. Packages ebb and flow in prominence and are constantly revised and updated to accommodate new events. (p. 2).

Aside the very contradictions of issues related to the environment, any study that sets out to assess the content of news, needs to take into account the contradictions intrinsic to the media. Though the media are instrumental in the analysis of meaning construction and dissemination of particular social issues, they themselves can disguise and corrupt meaning and, thus, in many ways, take away meaning from crucial issues (Dahlgren, 1985). It is Miller (1992) who discusses this contradiction further. For the author, “While the separation of social interaction from discrete places hinders dialogue, it implies a level of global visibility never before possible” (p. 37). In this, Miller (Ibid.) sees the possibility that even from afar, individuals are able to establish and enhance bonds.

**Influences on the outcome of news**

Most authors also agree upon the role of journalists as key actors in such contexts. Though some emphasise the media messages themselves and play down the media impact in
decision-making processes (Kingdon, 1995), others argue that it is necessary to look beyond media content, in order to analyse production procedures (Borquez, 1993). Borquez acknowledges, though, that "Although there is useful literature on the politics and economics of newsmaking, it has been difficult to incorporate it into many conceptualisations of the policy process." (Ibid., p. 34). Kingdon (1995) goes further and states that the insistence on giving prominence to themes based on values of drama and newsworthiness as known to media, in fact, decreases news impact on policy-making. The justification for Kingdon's (Ibid.) argument comes in the form of the order taken by the news as it tends to be published as a result and not in anticipation of decisions made at government level. The anticipation of news has a special significance in the Amazon as it will be seen in the analysis.26

Kingdon (1995) acknowledges some of the media potentials relevant to this study. Firstly, the author recognises the mediator function of news bridging segments within the policy-making structures. Secondly, comes the acceptance of media impact in amplifying policy moves originated at different places. Finally, in a clear allusion to potential collusion, Kingdon concedes that in the event that the media actually influence public agendas, it becomes evident how participants in said agendas endorse the media.

Similar criticism as to the media-centrism in media sociology studies have been extensively discussed by Schlesinger (1991). He argues that "any sociology of information management which is surely central to the workings of the 'information society' - has to take due account of what the sociology of journalism can tell us about the nature and scope of source power." (p. 62-63). In this scenario, theoretical frameworks such as the constructionist approach proposed by Gamson (1988a and b) appear more appropriate. In Constructionism, the focus is on common knowledge, collective building of meaning, rather than on public opinion. Attention is dedicated to "... what people think and how they think about public issues rather than narrowly defined valence-oriented 'opinions' concerning an issue ..." (Neuman et al., 1992, p. 18). It is the organisation of meaning in specific structures that allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the significance and the relevance that issues acquire.

26Many of the issues which became prominent in the second half of the 1990s were signalled in the news during the period targeted by this research. See Conclusion chapter (VIII).
A comprehensive mode of analysis

It is in the overall collective dimensions where frames of news operate as a unifying factor in the perception of issues and building of meaning. As Neuman et al. (1992) say "... the structuring and framing of information is not unique to each individual but aggregates into the cultural phenomenon of shared perspectives and issue frames." (p. 18). According to Borquez (1993), "... models emphasising fluid participation by larger sets of actors make this incorporation more feasible." (p. 34). In the analysis of processes which take place in public arenas such as the media resides the core proposition of Constructionism. In this analytical approach, a combination of forms of scrutiny is required as both processes of interpretation - that of meaning construction and actors' performance - is essential.

Garnham (1986) argues that we run into the risk of being axiomatic as we assert that communication processes are fundamental in democracy. But in places where democracy is yet to be consolidated, this is never repetitive an assumption. If democracy is to stand in Amazônia and the region has a chance to be developed in a sustainable fashion, dialogue is necessary in the making of policy. It is in this context that media and their potential to sustain public communication are taken as fundamental elements of the regional scenario of sustainable development. Though using the media as the universe of the research, this study's analysis is not restricted to media procedures. It takes into consideration an array of factors active in the context within which news is published in the Amazon. One of the most pervasive types of analysis is also Garnham's critical political economy of mass communication. On this, Keane (1991) says that the media fundamentally represent "economic phenomena" with two distinct dimensions: 1. the media perform a direct role in the generation of a product, the commodity that news has become; and 2. they also have an indirect role, revealed in the form of advertising.

Commoditisation of news and media role are matters to be considered not in themselves but as part of an overall scenario which includes other elements. It is essential to argue the importance of information gain in decision-making. But it is also important to recall that the fact that the media act as major sources of the required knowledge. For Dahlgren (1985),
"information has to be situated in some scheme or pattern." (p. 10). Although information provision may not be, after all, the aim of news, the author argues that out of society's demands "meaning emerges" regardless of journalistic "intentions". (Ibid., p. 11).

The paradigm of sustainable development, therefore, demands a theoretical framework for the study of mass communication that matches its principles. Reeves (1993) says:

Changes in theory and analysis of communications and culture in 'Third World' societies, including their relations with those of the advanced capitalist world, have fairly closely followed those of economic development. (p. 51).

The author also argues that some research answers reside in the analysis of matters constituting internal social structure and social reproduction such as media production processes. In contexts such as that of Latin America, communication, meanings and reactions are constructed, among other elements, from the perspective of very diverse publics. As a result of this diversity, meaning construction and resonance are outcomes of "complex sets of social and cultural relations and mediations" (p. 52). The author does not see that analysis of Latin American contexts can be solely based on domination models be they of cultural or economic nature or of international or national perspectives.

As suggested by Ericson et al. (1991), analytical concerns should not focus on the truthfulness of news. Relevant studies of news should concentrate on the intrinsic power relations and the use of news in support of such relations or as a disguise of them.

**Constructionism and definition of social problems in the media**

A constructionist study of issues such as the environment seems to be the response to other less encompassing theoretical approaches. By concentrating on social matters themselves and not limiting the analysis interest to media alone, research acknowledges the need for an interdependent and multifaceted framework. Through the constructionist approach, this research attempts to extend its observation from actors only to an analysis of how some issues take shape and others are undermined or left out in what Hansen (1993) writes as
being the "wider 'cultural givens' and 'cultural resonances' [that] help privilege the advancement of some issues and not others" (Ibid., p. 454).

As issues rise and fall in the media, they may or may not be taken into consideration by decision circles. Solesbury (1976) suggests that action is taken in the direction of certain issues dependent on their ability to persist in the arenas of debate. They must, according to the author, live through the tangles of policy-making processes.

In the context of meaning construction, Schudson (1987), similar to Dahlgren (1985), argues that cultural understanding is assumed in news stories and whilst the writer intends one interpretation, the readers, due to their diverse backgrounds, interpret in varied forms. Furthermore, as Palmer (1993) suggests, according to the nature of actors' roles, they will act one way or another in the defence of distinct positions. It is in this case that "Scientists and public officials are accused at times of maintaining a status quo, and environmentalists and journalists share a commitment, albeit with different motives, to undermine it." (p. 160).

Any news which criticises and undermines power structures is, according to Palmer (Ibid.), suggestive of the inability of government to find suitable solutions to society's problems.

According to Peet & Watts (1993), the economic changes observed in the 1980s and a threatening global environmental crisis brought back the theme of the environment. Upon this return, they argue, a new concept became pervasive, that of sustainable development. A new discourse based on sustainability principles rose and was appropriated by a wide spectrum of organisations. From international financial agencies such as the World Bank to grassroots movements, the rhetoric included the new terminology and its poor operationalisation of principles.

It is García's (1992) argument that a surprising communion in the use of concepts occurred as an outcome of the more recent economic crisis as:

... the themes of participatory democracy and quality of life that facilitate articulations between environmental and other organisations may undergo a process of resignification. The so-called economic democracy of neoliberalism is backed by neighbourhood associations, but is rejected by grassroots popular organisations and some environmental
groups who demand that the content of political democracy be enriched with the principles of equity and social justice. (p. 166).

The discourse about sustainable development in the Amazon has gone beyond the limits of environmentally-concerned statements. The structure of such a discourse has been drawn around a said compromise of better quality of life and better management of natural resources. Represented as the "harmonisation of the economics-ecology relation" (Garnham, 1986, p. 37), sustainable development meets the needs of a believed and, mostly, convincing discourse. According to Elliott (1994) "... all view sustainable development as inherently desirable and a policy objective which should be striven for." (p. 109).

For Peet & Watts (1993), "Discourses vary among what are often competing, even conflicting, cultural, racial, gender, class, regional, and other differing interests ..." (p. 228). But as unlikely as it may seem at first, various discourses coexist under hegemonic structures. An aspect that must be taken into consideration when discussing issues of hegemony is the fact that media and media professional are key elements in the processes of status quo maintenance. They are major actors, protagonists in that they are empowered "... as selectors of which people can speak in public conversations, as formulators of how these people are presented, and as authors of knowledge." (Ericson et al., 1991, p. 16).

The agenda of those who have taken in their hands the articulation of what can be called the sustainable development project in the Amazon, has a comprehensive perspective. Instead of particularising the issue as one of environmental concern, sustainable development as a concept serves political, economic and social agendas in a thoroughness that is hardly noticeable in another issue. Sustainable development can be compared as the environment has been to strategic defence expenditure in that it involves issues of information freedom and State as well as private sector social accountability (Comer & Schlesinger, 1991). Thus, sustainable development issues has been acknowledged in public arenas of wider social reach and has become the order of the day in most arenas of the Brazilian Amazon rhetoric. From politicians to business circles, from popular movements to media, sustainable development has assumed a strength of hope within a damaged regional scenario.
Scholars such as Cottle (1993) have acknowledged that media representations of the environment are of major importance to contemporary society. Comer & Schlesinger (1991) also defend such an argument. For them, the environment touches areas of freedom of information and State and private spheres relations to an extent only known before in matters of strategic defence expenditure. In this context, though, Solesbury (1976) warns against the risk of environmental issues becoming circumscribed in the political system. It is important that the environment enters a variety of spheres. Its nature, though, allows for it to be part of State affairs but it is also intrinsic to private circles. Environmental issues take up space in the news both as they are discussed in the legislative and in small communities threatened by environmental damage.

Far from the most common threat and risk characteristic of environmental topics, sustainable development is presented as a solution, a source of hope and a cure to all maladies. Mostly approached as positive, sustainable development has become a matter of meaning making amongst audiences. The problem of operationalisation of the concept in itself has been transposed to the very communication of the construct. If experts have difficulty in bringing together all the elements that constitute sustainable development, what can be said of those who actually "translate" the subject to the general public? Among those are media professionals as well as representatives of segments engaged in the debate, e.g., scientists, media liaisons, environmental activists, non-governmental organisations' officials. How do they themselves operationalise and make sense of a complex concept that is to be communicated to wider audiences? In yet another approach, how do audiences frame the meaning of sustainable development as they "read" it from the information provided by the media?

As Comer & Schlesinger (1991) suggest, journalism is responsible for a range of issues relevant in the construction of meaning of a given social problem. Some of them arise in the professional routines and narratives appearing in the news. They also involve the representation of environmental policy, the carrying capacity of the theme in the news agenda. Moreover national and local economic aspects account for how media portrays environmental affairs. These issues are to be studied in a context of change, of a new regime. Becker (1994) explains the change as one of globalised markets and increased high
technology availability and use, all of which legitimised by scientific knowledge. As Handel (1982) says "when scientific results are employed in practical decision-making, they enter the decision process as evidence ... Despite the imposition of ... procedure ... science remains a commonsense activity." (p. 121). This aids the trivialisation of technical arguments and facilitates their acceptance with the non-specialised audiences.

Space-time relationships as discussed by Carey (1989), Harvey (1989) and Giddens (1990) are in the centre of the new regimes pointed out previously. With their elements of speed, space and time, altered relationships, are key elements in the new regime "... capable of altering not only civil and military techno-production complex but also social power relations. ‘Velocity’ is achieved via the multiplication of the technical circulation and communication networks." (Becker, 1994, p. 177).

Miller (1992) in his optimistic tone argues that:

While modernity has clearly brought an expansion of systemic forms of action coordination, it has also entailed an expansion of communicative action; many aspects of daily life that were previously unspeakable ... are now discussed, questioned, and challenged. (p. 37).

Though one can hardly question the extensive debate on issues pointed out by Miller, it is important to recall that this is not the result of facilitated means of communication. Rather these developments represent changes in the context of major political struggles based on democratic principles and afforded by resistance movements. New spaces for communication and understanding have indeed been created. Aside their novelty, it must be emphasised that the author says that these are not without their own problems. It is not their mere existence that ensures dialogue and flow of information.

Media, public arenas and discourse-building around the environment

Over the past thirty years, a number of issues has become of social concern as they regard environmental conditions and have brought new themes to the media research agenda. Among many other scholars, Sachsman (1996) argues that the environment became the
focus of media throughout the world from the 1960s onwards. According to the author, because government took on the topic of the environment, the media started to report it as serious. In this process, audiences became acquainted with environmental issues and realised their relevance to society. Processes of production, of meaning making, policy decisions, public action and participation are more than ever a must. As suggested by Burgess (1990), the analysis of production and consumption of environmental news is crucial to understanding:

How is environmental science transformed by different media for non-specialist audiences and what sense do people make of different areas of scientific research which might affect their daily lives or the world which their children and grandchildren might inherit? (p. 157).

As part of a bigger political, economic and social framework, the media representation of social issues has been acknowledged as one of impact in the framing and shaping of these very matters. For Gurevitch and Levy (1985), "the media should be seen as the site on which a variety of more-or-less powerful and organised interests and perspectives contend in an effort to influence the public dialogue." (p. 19).

Relevant to the discussion on how the press covers issues of sustainable development in the Amazon is the emphasis some authors, such as Cavalcanti (1996), give to information as a basis to the formulation of public policy under sustainability principles. In addition to this, it is essential to note as suggested by Van Dijk (1991) that:

Most of our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world derive from the dozens of news reports we read or see every day. There is probably no other discursive practice, besides everyday conversation, that is engaged in so frequently and by so many people as news in the press and on television. (p. 110).

Since considerable amounts of information are acquired through the media, it is essential to identify structures of discourse as they appear in newspapers in regard to sustainable development. Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that "... an object may provide interest groups with a powerful symbol and an invaluable political resource" (Rodgers, 1996, p. 178).
Participation of actors interferes in the process of long term decision-making which ultimately produces official policy. Castells (1977) and Melucci (1988), among other scholars whose works analyse social change, argue that change takes place as new meanings are brought into society as a result of conflict. The media work as arenas to public dialogue held by social actors on issues such as the environment and development. Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) discuss the formation of social problems in public arenas. According to them, the definition of social problems is built collectively. The nature of this scenario is one of competitive and selective attention dispensed by both the media and the public. The authors argue that in these processes, media play a fundamental role as they deliver news after having selected some themes among the competing social problems. For Strodthoff et al. (1985), the media are major carriers of environmental information and serve as channels for articulating the environment as a social problem. The authors suggest the importance of observing “… communication processes involved in the crystallisation and diffusion of an ideology of social change (Environmentalism) and the translation over time of this doctrine into a unified realm of substantive concerns.” (Ibid., p. 134).

Other authors such as Waddell (1995) and Neuzil (1995) have studied environment-related issues against a public arenas model. Burgess (1990) and Whatmore & Boucher (1993) have analysed the construction of environmental meaning as they constitute discourses on social problems as previously indicated by Hilgartner & Bosk (1988). As far as environmental issues are of concern in Brazil, various authors lend guidance to the analysis of the Amazonian context. Among those are Ribeiro (1991) and his analysis of various discourses and implications in political arenas; Gondim (1994) and her analysis of meaning building around the Amazon region drawn from various literary sources; and Tassara (1992) and the diffusion of an environmentalist discourse of domination and how it has forced policy decision-making in Brazil to fit international demands and standards.

**Communicating environmental meaning**

Keane (1991) states that environment policy is an example for “...providing new and undogmatic arguments for the compatibility and superiority of both the democratic method and public service communications” (p. 174). According to the author, the nature and reach of environmental damage is such that it crosses national borders and hits rich and poor just
as hard. In the unprecedented character of environmental problems, democracy is, according to the author, renewed in its relevance to the contemporary world. Many decisions and measures are to be taken to avoid damage escalating to extreme proportions. In this, the democratic rights of expression, access to information and interference in public affairs assume a new and unexpected dimension bringing into play a variety of actors and interests. Many authors have discussed this phenomenon in settings such as Brazil (Viola, 1987; Ribeiro, 1991) and the Amazon (Arnt & Schwarzman, 1992).

Downs (1972) as well as Solesbury (1976) had previously identified the phenomena. In the words of Solesbury "... the environment as a general issue has risen to a dominant position among political concerns." (p. 379). In his work, the author does not so much analyse the emergence of environmental issues. He points towards an analysis that the systemic nature of the environment has finally been acknowledged and as such is treated in the media. Solesbury (1976) says that environmental damage resulting from economic pressures has started to be acknowledged. The connection of a variety of environmental factors until now considered unrelated have, according to Solesbury, been recognised.

It is in the public sphere, in arenas of debate such as the media, that discourse takes shape. Although some theorists, such as Foucault, approach discourse as one of "producing regimes of truth that pervade society" (McCoy, 1988: 71), constructionist theory argues that the expression of different discourses establishes an underlying and complex set of meanings that ultimately shapes reality (Gamson, 1988a and b; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gamson et al., 1992; Hansen, 1994; Hannigan, 1995). Discourse, though, is not static and, according to Schuurman (1993), "movements and individuals go from one discourse to another depending upon the way their own identity construction takes place and depending upon the reactions of other social and political actors" (p. 201).

The analysis of media discourse reveals "set[s] of possible statements about a given area, and organise[s] and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about ..." (Kress, 1985, p. 7). According to Kress, discourses ultimately establish social norms and regulations by which individual and collective action are to abide. Discourse implies the systematic organisation of language in regard to specific
topics that have embedded meanings and values. In Fowler (1991), discourse "is socially and institutionally originating ideology, encoded in language" (p. 42). But discourse and meaning are built from a variety of factors. Fairclough (1995) says that as much as media discourse is to be seen as a space of complicated and opposing dynamics it also implies that media texts have an ideological motive and "... operate as cultural commodities in a competitive market ..." (p. 47).

Hall et al. (1978), though not discussing media discourse, but ideology in the media, concede that as media perform a connective and mediating role, they are "...enhanced, not weakened, by the very fact that they are, formally and structurally, independent both of the sources to which they refer and of the 'public' on whose behalf they speak." (p. 64). This approach is problematic as it does not allow for the analysis of media in connection with other social institutions. By considering media as an independent body, this line of thought isolates the media from the whole of the social context.

The prevailing tendency in the definition of events has a correspondent counter-tendency, which depends "... on the existence of organised and articulate sources ..." (Ibid., p. 64) which must be as powerful as the forces they oppose. Counter-definitions originating from non-prevailing sources, according to the authors, are successful to the extent of these actors' competence in providing meaning that is as powerful as meanings they confront. It is also necessary that these actors in order to face their opponents in media arenas, are organised and if they do not comprise a majority, are at least a considerable minority. Tested at all levels, counter-definers have to prove they express their views among the wave of meanings and, thus, remain on the scene, even winning the competition.

Language, discourse and power

The discussion on counter-definition strategies is consistent with the arguments that new social movements rise and can only secure space for their claims as they find backing from a leadership or other members of society, such as scientists. The lending of authority provides the necessary legitimacy to issues brought to the surface in the news. In this dynamic
environment, a variety of discourses take shape and frames are attributed to news from various perspectives such as science, economy and politics.

For Peet & Watts (1993), discourse represents language applied to a specific area. It holds a direct link with relevant institutions and is a tool to express a specific perspective. The authors rely on Barnes & Duncan’s (1992) definition of discourses as “frameworks that embrace particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices, each relevant to a particular realm of social action.” (p. 228). In the particular area of social action, Harré (1983) and Renckstorf & McQuail (1996) give their contributions. Harré emphasises language as an instrument of action within wider contexts of meaning making. Renckstorf & McQuail discuss the social action approach in media in that “… media and mediated messages form but a part of the sense-making symbolic environment of post-industrial man.” (Ibid., p. 15). From these perspectives, the relevance of media and their messages is defined by both contexts and by individual and collective acts.

Sholle (1988) argues that ideology “... is a produced knowledge, a knowledge that is opposed to ‘truth’, a knowledge that oppresses and represses.” (p. 16). A non-reductionist approach to ideology, according to Sholle, provides a redefinition of the term as an evolving and dynamic definition of language rather than a forceful introduction of ideas. Thus, one may infer that ideology, and for the purpose of this study the ideology of sustainable development, is constructed in the process of public debates of related issues and can be assessed from media content.

The emergence of the environmentalist movement was a counter-definer in itself, with the task of challenging established values in society. According to Lowe & Morrison (1984), the movement put to test the “...technological rationality of advanced industrial society and the role of science not just as a form of knowledge but as a cultural domination ...” (p. 76). In the authors’ view, the movement represents resistance to the industrial ideology exercised by means of an applied humanist rationale.

28 Authors such as Ribeiro (1991) and Coelho (1994) discuss the idea that the concept of sustainable development has become an ideology. They both analyse the issue in the contexts of Brazil and Amazônia.
For Fairclough (1995), it is correct to examine media discourse as a source of power and domination so long as this is not the single perspective used. According to him, the alleged media domination by stable unitary codes and practices does not hold any longer. A contemporary view of the media "... stresses cultural diversity ... highly pluralistic in practices, with no single web of power running through the whole system." (Ibid., p. 67). Because the functions of ideology are of such a varied nature, Sholle contributes his view as he studies television, by arguing that messages cannot be identified on "single sources" (Ibid., p. 34). For him, messages combine speeches and, thus, appear in the media. In this scenario, it is important to emphasise the use of a constructionist approach to media analysis as it draws precisely on the plurality of components appearing in media messages.

According to Sholle (1988), the media present their audiences with a systematised structure of themes and perspectives that are present in the public agenda. The perspectives which frame information compose the overall structure of discourse and ultimately comprise the ideology of a specific source of power. As Raymond Williams (1961) argues "It is impossible to discuss communication ... without in the end coming to discuss power." (p. 19). This stands in contemporary society with the added burden of considering different discourses stemming from various representations of power and from differences in classes which, according to Sparks (1992), "... have different access to education, to leisure, and to the means of cultural consumption." (p. 77).

In the discussion of power, Habermas has provided a fundamental theoretical framework when communication studies debate the role of media as public arenas. McCoy (1988) and Peters (1993) both analyse such a framework. In discussing representation publicity, Peters defines it as a "counterweight to democratic participation" (Ibid., p. 545), that allows society possibility of choice immanent to democracy. The idea of openness of discussion, embedded in publicity, goes back to Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Such a concept "forms the historical background for modern forms of public communication" (Habermas, In Peters, 1993, p. 545). Media arenas represent fora of debate and dialogue with a potential of being available to all layers of society. Miller (1992) explains Habermas' theory of collective action by the spheres they comprise. One sphere, namely the "system", represents the space
of material production and reproduction and aims at being successful. In the case of the other sphere, the "lifeworld", it holds the shared knowledge, traditions, rituals and symbols a society is based upon in keeping its minimum integrity by the observation of rules and regulation. The author emphasises that communicative action, different from action which is strategic and instrumental directed to success, "... is oriented toward reaching understanding ... and is rooted in communicative rationality." (Ibid., p.26).

The use of Habermas' analogy of theatre and marketplace is helpful in understanding the dynamics of dialogue within the public sphere. Peters (1993), similar to Miller (1992), explains these circles in that the theatre holds society as audience in the listening for determined scripts. The marketplace provides a variety of performances. For instance, those who are audience in the theatre do not necessarily remain in that position. They sometimes also become active participants in the marketplace. Among the attributed contemporary media roles is one of a civic nature, of information provision and another of economic character "to provide entertainment ... to produce audiences for advertisers". (Peters, 1993, p. 559). Peters argues that the media are an extremely ambiguous institution. Since the goals of media mix altruistic acts of producing information to society and those of commercial nature, it is difficult to define lines and limits for these two opposed objectives and distinct interests. Ambiguity contributes to confusion in interpretation, in the process of meaning building and can work in many different ways, producing quite different outcomes. Borquez (1993) supports such an argument when stating that "In some cases, media coverage may influence policymakers by mobilising public opinion; in other instances, coverage may provide officials the opportunity to substitute symbolic gestures for constructive policy proposals." (p. 39).

It is in the public sphere, in the arenas of debate such as the media, that public opinion and discourse take shape. According to Lowe & Morrison (1984), "Habermas is in no doubt about the role which the mass media play in this process". For the German thinker the media act as a means to depoliticise the public, avoiding, thus, criticism of the technocratic ideology behind advanced capitalist societies. It is in the public sphere managed by the media that this is possible (Habermas, 1971b).
Peet & Watts (1993) suggest analysis of the particular "connection between centralised power articulated through hegemonic discourses and the discourses of dominated people." (p. 230). In an argument by Peet & Watts (1993), the context of a region is particularly relevant to the construction of discourse. The setting allows for the rise of particular forms of thinking and expression, subjects, reasoning, and produces endogenous images in the translation of the region's own reality. In the dynamics of constructing a regional discourse, these elements fade away, at times, "... only to reappear with even greater intensity in new guises." (p. 231).

As Habermas (1987a) analyses communication in the time of bourgeois rise in the nineteenth century, his is a reference to contemporary studies in the field. According to the author, "communication was represented as standing on its own feet, setting limits to the dynamics of autonomous subsystems, bursting encapsulated expert cultures, and thus as escaping the combined threat of reification and desolation" (p. 329). It is in this condition, according to Peters (1993), that communication became political (p. 552). In this lies the importance to approach the field from a constructionist perspective. According to Swanson (1985), the approach allows analysis of how publics construct meaning out of political messages. The author argues that Constructionism allows the study of other relevant aspects, such as "the influence of political attitudes on behaviour, the ways particular features of political messages may impact on persons' understandings of political actors and events ..." (p. 188).

According to Miller (1992), Habermas' concept of communicative action "permits a collective critique of systemic social problems by rational-moral actors drawing on the normative structures of their lifeworld." (p. 27). The sphere, once genuinely public, became over time privatised. With this new condition came the unwillingness to comply with principles of public accountability. In the terrain of media this meant the exclusion of ideas which did not align with private interests (McCoy, 1988).

As the public sphere brings into its arenas a variety of actors and interests, these are structures that have to be assessed in their complexity. There is no certain outcome coming from these relations as they are a continuing series of acts of symbolism. For Sholle (1988),
the media structures involve a "... complex web of practices in which activity is not a labour of subjects on objects but an activity of symbolisation among subjects ..." (p. 36).

As elaborated by Gamson (1988b), there are several discourses competing within public arenas of debate. Hence, it is important to observe how these discourses relate to one another. According to the author, there are specialist arenas which mostly apply written expression of their thoughts. An oral exercise is practised by actors at the level of decision-making. Besides these two there is a third discourse based on tailored packages aimed at mobilising society into action.

Seeking to understand shared meanings and interests around environment and development issues in the Amazon is a challenge and a necessary exercise. It is from initiatives to identify common grounds and differences among actors and the discourses they represent that the region may be able to decide upon its future.

**Media roles in setting the agenda, constructing meaning and building consensus**

Context is a factor of fundamental influence in meaning construction. As Burgess (1990) says:

> How people decode media texts depends on the different contexts in which they are read and the position of the individual in relation to the texts: sometimes readings will be dominant, at other times the individual will make an oppositional reading of the same material. (p. 155).

As previously discussed, the analysis of news content takes into account the general principle that media play a strong role as builders of an agenda of social affairs. Thus, the media are essential elements in the way society constructs reality. Environmental issues are the key to study such a scenario. The rise of Environmentalism in the 1960s and early 1970s was closely covered by the media. As a challenge to the well-established technological legitimacy, Environmentalism rose and the media administered the public sphere where the continuation of technological dominance had to be ensured. The implications to the future of
the treatment of environmental issues lie in the potential that the media persist to devise the environment as a neutral political theme. If that were to occur, media would be dismissing crucial aspects in the discussion of environmental affairs. By insisting on debate centred on quality of life, the coverage disregards the very holistic nature of the concept of environment (Lowe & Morrison, 1984).

Peet & Watts (1993) believe that it is necessary that any communication about environmental and development issues has to report on the equivocal nature of the separation of communities and the natural environment. They suggest that it is basic to "... recognise that dialectics remains a compelling theory of contradiction, crisis, and change." (p. 248). The authors argue that meaning making is a process that demands conflict and debate. Thus, if the media act as arenas of public debate, they must provide space needed for conflict and debate to take place. Gurevitch & Blumler (1990) argue that the news is an irrefutable space for the democratic exercise as it introduces opposing views, definitions and interpretations. By presenting contradictory views the news media also allow for "... a standing refutation of the antidemocratic notion that there is some single valid social purpose for pursuit through politics ..." (p. 272).

Between the historical conceptualisation of the public sphere in Habermas' thinking and the contemporary conditions, the public sphere has more and more been dominated by a State enlarged in size and influence. The public sphere has also been influenced by media systems concentrated in the hands of few groups. The media, according to Keane (1991), are no longer agents of power but have become manipulative. In a constructionist framework, media are as much part of society as any other institutions and hold the means to create space and opportunity for public debate. Settings for public debate on issues of crucial social importance, the media play a political role in calling attention to matters which otherwise would remain hidden from political arenas. In this mediating role, there is the potential for silencing coverage of some issues regardless of social relevance as both media and actors have interests to be protected. Though constituting arenas of debate, the media remain actors with obvious and mostly overt interests in the process of political decision-making.
Gandy (1982) suggests a step ahead or "beyond agenda-setting to determine who sets the media agenda, how and for what purposes it is set, and with what impact on the distribution of power and values in society." (p. 7). His argument is that whoever or whichever institutions control information, they hold the key to decision-making. In the centre of the argument of public participation in policy-making and the media role in this process are two major points. One point emphasises awareness-raising on issues such as science, technology and the environment and another that is the need to disseminate information to aid policy-making (Miller, 1983 and 1986, In Glynn, 1988). Page and Shapiro (1983) consider fundamental to study the media content, politicians discourse and other variables beyond opinion and policy as a means to analyse media roles. In the field of communication studies, Yankelovich (1991) proposes the systematic study of these issues as a process and Gamson (1988a and b) suggests a constructionist approach that centres on the social problems in the search to understanding meaning making processes within media arenas that eventually lead into decision.

Along these lines, Gerbner (1973) offers cultural indicators in their potential to "illuminate the aspects that relate more to institutional policy than to personal choice or taste" (p. 556). The author argues that such indicators aid the identification of sound policy choices which take into consideration the role media play in the “... cultivation of public policy alternatives”. (p. 556). According to Lowe & Morrison (1984), news is not the direct result of any conspiracy based on dominant ideological discourse. At the same time the authors concede that by encoding news from the point of view of shared culture and professional procedures guided by organisational structures, news indeed reflects a dominant ideology. Ericson et al. (1991) reinforce the argument in that “While news is institutionalised form of knowledge, its institutionalisation depends on the power/knowledge struggles of sources and journalists.” (p. 11).

Sholle suggests analysis of such power and knowledge relations based on the assumption that power is not static and does not belong in the hands of one specific class. If it were for that, revolutions would not take power from the hands of one group shifting it to yet another set of individuals. According to the author, “... power is not a commodity processed by a dominant class ... power exists as a network that extends to the entire social body”. (p. 37).
Thus, knowledge is not the revelation of one class's hidden controls and purposes. On the contrary, "formations of knowledge ... are a process of constituting the object of knowledge" (p. 37) in which the whole of society is capable of interfering.

Taking news as a starting point in the acquisition of knowledge, information is processed both within the boundaries of organisational demands, journalistic practices, and the input of actors who appear as sources of specific themes. The receiving end of this product is a not a motionless body with no reaction. Society as a whole acts upon information as it makes sense of it. As part of the communication process, different opinions and interests rise in the public arenas including the media. To look at the variety of elements involved is the objective of constructionist theory.

Studies have developed from an approach of agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), under which the media have been said to decide what the public should think about, should be aware of, concerned with, to one of Constructionism (Gamson, 1988a and b). The latter emphasises the interconnection between media and society in the full and comprehensive relations of what is political, economic and cultural. The constructionist approach "reframes the relationship between media and public opinion as the interplay between two interacting systems." (Gamson, 1988a, p. 165). In a similar elaboration as that of Habermas, Gamson's own approach devises two related and complementary arenas. One system is that of media discourse which produces forms of representing reality. In the other arena, collectives of citizens use media discourse in the construction of meaning relevant to personal and public affairs. According to Gamson, the two systems involve one where "media discourse ... frames events and presents information always in some context of meaning" and another where "... a public of interacting individuals ... approach media discourse in an active way, using it to construct their own personal meanings about public events and issues." (Ibid., p. 165).

To Burgess (1990), the media industry "... has come to dominate public communication through its selective provision of information about relations between different groups in societies, their economies and political processes, their relations with built and natural environments." (p. 141). A cycle seems to take place as sources produce information,
reported by the media, that builds up political attention and response to social causes and movements such as science and the environment (Yearley, 1988 and 1991; O'Riordan, 1989; Solesbury, 1976; Graber, 1994; Yankelovich, 1991; Suhonen, 1993b).

Burgess (1990) summarises this cycle as she analyses the construction of meaning and organises it in distinct phases. From production involving media personnel who are obliged to observe economic rules to the text, information is transformed in a system of symbols. There is no end to this process as the consumption of news implies the creation of a number of meanings dependent on the nature of audiences and their ability to respond to the information provided. In this ability lies the reproduction of the whole process of news production as it allows for renewed reporting.

In both constructionist approaches and extensions of the agenda-setting approach, sources and journalistic production are major components in the identification of media processes. The emphasis on acquisition of information or construction of meaning and collective participation in policy decision-making is crucial in the argument of media as public arenas (Borquez, 1993; Kamieniecki, 1991). The ability to impact decision at official levels is one of the main goals of those who believe the media are spaces of public discussion no matter the constraints they present. For Gamson (1988a), the media are "part of a cultural system worthy of a dynamic analysis in its own." (p. 165).

Individual sources play important roles in the setting of public agendas. Legitimacy comes to information through what Goodell (1986) calls "accredited sources". The origin of these individuals, according to Solesbury (1976), is usually the intellectual circles. This is especially true in cases of democratic settings. They can be academics, activists or government officials. For Solesbury, "In diverse, non-authoritarian, educated societies ... such individuals are likely to be found within any of the political institutions - as professors within universities ... as experts within interest groups, as specialists within government ..." (Ibid., p. 382).
News framing

Within the constructionist analysis of news, one concept is crucial: that of frames. Media frames or media packages characterise the ordering of a given content (Gitlin, 1980; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). This form of analysis is essential in the identification of how news about the Amazon is constructed. By identifying news framing, the study reveals dominant views about the region, pervasive interpretations about social problems and predominant interests in the Amazonian question. According to Gitlin (1980), "media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organise discourse, whether verbal or visual." (p. 7). McCombs & Shaw (1993) consider the evolution of the agenda-setting paradigm in media studies, and believe frame analysis implies that news is responsible for revealing social problems. At the same time, news is responsible for the "... alternative proposals for coping with problems, or focus on the tactical efforts of activists and government officials to cope with problems" (p. 62).

Given the importance of framing analysis, other scholars have built relevant knowledge on the concept. Among those are Pan & Kosicki (1993) and Snow & Benford (1988). In the discussion of news as discourse, Pan & Kosicki try to build a model based on an enlarged framework "... that involves not only the cognitive activities ... but also the social and cultural contexts..." (p. 69). Other authors such as Snow & Benford see "framing" as comprising three fundamental tasks. The first stage involves the identification of problematic issues which require solution. Secondly, a suggestion of solution rises, finally leading to a third phase in which corrective action takes place. Although this analysis has no intention of carrying a utilitarian and pragmatic perspective to the extent the authors suggest, it is relevant that such steps are considered in the study of social movements, mobilisation, action and consensus building as Snow & Benford (1988) emphasise.

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29 As Tuchman (1991) explains: "The idea of frame originated with Bateson (1955/72), was introduced to cultural sociology by Goffman (1974), and then became a key idea in participant observation studies of news (Fishman, 1980; Gamson, 1984; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989. Gitlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978)..." (p. 92).
In the study of Amazonian development and environmental affairs, it is essential to observe how regional news is orientated and which views become pervasive in the coverage. Framing analysis is instrumental to allow for conclusions in this regard. In addition, news framing reveals fundamental elements in the definition of the wider context in which news is published. In the analysis chapters that will follow, framing considers variables such as origin of news and the classification of news within each newspaper in order to trace elements of framing. Wider political and economic aspects are discussed in length as they influence news framing in regional newspapers targeted in this study.

Looking at recent studies has aided in the task of devising what are the main research trends in the field are. A variety of recent studies has concentrated on the environment as a social problem (Hansen, 1991b; Hannigan, 1995). Other authors have focused their studies on source-journalist relations within the context of the coverage of environmental issues (Peters, 1995; Mormont & Dasnoy, 1995; Suhonen, 1993a; Minke, 1990). Recent studies have also focused on local community settings and the construction of meaning of their specific social problems (Schweitzer & Smith, 1991; Grenier, 1994; Coleman, 1995). Other studies have applied the public arenas model to health issues (Hertog et al., 1994) or analysed the multiplicity of meanings around specific issues as they appear in news (Rodgers, 1996; Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995). These studies have provided guidelines and insights on how to approach analysis of Amazonian news coverage of regional affairs. Many of the aspects elected by the above mentioned research have been taken into account in the design of this particular study. Much of the theoretical framework in these research works has also been explored as a means to identify the best possible ways of analysing the construction of the Amazon in the regional press.

**Journalistic frames and practices**

According to Gamson & Modigliani (1989), "Journalists may draw their ideas and language from any or all of the other forums, frequently paraphrasing or quoting their sources." But just as important are journalists' frames and inventiveness creating "their own clever catchphrases, drawing on a popular culture that they share with their audience" (Ibid., p. 3).
Though some scholars argue that journalists have less impact in the production of meaning than do their sources (Manoff & Schudson, 1987), others consider that routines and practices involving journalists and officials are relevant elements to news analysis (Borquez, 1993). It is the manner by which these procedures may influence the processes of policy-making that remains important. This is especially relevant media professionals also constitute actors in the process. Considering that this study follows a constructionist theoretical framework, journalistic practices, procedures, associations and strategies constitute essential variables in the analysis.

In constructing reality and meaning, media have their effectiveness measured by their capability to encounter cultural resonance among those groups. According to Gamson (1988a), "Certain packages on specific issues have a natural advantage because their ideas and language resonate with larger cultural themes. Resonances increase the appeal of a package; they make it appear natural and familiar." (p. 167). Following up on Hall et al.'s (1978) argument that the media provide primary definitions of issues and claims by a number of authors that the media are the main source of information in society, Borquez (1993) joins in the idea of the media as "... as the primary purveyors of these packages.” Analysis of news framing allows research to identify the variety of conflicting views and competing issues present in the coverage.

A schema approach is pointed out as a means of revealing processes involved in the construction of meaning resulting from media's provision of arenas to public debate (Gamson, 1988a and b). As Burgess (1990) says, media messages are "... complex ideological discourses composed of verbal and visual signs with meaning encoded into them through the operation of pre-given communicative codes or rules." (p. 143). The construction of reality as a result reveals "shared, culturally-specific, symbolic systems of verbal and visual communications, including those of the media." (Ibid., p. 143).

As members of an epistemic community and a social elite, journalists are themselves regulated by rules, norms and values. These are acquired by systematic training as well as by acquired professional experience (Borquez, 1993). News values of timeliness, worthiness,
human interest (involving known, noteworthy people) are standards journalists must follow. A tendency to orientate news by events and stories which carry elements of conflict is pointed out by many authors such as Solesbury (1976), Kepplinger & Habermeier (1995), Borquez (1993). The latter argues that "... stories are more likely to run when they can be attached to a newspeg." (Ibid., p. 35). This is endorsed by McCombs & Shaw (1993) as they argue that controversy meets the calls of "... the traditional journalism agenda of vivid, newsworthy stories." (p. 62). Added to this, the way journalists organise the affairs they report and present to their audiences has a potential impact on how society elaborates matters reported (McCombs & Shaw, 1993).

Source/Journalist relationships

As discussed previously, journalistic practice is a primordial aspect in the analysis of news. The exploration of professional procedures and strategies constitutes fundamental element in a constructionist analysis. The potential to reveal choice of language, of sources, political orientations is essential to draw a comprehensive scenario of meaning construction in this study.

Matters of carrying capacity, source strategy and space gaining in the media affect both journalists and sources (Downs, 1972; Solesbury, 1976; Schlesinger, 1991). While interest groups, the government and politicians each have their agendas and struggle to obtain and keep space within the media, journalists also build relationships with sources which are influenced by the carrying capacity of a theme. Anderson (1991) points out the strategies used by pressure groups for achieving media attention to environmental issues. Other practices and forms of public relations and press liaisons appear to be relevant in attempts to establish or consolidate existing links between sources and journalists.

According to Peters (1993), dissemination of information in contemporary democracies makes "The mass communication systems ... link public discourse with governmental strategies ..." (p. 83). Nevertheless, there are several aspects to be considered as one argues about media as public arenas. Media are in principle organisations that bear their own interests be they economic, political or of any other nature (Bagdikian, 1990; Golding &
Murdock, 1991; Gamson, 1988a and b; Manoff & Schudson, 1987; Gans, 1990). Some scholars explore the ideological aspect of message content as they argue that those who control information provision into the framework of society, have also the ability to influence outcomes of such relations (Hall et al., 1978; Jensen, 1986). But as pluralists prefer to approach these matters, there is no dominant aspect. Rather, the performance of the media is very much a result of all contributing factors (McQuail, 1987). In this inclusive aspect of all factors lies the purpose of this study in analysing Amazonian perspective from a constructionist framework.

Constructionism sees that organisational structures and professional procedures shape meaning in news, and so do those who constitute sources. They are responsible for the framing of social causes and their relevance in the fact that journalists are agents who transform information. They themselves "... speak the discourse of power and knowledge produced by those in charge" (Peters, 1993, p. 83). Hence, journalists and, ultimately, media organisations, shape social awareness and produce knowledge. Comprising an elite and circulating among representatives of political and economic elites, journalists live in an environment of power relations and are players in these relations (Neuman et al., 1992). Peters (1993) goes further to say that such a knowledge and awareness discourse "is produced along the lines that serve to mask the true functioning of power" (p. 84). Is that to say that democracy has failed and media as social institutions have failed their task as public arenas in the nineteenth century-sense of public sphere? Peters asks: "If we admit that public spheres are initially constituted by fictions, need this discredit public opinion as the central term of democratic governance?" (Ibid., p. 84). The issues of accountability and impunity rise high when these procedures seem to threaten the ideals of social participation in the solution of problems. As Gerbner (1973) puts it in a rather pessimist approach, the media excel in representation but are "... horrid for participation." (p. 566). Regardless, media as integral parts of culture areessential channels in building meaning around issues such as the environment.

Borquez (1993) points to the fact that "Although recent models of policy-making recognise fluid participation and broader sets of policy actors, some individuals or organisations still face substantial obstacles to getting into the game." (p. 35). Palmer (1993) agrees with
Borquez (Ibid.) when he studies different domains of environmental discourse about the Amazon rain forest as they appear in the international media. The comprehensive importance of environmental issues is concealed in prolific language reflecting vested interests. The responsibility for the environment being obscured in the news, according to Palmer (1993), lies with both sources and journalists who reproduce their rhetoric. More as an explanation than a justifying factor, Borquez (1993) argues that “Since many policy elites are, by journalistic standards, newsworthy, their actions are more apt to attract media attention ...” (p. 36). For the author, professional norms, values and procedures guarantee that official sources dominate policy debate and prevent more diversity of actors in the news about public affairs.

Burgess (1990) stresses the media’s business character. Due to the tangle of interests attached to business, media should be studied in the processes of meaning making and production of environmental significance. Thus, according to Sholle (1993), the media hold the responsibility and fills the role of a guide. They “... create a way of seeing, a method of ordering and judging, or a means of selection and preference ...” (Ibid., p. 34-35).

It is in the creation of ways of looking at social problems that journalists and their sources play a fundamental role. To overlook these variables would be equivocal in constructionist analysis.

**Conclusion**

It has been the argument throughout this chapter that media are among the most important public arenas to debate social problems and framing of matters. In these arenas, meaning is collectively created and, on occasions, the outcome of the ongoing debate represents potential influence in decision-making processes in democratic societies.

Another main argument has been that it is important to look at how the news is framed. Frame analysis reveals an array of interests, narratives in the use of language and formation of regional discourses. Media frames aid building consensus over issues of major interest to
society. They present affairs in a ready-made perspective that calls for consensus but, nevertheless, can be counterposed. The discussion about sustainable development represents a classic example of clashing forces. The confrontation of interests is fundamental in building consensus. Such a consensus building process is done at the cost of media translation of expert knowledge. As it was made salient throughout the discussion of the theoretical framework, the need to understand how society processes information and one may add, in the Amazonian context, how journalists, sources and media institutions as a whole frame matters such as the environment.

As the media play a variety of roles from information providers to builders of meaning and mediators of public debate, they represent a fundamental institution in political life and in the actions taken around matters of development and the environment. A theme's presence in the news in itself creates an aura of acceptance of the topic itself and the system behind it. Journalists need voices to back their stories. Such voices originate in assumed reliable, accredited, recognised voices, who are, in principle, "primary definers" of specific issues. The interaction between journalists and news sources is crucial to determine who says, what one says and what one meant by saying what one says. This argument is based on the observation of general characteristics of the press which apply to the two regional newspapers targeted by this study. The elitist character of the press observed throughout its history in Brazil is not any different in the cases of *A Crítica* and *O Liberal*. As elitist as the press so are the news sources. Individuals interviewed by journalists hold prominent positions in society. These general characteristics impact the criteria of accredited sources. In the case of environment and development-related issues, sources are administrators, policy-makers, scientific experts, or various interest groups. As will be shown in the analysis, they can also be well-known leaders of ethnic and environmental groups.

Analysis of discourses about sustainable development and the environment appearing in the Amazonian press allows us to uncover the wider frames in which experience and interpretation of these matters are expressed by those active in the region. Society is faced with a general crisis: a crisis of modernisation based on the inability of scientific knowledge to interpret the changes in the environment, a crisis of the political structures and of the economic process. How do these phenomena affect the construction of meaning, the
signalling of social problems in news? How do new social movements gain space in the media and articulate change in settings such as the Amazon? These are some of the questions this study explores. They are of significance to the region itself and to other tropical humid areas of the Globe.
Chapter IV
Research Design

Introduction

Throughout the years, issues related to regional development as reported in the press have undergone changes that accompanied political, social and economic changes in Brazilian society as a whole and in the Amazon region in particular. The need to understand the meaning built around sustainable development themes from a regional perspective made this research target one segment of the local media: newspapers. Due to more space available when compared to radio and television, newspapers allow more in-depth coverage, which in the analysis of regional environmental and development issues is crucial. Since radio and television material would be more difficult to gain access to, the availability of newspaper data was also a factor in the selection of this medium. Benefiting from the more detailed discussion provided within the newspaper content, the research is able to better identify frames of meaning constructed around the development concept and its implications for the Amazon.

As Schwandt (1994) suggests, a constructionist approach to analysis allows us to observe how citizens in specific settings and in given moments in history establish meaning from reality. Such meaning-making process involves what the author calls "... complex processes of social interaction involving history, language, and action." (p. 118). According to Coleman (1995), "Constructionists argue that the ability to define an issue is subject to the claim-maker's facility in forging social reality ..." (p. 68). By analysing themes and actors appearing in the news, this study will present a comprehensive scenario of how the regional perspective about the Amazon was forged in the early 1990s and thus expressed in the news. In the processes meaning-making, it is also possible to analyse how news manufactures regional reality. For the author, "social reality is more successful if it resonates with dominant cultural beliefs and values ..." (Ibid., p. 68). In this lies the role of journalists who mediate reality-construction based upon their selection of themes and sources and the
ultimate production of news. The latter aspect contemplates the definition of frames within which news is presented as suggested by Gitlin (1980), Gamson (1988) and Neuman et al. (1992) among others.

Aims and objectives

The basic aim of this study is to analyse how sustainable development-related issues are constructed in the regional press over a five-year period between 1990 and 1994. A combination of research methodologies has been chosen in order to assess the regional news scenario.

It is this research's aim to study media coverage of sustainable development in two major regional newspapers in Amazônia. A content analysis of press coverage of sustainable development-related issues was carried out as a means to assess regional media's role as public arenas and as meaning builders of environmental and development as social problems. Previous studies have analysed coverage of environmental issues in Brazil and in Amazônia from the perspective of the national press (Oliveira, 1990; Reis, 1994; Silva, 1994; Ramos, 1996).

Among the objectives are the observation of the more prominent issues in the coverage of sustainable development and the identification of sources to better understand what they mean by sustainable development. The study assessed journalistic practices and news sources' role in setting the news agenda for topics such as the environment and sustainable development. Thus, supportive to the content analysis, language analysis, and discourse analysis, interviews with journalists were conducted.

The research questions proposed in this study revolve around the main aim of identifying how major regional newspapers cover sustainable development related issues. Data collected has allowed for the identification of what are the most prominent issues in the coverage and who are the most prominent sources. I have also extracted from the news elements such as what type of news is produced, how they are editorially classified. Other aspects involved in the character of the coverage are taken into account as to what sources and journalists mean
by sustainable development, how journalists perceive the news media's role in relation of social processes of policy-making, and to what extent the media have contributed to making sustainable development a topic of social interest. In the field of journalists/sources relationships, analysis discusses how sources and journalists understand and communicate regional issues and how sources and journalists relate to each other in obtaining and publishing scientific and environmental information.

A number of the issues identified in an earlier study (Beltrão, 1994)\(^1\) appeared as relevant to the context of regional development as printed in the newspapers targeted by this research. The definition of themes remained an ongoing process throughout the study. The research of the concept of sustainable development and all it encompasses was the starting point. Themes such as land-ownership, territory disputes, mining, logging/deforestation, water resources, agriculture, Indian matters, preservation/conservation of ecosystems, research funding, scientific results, health, education, science and technology were identified among those of more prominence in the news. They also constitute relevant themes as they match the various aspects of the whole of the construct of sustainable development as shown in a number of previous studies. As a means of building the research, a pilot study focusing on *O Liberal*, the newspaper in the city of Belém, was carried out in December 1994 and January 1995. During the pilot study the themes earlier identified emerged in the news. Other themes also surfaced as I explored *O Liberal*. In addition, throughout the data collection, which took place between June and December 1995, themes were adjusted to accommodate the wide variety of issues reported in relation to regional development and the environment.

News themes were classified according to the operationalisation presented below:

- **Environment and development** - environmental matters as they impact development decision-making or and development actions in relation to environmental matter.
- **Indian matters** - topics overall related to Indian populations.
- **Health** - matters of public health, sanitation, basic hygiene conditions, epidemics.
- **Political and border affairs** - issues of geopolitical nature and national security.

\(^1\)For a summarised version see in *Ciência & Cultura*, May, 1998.
Natural resources management - preservation, conservation, use of natural resources, rehabilitation of damaged environments.

Scientific results - topics related to research findings, including discoveries, breakthroughs and scientific debates on themes of regional interest.

Commerce and industry - commercial and industrial affairs, exports, imports, taxation, economic indexes.

Research management - science and technology affairs, research and development policies, funding, administration of resources, planning and information provision.

Crime and violence - crimes and acts of violence related to conflicts of various natures such as land-ownership, mining, Indians, drug traffic, smuggling of wild animals.

Primary economy - issues related to extractive practices, as well as other production systems such as agriculture, cattle raising, husbandry, fisheries.

Mining - exploitation of mineral resources at small, manual, free-lance prospecting and industrial levels.

Natural phenomena - climate, natural disasters, air condition, pollution.

Infra-structure - issues related to the creation of basic capital conditions, opening of roads, building of hydroelectric power dams, or discussion of lack of basic sanitary conditions.

Deforestation - cutting of trees resulting from creation of infra-structure, exploitation of timber, clearing of land for agriculture and cattle pastures.

Science and technology events - scientific events such as conferences, seminars, workshops and any meeting of technical character dedicated to the discussion of regional issues.

Education and culture - educational issues originated at all levels of schooling and cultural issues reporting on regional manifestations.

Economy - regional economy news reporting on trends, indexes, policy and labour issues.

Land ownership - reporting on agrarian or urban occupation issues, conflicts, legal processes.

Human populations - human occupation of territory, intrinsic elements to migration.

The operationalisation of themes allowed for a data collection attuned with the main inquiry present in this study, avoiding major doubts. At the same time, the dynamic nature of themes definition allowed for continuous revision and adjustment in the list of themes. The criteria
set out for data collection allowed a focused reading of the news. It also permitted a dynamic construction of the themes previously defined.

Combining methodologies

Content analysis: Basic concepts and criticisms

In Mass Communication studies, content analysis methodology allows research to follow trends over time. As a method, it allows the identification of patterns of news as well as recurrent language used to convey meaning. Society generates a substantial quantity of media discourse (Bell, 1991). In this scenario, Strodthoff et al. (1985) have demonstrated the importance of observing trends in news coverage over time in their model of ideology diffusion in the specific area of the environment. Their findings show increasing amount of environment-related issues persistently discussed in the media in a sustainable fashion. According to the authors, the research “... showed the progression in the diffusion of environmental information, concepts, and concerns featuring in a sustained period of increasing media attention ...” (p. 147). These observations allow the checking of information cycles of specific issues such as the environment (Downs, 1972; Strodthoff et al., 1985; Anderson, 1991; Hansen, 1993).

In a constructionist approach, media language, analysed in combination with other factors, provides a view of the wider social context. It aids in observing how people assess their reality in continuing acts of interpretation and re-interpretation (Swanson, 1985). By carrying out a content analysis, this study has been allowed inferences on the news about sustainable development issues, on the most prominent themes, on possible trends on the usage of the terminology, and on types of sources most relied on. Content analysis is quantitative to the extent it checks the frequency with which news, sources and themes appear in the coverage. This research technique also explores a qualitative dimension as the news pieces, the themes treated within themes, and actors involved fit a regional context that searches for more appropriate forms of development (Krippendorff, 1980; McQuail, 1993).
Quite simply that, Stempel III (1989) suggests that “Content analysis is a formal system for doing something that we all do informally rather frequently, drawing conclusions from observations of content.” The frequency with which such issues and specific wording are not in themselves more important than the counting of times they have been printed in news of regional development interest. What may be revealed by any relative frequency are inferences on policy-making matters at stake at particular moments in history. Analysed against the appropriate context, frequency of issues might indicate possible influence of certain themes have on policy-making. Moreover, the analysis of content allows inferences on journalist and source relationships among other relevant aspects.

The advantage of synthesising considerable amounts of data, makes content analysis a methodology that provides tools to observe and account for trends in news over a longer period of time. Based on the works of Gitlin (1980) and Page & Shapiro (1992), McCombs & Shaw (1993) argue on the importance of observing trends over time. According to them, besides identifying issues salience, “... news coverage [is a] significant predictor of the shifts in public opinion ...” (McCombs & Shaw, 1993, p. 63). More than a mere predictor of public opinion evolution, to observe trends over time facilitates comparative analysis against different historical moments. Combined with other methods, this comparison becomes fundamental if put against broader political, economic, social and cultural scenarios.

The role of the news media in communicating development issues, which in the case of the Amazon region is closely linked to the effective use as well as the preservation of its natural resources, can be better understood by means of a combination of methodologies (Severin & Tankard, 1992; Kracauer, 1952; Whatmore & Boucher, 1993). As this study sets out from a constructionist theoretical framework, “... the systematic integration of multiple methodologies ...” (Neuman et al. 1992, p. 19) is emphasised. As suggested by the authors, it is advisable to use a combination of methods as the practice avoids ignoring “... the breadth and generalisability of traditional empirical social scientific methods for the depth, openness, and sensitivity of qualitative methods ...” (Ibid., p. 19).

Hence, supportive to the content analysis, interviews with journalists were also conducted. This was intended as an attempt to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches that
would ultimately allow for the identification of broader contexts within which news is produced. Such combination allows for the presentation of a more comprehensive picture of the meaning constructed around sustainable development in the Amazon from the perspective of locals and presented in the regional news scenarios.

According to Kracauer (1952), quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary "for it [quantitative approach] both originates and culminates in qualitative consideration ... qualitative analysis proper often requires quantification in the interest of exhaustive treatment." He concludes by arguing that these two types of analysis are complementing each other and do not constitute alternatives independent from each other. In line with the author’s suggestions on the issue of methods’ complementarity, interviewing journalists was chosen as means to identifying patterns present in the news. The context in which news is presented is revealed in professional practices and numerous organisational constraints as well as in cultural relations established between journalists and their sources.

In understanding the processes of media’s political impact, Graber (1993) suggests that it is not enough to state the media’s ability “... to change the political images shared by large publics.” (p. 24). In the author’s opinion, it is fundamental to assess media content as it is “... likely to strengthen or weaken public support for the status quo.” (p. 24). In assessing themes and sources, this study attempts to assess the relationship between the news agenda and overall public political debate of regional affairs. According to Neuman et al. (1992) issue prominence is “... critical to understanding the dynamics of political learning.” (p. 115)

The analysis of newspaper material has as parameters a coding schedule (Appendix A), enhanced by Bell's (1994) mode of analysis developed from the risk perception research tradition. The basic elements of such mode of analysis being certitude, overstatement and confusion are observed in the identification of news. These elements provide the foundation on which to assess how sustainable development concept and related issues are constructed in the regional press.

Content is analysed through the lenses of journalistic reporting that uses three parameters: 1. prediction or creation of expectation on given topics; 2. overstates scientific findings by
omitting time frames, inducing imaginability and relying on memorability; and/or 3. generates confusion by blending non-related events. These categories of analysis have been applied by Bell (1994) in studying global climate change as reported in the newsmedia. In that the press contributes to the insertion of sustainable development in the public imaginary as an alternative for the Amazon, the elements of prediction and expectation are relevant. As information is fundamental to public debate about development and the environment, the use of scientific findings is a source of legitimacy that news cannot spare. Finally, the overall ambiguity and poor operationalisation of the concept of sustainable development is better observed under the parameters suggested by Bell (1993).

Complementary to the analyses of content and interviews, the study introduces analysis of discourse. For the latter, I apply models and typologies developed in the specific contexts of the environment and development by Whatmore & Boucher (1993) and Escobar (1992). These are discussed in greater length in a section in this chapter dedicated to language and discourse analyses.

The content analysis is a partial picture of the whole media coverage. Frequency with which regional development issues are printed may yield to inferences on alleged importance given to those matters. Much criticism has been expressed in relation to content analysis as it is said to have "... been unable to capture the context within which a written text has meaning." (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994, p. 463).

Basing the study on the absolute need of context within which news is published, I have chosen a combination of methods. According to Kracauer (1952), in the study of content, relevance lies with "... the patterns, the wholes, which can be made manifest by qualitative exegesis and which can throw light upon a textual characteristic which is allergic to quantitative breakdowns." (p. 640). Thus, counts are not in themselves or by themselves relevant until associated and analysed within a wider framework and context. For Entman (1993), "The major task of determining textual meaning should be to identify and describe frames." (p. 57) In this, the author believes that a content analysis placed against a framing approach prevents research from running into equivocal interpretations. Thus, coders should
not ignore "the salience of elements in the text" at the risk of failing "to gauge the relationships of the most salient clusters of messages - the frames ..." (Ibid., p. 57).

Among the difficulties identified within the content analysis method, Graber (1993) states that "... the desire to produce quantifiable data has led a plethora of schemes for counting assorted elements of information and inferring meanings from frequencies of mention per se ..." (Ibid., p. 24). She criticises the "overly mechanistic" interpretation which relies on numbers. Emphasis, in Graber's opinion, should be placed on context that allows the observation of interpretation processes which lends sense to quantitative data (Ibid.).

Critics of qualitative methods of analysis, such as Berelson (1952), say that the pitfall of qualitative analysis lies on the methods' emphasis on texts' "underlying intentions or its presumable effects on the audience". On the other hand, quantitative analysis, dedicates itself to a descriptive approach. Kracauer (1952) criticises such an approach and says:

The more involved communications ... reverberate with so many latent meanings that to isolate their manifest content and describe it in a 'straight' manner is not only almost impossible, but can hardly be expected to yield significant results. (p. 638).

Aware of the disadvantages of content analysis, this study applies a combination of methods that privileges the context within which news is published. Also observing Graber's (1993) discussion on the evidence "... that journalists can and do influence what issues will come to the attention of media audiences and the perspectives from which these issues will be viewed ..." (p. 29), I interviewed professionals involved in the process of news production in the Amazon. Journalists' understanding of the main concepts targeted by the study is a major contribution to draw the wider context of the publication of such news. How do specific issues become news; how do journalists choose their sources; what are they looking for as information; how do they understand sustainable development issues; how do they explain scientific terms; are some of the questions raised in interviews with professionals involved in the news production process (Appendix B).

In combining quantitative content analysis and qualitative analysis in two different tools - i.e. interviews, language and discourse analysis -, this study agrees with Kracauer (1952)
who says that qualitative methods "... penetrate textual dimensions which are completely inaccessible to quantitative techniques." (p. 639).

**Selecting the media**

In the scope of a study of regional coverage, the regionally-constructed meaning of sustainable development is the crucial point. Regional leadership originating in various social segments, both official and non-governmental, have increasingly tried to gain decision power at a federal, state and local level. Their voices and the overall framework within which they perform their roles are of major importance in the assessment of the frames of regional discourse about the Brazilian Amazônia.

As a region, Amazônia, has been throughout history a show-case for national and international political forces to decide upon its future. But what do the Amazonians themselves think and have to say? The amount and quality of coverage given to the region in Southern and South-eastern newspapers do not respond to its reality (Reis, 1994). It is the Southern states which hold the most powerful economic and political forces influencing decision-making in Brasília, the capital of the country. As coverage is small, regional issues mostly rise as a result of international pressure (Hansen, 1994; Andersson & Pertof, 1996; Bendix & Liebler, 1991). By turning to regional media and the press in particular, I attempt to ensure analysis of more in-depth (if compared to radio and television news) and regionally expressed coverage. These observations and the ensuing decision have resulted from the pilot study carried out in December 1994 and January 1995 preceding the actual data collection.

**Pilot study**

In the pilot study carried out with *O Liberal*, in Belém, in December 1994 and January 1995, I conducted a random selection of ten newspaper issues from each month throughout the period of three years (1991-1993). Among the items identified were locally-produced and news agencies-originated stories as well as feature articles and editorials about sustainable development-related issues in the region as earlier described.
The assumption while carrying out the pilot study was that these items cover the targeted themes more in-depth and as such allow expanded ways to understanding the construction of reality in regard to regional matters. The amount of coverage identified in the initial pilot study was considered sufficiently representative for research to take over a five-year time period. A total of 633 pieces was identified in O Liberal for a three-year period (1991-1993).

Sampling was done throughout three years 1991, 1992 and 1993. These years were chosen for their historical significance. The Rio 92 Conference brought issues of sustainable development to public agenda. To cover the years before and after as well as the year in which the event itself took place, allowed the observation of trends in the media coverage of the matter. Ten issues of O Liberal were randomly selected from each of the 36 months in the above mentioned years.

Issues of land-ownership, mining, deforestation, Indian matters, preservation/conservation, financing of research activities, scientific research results in any relevant field in the Amazon region, health, education, science and technology emerged from this preliminary data collection. The logic is that these issues belong under the umbrella of sustainable development. From a certain moment in time, possibly 1992 onwards, it was noticed that the terminology itself became of more current use and it is always applied in connection to one or various of the above listed issues.

Material was found in various sections of the paper. There is no tradition to cover in a systematic fashion the above mentioned issues such as science and technology or the environment. There is no special section within which these matters are printed. Except for two scattered initiatives one in 1991 and another in 1992 to edit material about science and technology and environment on the same page, there has been no attempt to cover or edit such a material.2

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2It was only in 1996, therefore outside the sample period, that a science and environment page began to be published in O Liberal.
Over 600 pieces divided into 559 local and news agency-generated stories and 65 feature articles and 9 editorials were found for the period covered by the pilot study. Ten to 15 percent of the stories report on events and are sometimes mere announcements of conferences, seminars, symposia in various topics. As the Rio 92 approached that the more local, regional conferences took place is in itself revealing. These events set a pattern of external changes in government and non-government moves regarding the environment and the issues related to sustainable development. The number of events increased, but did the actions? Media coverage reveals more action, but in a non-systematic fashion.

As suggested by Carey (1987), the whole of the context of journalistic coverage is found not only in the news story. It is found in a combination of media and formats such as editorials, columns, weekly news magazines. Since it would be impossible to analyse a whole selection of media for this study, we have opted to analyse various formats within the newspaper genre. In addition, I have introduced throughout the analysis background information collected from different media, especially weekly news magazines and news bulletins issued by a variety of sources in Brazil and in the Amazon in particular.

Another factor for the selection of newspapers is related to the availability of data over a longer period of time. In Europe and in the U.S. news indexes and databases are far more organised than in other regions. But even so, Hansen (1995) directs researchers’ attention to the fact that “... although well developed and well indexed video and broadcast archives exist, there are yet no equivalents for broadcast media to the full text databases for newspapers.” (p. 148-149). On a different scale that is also true for archives in Brazil and in the Amazon, in particular. While it is possible to find the newspaper collections in libraries and newspaper companies’ archives, the cost and the considerable novelty of video technology does not ensure the existence of the television material let alone its availability for research purposes.

Due to the fact that this study proposes to identify meaning from a regional perspective, television would be most unsuitable. The television networks in Brazil concede right to local stations to broadcast their programmes. Carrying the status of “affiliated stations”, local stations follow the standards established by the networks and conceived under patterns
originated in the Southeast region, in Rio and São Paulo (Straubhaar, 1989). It is clear that the standards followed by stations such as TV Liberal, in Belém, or the Rede Amazônica, in Manaus, do not correspond to local and regional perspectives. Apart from this imposition of cultural patterns alien to the region, there is the fact that the news locally produced is only a small fraction of the whole of news produced by teams in Rio, São Paulo and other major capitals in Brazil, among which Belém and Manaus are not included.

Newspapers constitute a more traditional type of medium and have historically belonged to local elites. They have thus remained despite the fact that they were the origin of more diverse media conglomerates. O Liberal and TV Liberal belong to the same media group in Belém, but unlike from the unavoidable local stations' affiliation to national television networks, local and regional newspapers have managed to escape the impositions of alien standards. It is necessary to acknowledge, though, that as far as visual and appearance are concerned, local and regional dailies have tried to adjust to standards known in Southeastern Brazil. But if they are to survive as of local interest their news agenda has to stick to issues of interest in the Belém and Manaus and indeed has. Thus, the two biggest circulation newspapers in the region were targeted by this study. O Liberal is published in Belém and A Crítica, in Manaus, the two major cities in the Brazilian Amazon.

Sample period

This study set out to identify trends in the coverage of sustainable development issues within the Brazilian Amazon press, as it makes use of regional sources and targets regional readership. The research looks for a regional discourse built through and within the newspapers. The sample targeted two major newspapers in the region: O Liberal, in Belém, and A Crítica, in Manaus.

Collection of data was conducted in both newspapers archives and Pará and Amazonas States Public Library, located in Belém and Manaus, respectively. Access was also available to the archives of the Goeldi Museum (MPEG), in Belém and of the National Institute for

3 In Brazil, the holding of television channels is based on a system of government concessions. Major television networks resort to these affiliations to expand their area of reach as legislation limits the number of channel concessions to ten channels per organisation. (Comparato, 1991; Caiafa, 1994).
Research in the Amazon (INPA), in Manaus. In Belém, I was also given access to the private archive of Federal University of Pará's Professor Maria de Fátima Carneiro Conceição.

The time period targeted years between 1990 and 1994 and is justified by the possibility of observing concerns with sustainable development prior to and after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio, Brazil, in 1992.

Sample

As a result of the pilot study and to avoid unmanageable amounts of data, a decision was made to look at every tenth day issue throughout the period 1990-1994. A total of 36 was searched for every year of the whole period of five years for each of the two newspapers. A number of 360 issues per newspaper were read, bringing the total of issues to 720. In the end, 679 items were collected from the two newspapers which were published in O Liberal and A Crítica.

Coding Schedule

A coding schedule (Appendix A) has been designed to identify information relevant to answering the research questions in this study. A total of 14 categories have been identified.

The schedule follows the initial identification categories, such as item number; newspaper's name; date; page heading under which item was printed; type of item, e.g. locally-produced story, national or international news agency-generated story, feature article or editorial; number and type of visuals.

As this study's interest targets most prominent subjects, the coding schedule classifies the main theme and two subsidiary themes. Actors are also fundamental elements of analysis. Thus, the schedule allows for the coding of who are the first four actors mentioned within the piece.
Among the actors are those identified as experts from the various areas of scientific knowledge. They have been divided into three main areas:

**Earth and Exact Sciences**, comprising experts in fields such as Geosciences, Engineering, Zoology, Botany, Ecology, Agrarian Sciences, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics;

**Social Sciences**, comprising those in Psychology, Philosophy, Political Science, Arts, Education, Literature, Anthropology, Geography, Law, Administration, Economics, Information Sciences, History, Sociology; and

**Health and Life Sciences**, comprising experts in Medical Sciences, Biology, Biophysics, Biochemistry, Nutrition, Epidemiology.

To identify the use of words necessary to the language analysis, there are five categories used to log photo caption, cartoon description and comment; headline; lead and the listing of the main constructs (up to three) that appear throughout the text (e.g. development, sustainability, Amazon etc.).

**Ethnography**

**Participant observation**

There is a lack of specialisation in the coverage of science and environmental issues in newspapers targeted by this study. Unlike what is a common editorial practice in newspapers elsewhere in Brazil and outside Brazil, the regional dailies do not have a tradition of specialised coverage of science and the environment. Considering this aspect and the longitudinal nature of the study, participant observation would not altogether be relevant. Because there are no formal or informal planning meetings in either *O Liberal* and *A Crítica*, there were no procedures of this type to be observed. Decisions are centralised in the hands of editors. Although there have been attempts in the recent past to orientate the news agenda in a more open and democratic fashion, in fact, the discussion of newspaper agenda as a planning strategy is yet to become a routine. Thus, participant observation appeared irrelevant in such an environment.
In the case of specialised coverage, the assumption remains that the amount of local stories does not justify special coverage and can be taken care of as general assignments (Sachsman, 1996). This is precisely what is discussed in the findings. As there is no specialised coverage and reporters can be assigned to cover any area, it would be impossible to point out journalists dedicated to special beats.

Added to those aspects is the fact that the observation period of the process of news production would not correspond to the whole period of the study. Hence, this could introduce discrepancies which would ultimately distort findings and analysis of findings. Also, as pointed out by Jorgensen (1989), among the advantages of formal interviews is that of "... the possibility of reaching more people with less investment of the researcher's time (as compared to participant observation) ..." (p. 90). Due to the limited available financial resources, time was a factor that had to be considered very closely throughout this research.

**Interviews**

As tools for discovery, interviews are an irrefutable instrument. In order to have a closer insight of people's activities and world views, conversations empower interviewers to extract as much information as possible. The situation, though, is affected by the constraints of time and those related to the artificiality of the setting. For Ely (1993), the importance of interviews is that "... they seek the words of the people we are studying, the richer the better, so that we can understand their situations with increasing clarity." (p. 58).

Since the study targets the construction of sustainable development issues, interviews with journalists demonstrated useful instruments of data collection. In this case, sampling was not restricted to those working in the newspapers under analysis. This is because since the publication of by-lines is not among the newspapers procedures, it is difficult to identify who wrote what piece. Thus, interviews were conducted with journalists working in connection to regional development issues in positions such as press liaisons, free-lancer, scientific editors with journalistic background among others. Interviews clarify the complexity in which certain issues are entangled. The selection of individuals with relevant
roles in complex news environments guarantees useful and appropriate interpretation of the news production context.

This study analyses these professionals’ perceptions about the overall scenario of the coverage as an effort to build a wider framework within which regional news is placed. As discussed earlier, links between news construction and wider social, political, economic and cultural processes are drawn from the findings. As journalists largely build meaning around issues relevant to public affairs, it is necessary to explore their own professional culture. According to Spradley (1980), “Ethnographic interviewing is a special kind that employs questions designed to discover the cultural meanings ...” (p. 123).

Interviews have the potential to enrich the content analysis findings and to support the discourse analysis. They provide information that were not for the data collection instruments, would have been left hidden.

Although scholars argue that the artificial setting of interviews interferes with the actual responses, Dahlgren (1985) says that meaning of such reactions is compatible with the "official context", in which the interviews take place. Meanings are "partial and contextual" but "not necessarily distorted." (Ibid., p.12).

Journalists were interviewed in each city where the newspapers in the sample are published, i.e. Belém and Manaus. It was expected that a dozen to 15 people would be interviewed in each of the cities. Due to operational difficulties such as financial and time constraints as well as unavailability of journalists, only eight professionals were interviewed in Manaus. A total of 22 journalists were interviewed in Belem. In this city, I was able to spend more time due to accommodation facilities available.

Apart from the operational difficulties reported, I also attribute to two main factors the fact that Belém’s journalists were more forthcoming than those in Manaus. Having worked in Belém for most of my professional life facilitated access to journalists in the interview sample. My work experience in Manaus did not allow for the building of closer and lasting relations with other journalists as I only spent roughly a year there.
As suggested by Berger (1991), researchers may encounter difficulties in getting respondents to talk to them. The author argues that “Some of the people you interview may be shy or may be otherwise reluctant (for various reasons) to talk freely ... Some interviewees talk around any subject and are hard to pin down; others are afraid to express their feelings.” (Ibid., p. 58). In this lies an implicit issue of my role as an insider, as suggested by Fetterman (1989), in the Belém scenario and as more of an outsider in Manaus. While in Belém I worked in both research institutions and in O Liberal, in Manaus I only experienced the environment of a research institute. As I agree that the insider’s position is one of beneficial effects to the research, I see Spradley’s (1980) advice as one to be taken into consideration. In his opinion, researcher should not “overlook informants who are previous acquaintances.” (Ibid., p. 124). In my case this was inevitable.

Beyond that, the fact that I spent more time working in Belém, and as a native of the city, there was an undeniable proximity with respondents which facilitated access. Such a proximity is not always seen as damaging to research. Authors disagree in this field and say that a detached attitude is fundamental (Wood, 1977). This was impossible in my case as I myself as a journalist had worked in the environments under study and have developed relations with various of the professionals in the sample. As argued by Ely (1993), detachment does not always work against the researcher. The author says that the fact the interviewee knows the interviewer, has been in that position and understands the situations is an instrument that facilitates trust. Another factor for journalists’ attitude has to do with an overall stronger scientific tradition of Belém in comparison to that of Manaus. This latter associated with the former aspects explains journalists being more welcoming of research in their work field in Belém.

In order to provide supporting arguments on the results of the content analysis, a total of 30 interviews was conducted. As Jankowski & Wester (1991) say, “... interpretive inquiry seeks to identify the rules people apply in order to make sense of their world.” (p. 53). In this resides the value of conducting in-depth interviews with journalists professionally active in the Amazon. Among the advantages of interviews is that they have the potential to provide consistent data (Jorgensen, 1989).
Among interviewees are journalists from Belém and Manaus, the two major cities in the region. From a set of data, where I asked each respondent a series of pre-established open-ended questions (Appendix B), the study identifies traces characteristic of sustainable development frames of discourse as tools to understand how meaning is communicated by regional voices in the context of the Amazonian press. As discussed by Fetterman (1989), "Interviews explain and put in a larger context what the ethnographer sees and experiences." (p. 47). For the author, formal, structured interviews are useful for comparison and identification of representations implicit in the community under analysis. The interviews allow for the delineation of contexts of language, systems of belief as much as they are revealing of professional practices. The latter constitutes a crucial element to this study.

It was to the study's advantage that I myself had worked as a journalist in the region. As Fetterman (1989) suggests "A structured or semistructured interview is most valuable when the fieldworker comprehends the fundamentals of a community from the 'insider's' perspective." (p. 48).

**Language and discourse analyses**

Along side the content analysis and the interviews, language analysis tools have been applied aiming at answering the questions of who is speaking, what are they saying, and what do they mean. According to Fairclough (1995), "Media texts constitute a sensitive barometer of sociocultural change, and they should be seen as valuable material for researching change" (p. 52). As much as the observation of the frequency with which certain words appear is necessary, so is the analysis of the context within which language is used. To the author, "The significance of media discourse is located in the often implicit explanatory frameworks and ground-rules of interpretation which must be 'read out' rather than simply 'read from' the discourse." (Davis, 1985, p. 46).

Van Dijk (1991) argues that "Discourse analysis emphasises the obvious, but has yet not fully explored fact that media 'messages' are specific types of text and talk." (p. 108). The analysis of text is basic as it "... formulates interpretation rules for words, sentences,
paragraphs, or whole discourses.” (Ibid., p. 112). As this study sets out to identify meaning-attribution to matters of development and the environment as well as frames of discourse built around such issues, it is considered relevant to proceed with language analysis of messages contained in news.

For Davis (1985), discourse analysis is able to show that:

... news ... owes its remarkable homogeneity and consistency of perspective in matters of social controversy ... to the institutional mechanisms which process facts, events and personalities ...” (p. 58).

Discourse analysis is also necessary given that in the study of meaning building within the news “... we need to spell out the cognitive representations and strategies of journalists in the production of the news report ...” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 117). According to Van Dijk, analysis of discourse is relevant as aspects of cognition are revealed in that the latter represents “... the interface between text and context.” (Ibid., p. 119). He goes further in saying that

... general representation of ingroups and outgroups ... is used strategically in the formation of models about specific news event, models which in turn govern the news-gathering routines, the interpretation of sources and source texts by the reporter, as well as the ways in which the news event is described in the news report. (p. 119).

"While the media content is a potentially powerful source of both status quo reinforcement and status quo change", as Graber (1993) argues, “... it operates in the context of many other forces that can enhance or diminish or even totally destroy its power.” (p. 27). That is when the author states it is essential “... to factor the political context of stories into any analysis of media influence.” (Ibid., p. 27). Among such factors that increase the power of the media are “... social and political crisis situations or instances of totally new, interest-arousing events that audiences find difficult to interpret on their own.” (Ibid., p. 27)

In applying language analysis tools, this study identifies terms and contexts most relevant to meaning building of development and environmental issues in the Amazon region. If from the content analysis it was possible to identify issues and actors of more prominence, in the language analysis, it was possible to identify the contexts in which issues and actors
appeared. As Hansen (1995) points out, “One of the major weaknesses of conventional content analysis is the fragmentation of meaning and the decontextualisation which inevitably follows when words, phrases and other chunks of texts are ‘translated’ [into] predefined codes and numbers.” (p. 165).

Also according to Hansen (1995), “There is little ... to be gained from a sharp distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches to the analysis of newspaper text.” (p. 165). As he suggests, using the approaches in a complementary way is what this study attempts. The use of textual retrieval technology helped in the interpretation of the variety of discourses expressed in the news regarding major regional issues. Sonar Professional was the software used for this task. It is a text retrieval programme applied in the location of information in extensive bodies of text. The software, used in research and by news services, has been instrumental in the recovery of constructs within overall word context. Clusters of terms were built from the associated words procedure in Sonar Professional. The associated words are those that most frequently appear in connection with the main concepts elected to guide the whole of the study:

**Main concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td>Decentralisation</td>
<td>Sovereignty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frames of discourses are built utilising Whatmore & Boucher’s (1993) model of narratives and other authors such as Ribeiro (1991), Escobar (1992), and Tassara (1992). The construction of such frame would be an outcome of the whole analysis as nuances of discourses appeared in the content and emerged from the interviews.
Whatmore & Boucher model of narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conservation narrative</th>
<th>Commodity narrative</th>
<th>Ecology narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nature as...</td>
<td>externality</td>
<td>commodity</td>
<td>system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning as...</td>
<td>zoning</td>
<td>bargaining</td>
<td>integrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative standard</td>
<td>conformity</td>
<td>authenticity</td>
<td>sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative context</td>
<td>aesthetic</td>
<td>amenity</td>
<td>ecology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of combined methodologies in the analysis of media content contributed to achieving the aims of this study. Contextualised content analysis has allowed for the identification of language that constitutes the underlying discourses about sustainable development in the Amazon. The most prominent themes and actors appearing in the coverage revealed the dominant issues and interests involved in the public debate about the Amazonian crisis during the first five years of the 1990s. Quantitative and qualitative approaches aided in locating frequencies against overall scenarios of media systems and professional practices. In this, interviews with journalists active in the region have been instrumental.

The discussion of results follows divided in three chapters. These sections include the news content analysis, the analysis of interviews and the symbolic representation of Amazônia.
Chapter V

Sustainable Development in the News

Content Analysis

Introduction

As a concept, sustainable development demands access to information for better planning, participative management of resources and decentralised decision-making, principles of democratic practice. Dialogue is, therefore, a crucial element as it is necessary to improve the quality of public opinion to counter balance the relationship between citizenry and expert opinions. As observed by authors such as Yankelovich (1991), Graber (1993), Spitzer (1993), and Kingdon (1995), among others, news media represent arenas where social dialogue takes place as they process most of the information that empowers society to influence policy-making. Though some analysts recognise constraints in the access to participation in the process of definition of policy, media are seen as fora for public influence in the process.

This study demonstrates the symbiotic nature of building meaning on issues of sustainable development in the Amazon as they are presented in the regional press coverage between 1990 and 1994. By studying how the press builds issues of sustainable development in the Brazilian Amazon, it is possible to understand broader political, economic, social and cultural perspectives. To understand the processes of making meaning of sustainable development issues constitutes a relevant object of study. It has the potential to reveal the multiplicity of themes and the plurality of actors involved in new forms of approach to environment and development in the region and elsewhere in Latin America.

This research aims at analysing how two regional newspapers, one in each of the two major cities in the Amazon, covered sustainable development issues throughout a five-year period, 1990 to 1994. The regional press was chosen for its presentation of more in-depth coverage of local actors in comparison to what, in Brazil, is considered the national press. By selecting the local press, the study also focuses on identifying how a regional perspective on
Amazonian matters is shaped in the news. As the objective is to reveal a regional actors' perspective, newspapers represent a more valuable source due to their historical links with local politics as both *O Liberal* and *A Crítica* had clear political purposes when first established. Unlike newspapers, local television stations comprise a national framework of media systems, such as that of *Globo*. Thus, they follow patterns set by the system, losing their regional character and providing a more standardised coverage.

In the 1990s, press coverage brings evidence that there has been a change in official as well as non-official discourse. There seems to be a shift from economic, environmentally and human-rights arguments to one that attempts to encompass all aspects, the newly introduced sustainable development concept (Killingsworth & Palmer, 1992). The political, economic and historical overall context and the character of the news business define media's approach to reality.

The press has consistently revealed stages of the process of designing policy with regard to many of the main issues of Amazonian life all along. In the years covered by this study some of the policy-related issues that appear are health, the environment and development, science and technology, land ownership, and Indian matters among others. In both newspapers, some of these issues are more or less reported on, according to the newspapers' own agendas and the newspapers’ specific context, i.e. Manaus and Belém. Values of geographic and cultural proximity are always present as the two newspapers establish what is news. Although both are newspapers located in Amazonian cities, they reveal differences closer to

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1 Some examples from *A Crítica*: “Rural communities want INCRA’s intervention”, 20/1/90; “Canadian mission to see environmental problems”, 10/2/90; “Waimiri-Atroari in conflict”, 20/2/90; “Entrepreneurs fear lack of support”, 10/11/90; “Environmentalist fears set back in policy to defend the Amazon”, 10/12/90; “Without a free duty zone, Manaus will not even be a port for timber export”, 20/6/91; “Eco 92 hides a plan to dominate the Amazon”, 10/7/91; “Institutions must unite in the defence of the Amazon”, 20/8/91; “Peoples of the forest meet at Union’s Eco”, 30/9/91; “Brazil taken to Court: dam construction”, 30/3/92; “Preserving science”, 10/6/92; “Mestrinho shows the Amazon to military officials”, 10/7/92; “Project to evaluate environmental impact”, 10/10/92; “Free trade zone: plans and neoliberal reality”, 10/4/93; “Braga: Ministry is an isolated policy”, 29/9/93; “IMA says there is a lack of union among environmental organisations”, 20/11/93; “Indians denounce terrorist policy”, 20/3/94.

In *O Liberal* some items are: “State’s rural leadership analyse agrarian reform”, 10/6/90; “Agriculture plan defined”, 10/8/90; “Science and technology State Council to be created”, 30/8/90; “Contribution of science to the Amazon is still incipient”, 30/10/90; “Economic order must also be taken into consideration”, 30/10/90; “Ecology, survival of all”, 29/9/91; “Amazon should not be a ‘guinea pig’ German professor says”, 20/11/91; “Modernisation policy is disastrous” (30/10/92); “CUT meets to discuss proposal of an environmental policy” 30/10/92; “Producers discover ‘coup’ against Brazilian rubber” 30/11/92; “Forum reviews projects in Amazônia” 28/2/93; “Omission affects all countries in the region”, 20/5/93; “Protection of the Amazon thought over since 1990”, 30/8/93; “Development and environment”, 30/5/94; “Rural policy can promote the Amazon”, 20/6/94.
each one’s reality. As the Amazon region presents many different facets so do the newspapers.

As a result of a change in official and non-official discourse and associated with the episodic nature of news, the debate over the use of natural resources to promote economic growth and better quality of life increased in the regional press in 1991 and 1992. The realisation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as Rio 92, helped set the agenda and increased coverage of sustainable development issues. As discussed earlier, the appeal of some events determines the press coverage they get.

After the critical period of the late 1980s when Brazil was strongly criticised in its practices of natural resources exploitation and levels of human quality of life, the Rio 92 Conference represented a major political event not only internationally, but for Brazil itself host of the event. It is not by chance that the greatest coverage of sustainable development issues in the Amazon took place in the years 1991 and 1992. As Table 1 and Figure 1 show, almost 30 percent of the items identified were published in 1991 (198 items). In 1992, the number was reduced to 154, representing 23 percent of the total.

Table 1
Items published by year in each newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>O Liberal [n=360] %</th>
<th>A Crítica [n=319] %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can argue that this is very much the case to this day, regardless of continuing changes in public policy.
Some of the more influential elements of the observed coverage were of economic and political nature with a wide spectrum of ideological inclinations. The environment had become a political discourse in which, as Hallin (1987) argues, orientation of many issues constitutes a news frame that once introduced by the media becomes an integrated part of reality and is thus taken by audiences. The media did not decide for themselves and by themselves that the environment and, for the mainstream politics, sustainable development was the new political discourse. The overall world context as Reeves (1993) and Gitlin (1980) argue, as well as Brazilian politics and economy, among many other factors, shaped the coverage and framing of news about sustainable development in the Amazon region. The pace of the destruction in the region has not followed what Schoenfeld et. al. (1979) describe as “The naturally slow process of environmental degradation” (p. 50). Along with the fact that the environment had been forced upon the political agenda, the theme appeared consistently in the news for a considerable period of time, i.e. for 12 months starting mid 1991.

The coverage stems from an overall scenario where interests contend and the resulting dissension worked out in dialogue are reported on through the articulation of different

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3Further discussion in chapter VII where the discourse analysis is presented.
actors. The regional reporting of Amazonian matters as well as discourses used by the sources read as if the concept of sustainable development, the ideas it implies, and the solutions it presents, had always been part of the every day life in the region. If coverage were to acknowledge that an indigenous population’s use of natural resources (Posey, 1995) had always applied sustainability principles to the region’s ecosystems, there would be no news. It would have completely lost its value of newsworthiness. The coverage manufactured sustainability in the use of natural resources as news that mostly originated in a different perspective than that of the indigenous peoples. The official and expert perspectives are pervasive throughout the coverage.

Those who had been applying sustainability principles as an element of their culture rarely got covered for these reasons. But the economic difficulties, the discrediting of the politicians and the increased poverty levels transformed sustainable development into an ideology and a creed. There is no doubt that it is necessary to have a sustainable approach to matters of the environment. What is unacceptable is that existing values are appropriated and distorted to meet special vested interests.

The press in the region accepted and conformed to the ideas and reported as if they had always been reported on, as if sustainable development had always been of wide knowledge and acceptance and, therefore, part of the public debate of Amazonian matters. In reality, it was the press that channelled the interests toward the public. Packaging of news made themes sound ordinary within a framing which introduced the alleged new concept and its ideology. The banalisation and commonality attributed to themes presented in the news are characteristics of the press coverage in a region affected by constant political, economic, social, cultural and environmental conflicts. In providing no major clarification on the newly introduced approach to the region’s problems, the press contributed to the usage of a concept which is not widely understood and belongs in debates held by the elite comprising political, economic, scientific and environmental actors. This is a dramatic picture as well as an extreme one. It is revealing of the dimension of the internal and external pressures represented within the region. The understanding of humankind not being an integral part of the environment creates a basic equivocal perspective of what development, welfare,
sustainability among other concepts actually mean. The press in the region reveals the confusion. Despite this, news has undoubtedly supported public debate on Amazonian issues throughout the first half of this decade.

Reporting of the articulation of major interests around sustainable development issues in the Amazon in the regional press was maintained since the earlier stages of preparation for the Rio Conference until the moment it took place in June 1992. An increased coverage was observed in the 12 months prior to the event, the period comprehended between the 2nd quarter of 1991 and the second quarter of 1992. This confirms the assumption that there was a rise in the press coverage of sustainable development related topics immediately before the Rio 92 Conference (Table 2 and Figure 2). More than 50 percent of the news published in the five years targeted by the study were published in 1991 and 1992. The political moment was right. This, though, was not an isolated occurrence. Increased discussion of environment and development matters were also observed both internationally, nationally and in the region itself.4 The regional press represents an Amazonian reflection of the world scenario as it debated environment and development matters.

Table 2
Items published by quarter in 1991 and 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>O Lib</th>
<th>A Crit</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st quarter</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quarter</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quarter</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th quarter</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4A number of authors (Hansen, 1994; Andersson & Pertoft, 1996; Oliveira, 1990; Reis, 1994; Silva, 1994; Ramos, 1996; and Beltrão, 1994) support this idea. See detailed discussion in chapter II.
After the uproar of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio 92, the coverage started to fall, hitting its lowest numbers in 1994, when 79 pieces (12 percent) were published, representing 40 percent of those published in 1991 and half of the amount published in 1992 (Table 1 and Figure 1).

News values such as the decision of what constitutes accredited sources set the media agenda and obviously reflect how themes are reported. In this context, analysis argues that social movements are to be seen in their ability to improve possibilities of specific themes entering the news agenda. Considering that the movements always introduce new leadership, as movements consolidate, such individuals become the “knowns” and appear in the coverage. When rubber tappers’ leader, Chico Mendes, was assassinated in the late 1980s, he became a “known” rather than an “unknown” as he might have remained to most of the region and Brazil, while he was alive. This is a universal journalistic value that stands in the Amazon as well. Another case is that of Kayapó Chief Paiakã who on being accused of raping a girl became widely reported in a rather dramatic circumstance of which the media maintained coverage throughout the Rio 92 and later during the trial.6

5 “Paiakã’s prison ordered”; “Redenção protests”; “Federal Police out of Paiakã’s case”; “Girl of 15 says she is victim of Chief”; “Protest against coverage”; “Parliamentarians in favour of punishment”, O Liberal, 10/6/92. “Kayapó Chief
Environmental news cycles have reached the Amazon region in a different pace. If internationally, the boom of environmental concern and environmental movements took place in the 1960s, it did not reach the region until the 1970s. Very much centred in regional problems and conflicts, social movements arose as land was occupied and infra-structure built to exploit natural resources. If the news media set the agenda, social movements in organised civil society, led by both the Right and the Left, triggered the themes of the environmental agenda as the subject has the ability to bring together traditionally antagonist forces. Perhaps the end of the Cold War and the awareness of working for the “common good” (Daly & Cobb, 1989) triggered a new attitude and the media was rather responsive to portray the revised values.

Themes in the coverage

Sustainable development encompasses many facets. The interdisciplinary character of the concept contributes to the diversity of themes it comprises. Identifying relevant themes that fit the concept was a complex, but necessary exercise. An earlier study (Beltrao, 1994) had identified a number of issues related to sustainable development and of specific regional concern. A comprehensive literature review was carried out to establish the themes falling under the interdisciplinary concept of sustainable development from the most varied perspectives of those studying the matter covering the main areas of scientific knowledge. A preliminary data collection was carried out for O Liberal, in Belém, in late 1994 and early 1995 in order to have a better understanding of the kind of coverage found in the regional press. The exercise allowed to identify the elected themes as well as to make the necessary adjustments throughout the data collection process.7
Issue prominence is important in the identification and analysis of meaning. In its potential to reveal political elements in the selection of themes, this is a fundamental category of analysis and, thus, relevant in studies of environmental and development issues marked by political signification. Among the most prominent themes in the news items are environment and development in 11 percent of the stories, followed by Indian matters (10 percent), health (9 percent) and political and border affairs (8 percent). Other relevant topics also appear such as those of natural resources management and scientific results (7 percent), commerce and industry, research management and crime and violence (6 percent) and primary economy activities (5 percent) and mining, natural phenomena and infra-structure (4 percent) all the way to deforestation (3 percent) (Table 3 and Figure 3).

The fact that deforestation and land-owning come in order of appearance way below scientific results (7 percent), commerce and industry, research management and crime and violence (6 percent); and even mining and natural phenomena (4 percent) is puzzling. It is very clear that a combination of motives contributed to such low percentage of coverage. Very much publicised everywhere in the world as under threat of disappearing completely due to controversial practices of land occupation, non-enforcement of legislation on land property, and logging and slash and burn practices to clear ground for agriculture and cattle ranching, it is surprising that the regional coverage of Amazônia does not reflect concern with deforestation and land-owning issues.

Similar to analysis of Indian matters, mining has been analysed separate from primary economy activities. It has such a relevance in the context of the region due to the abundance of mineral resources that it was necessary to identify whether this relevance would show in the press coverage. Indian-related themes have obviously lost to other themes its momentum in the news as seen in previous years.

It is possible, for lack of better quality information, logging has assumed a sensationalised type of coverage outside the region pushed by national and international environmental groups. Coverage of deforestation issues within the region itself remained immune to the

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8Given its relevance, Indian matters is analysed separately from human populations.
wave of “save the rain forest” discourse. It is also possible that the private sector responsible for logging and deforestation activities and ownership of considerable amount of land has exercised pressure on local media groups so that they would remain silent on an issue that involves major economic interests. Although, by now, the private sector had acquired the usage of sustainable development as a concept on which the tenets of business had always been based at, it was probably safer to avoid major debate on deforestation or even reforestation matters altogether. This also explains the low profile kept by the private sector in the years covered by this study. Although not the only source of influence, the private sector has shown to be more influential than the interest groups such as environmentalists, human and Indian rights movements.

The variety of interests involved in the development of Amazônia, especially those of economic and political order, exclude from the news, themes such as deforestation and land ownership. The small coverage of these two themes reveals some support to the political economy approach. The colluding nature of the relationship between the media and the local elites in the Brazilian context and in the region apply (Motter, 1994). It is important, though to recall that other factors influence such outcome in the coverage. As Gitlin (1980) says, “The media want to honour the political-economic system as a whole; their very power and prestige deeply presuppose that system.” (p. 258-259). It is quite obvious that economic groups in Amazônia, including both major corporations and latifundíários, as proprietors of large extensions of land, have no interests in seeing such matters discussed in the press. Though one cannot say that these newspapers can be necessarily included among those corporations nor among the land proprietors’ group, their approach to such matters concedes that they defend such interests by suppressing themes from the coverage.
Table 3

Main themes by newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>O Liberal [n=360]</th>
<th>A Crítica [n=319]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Env't &amp; Develop't</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Matters</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political, Borders Affairs</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Res. Manag't</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Results</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Management</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime &amp; Violence</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Economy Actv.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Phenomena</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infra-structure</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deforestation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sci. &amp; Tech. Events</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Culture</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-owning</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Populations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law &amp; Legislation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 679 100.0 100.0 100.0

Another contributing factor to the small coverage is that the private sector itself has reviewed its discourse and from the early 1990s started using concepts such as that of sustainable development to their own benefit. The use of sustainable development in the language of the representatives of the private sector implies that their business has always abided by the tenets of the concept (Maimon, 1995). In 1993, news of timber companies "fight to change image" was still among press reports in the region. As recent as 1996, a research has found that small and medium business representatives consider environmental management important but only a small group puts "opinion into practice". News items

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9 O Liberal, 10/11/93.
reflected the business representatives' truth and diminished the possibility of criticism by undermining the relevance of themes of such urgency to the region among which are deforestation, land property and mining.

Yet another aspect which is reflected in the coverage is that logging and deforestation are considered as primary economy activities.\footnote{Here included agriculture, cattle ranching and related problems raised by land occupation and concentrated land ownership.} As such, they are perceived as common activities in the region due to the increased scale they have reached in the past thirty years. Thus, the press covers the matters from the perspective of the end (agriculture, cattle ranching) and not the means (logging, although logging in itself is a very profitable end). These constitute some examples of the practice of news framing as conceptualised by Gitlin (1980) and Gurevitch and Levy (1985).

Overall, the findings point toward an environmentally-oriented discourse which indicates sustainability as a solution and as an objective to be aimed for, in support to the current sustainable development ideology. The most remarkable aspect of this finding is that the

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{themes_in_the_news}
\caption{Themes in the news}
\end{figure}

main subject of article
actors' voices confound themselves as they represent diverse segments of society. The voices in this environmentally-oriented discourse are of those as varied as government and union representatives and Indian leadership and private sector representatives.

If social movements were articulated regarding Indian and land ownership matters in the 1970s and 1980s, the 1990s gave way to environmentalist discourse that does not allow for the coverage of singled-out themes. The environment took over other pressing matters in the region, setting the tune for the private sector, by now, also organised, to face criticism. Some have even decided to clean up their image by introducing expert knowledge allegedly to guide them through their practices of natural resources exploitation. In doing so, they have built a new profile of environmentally-concerned businesses.

Much to the dismay of environmentalists, the private sector has learned strategies to present itself as "green" and, because of its access to the media, it has been able to interfere in the debate from a politically-correct position. This all happens despite the fact that non-governmental organisations representatives rise as actors in specific periods of the coverage. The media and the private sector have also learned to identify the limits of the intervention. Playing a low profile in certain instances has also been a private sector's practice. By retreating, it has allowed for the exposure of environment militant groups. This came to the entrepreneurs' benefit as a means of preventing direct criticism as well as a means of preventing them from having to assume a defensive position. It seems that a conjunction of factors has influenced a smaller coverage of logging and deforestation.12

A considerable variety of factors has also contributed to the decreased coverage of land-related issues. With the rise of environmental discourse in late 1980s and early 1990s, Amazonian matters overall assumed a different connotation. For some of the issues - and this is clear in the case of deforestation, land-ownership and mining -, there was a strong environmental frame. The rise of the environment as a theme in itself provided the conditions for the observed practice. The environment, as well as sustainable development, in its interdisciplinary nature has allowed for its discussion to be bent any convenient way.

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12 Even the national newspapers such as Folha de São Paulo, when reporting on the Amazon of the early 1990s have regarded logging as one of its agenda's top items (Ramos, 1996).
Instead of emphasising matters of land ownership, deforestation and mining, three of the most sensitive themes in the Brazilian Amazon, the press, without completely eliminating these themes from the coverage, was able to give them a green colouring. The emphasis was placed on environmental concerns instead of on the threat resulting from extensive land occupation and concentration of land ownership, from uncontrolled logging and polluting mining practices. This finding corroborates the argument about issues carrying capacity when it reveals the competing character of themes within news. In this, journalists play a fundamental role surrendering to an agenda that meets particular interests.

Under the argument that themes have a limited space in media arenas, the environment and development issues can be said to have overruled specific themes such as land ownership, mining and deforestation. News reveals a lack of context and a tendency to meet the convenience of vested interests pervasive in the region, those of the local oligarchy (Emmi, 1987; Becker, 1994). Although this may seem a contradiction in that new voices have indeed appeared in the coverage, the selection of sources is a complex matter and journalists in the region play a major role in guaranteeing diversity in the coverage. Many structural problems underlying more general issues were left out of the news and, thus, providing a generalised version of a far more complex scenario. News has undermined crucial issues in favour of a wide spread discourse of the newly introduced sustainable development concept.

**Differences between newspapers’ coverage of themes**

There is no agreement as to which theme is of most importance where the Amazon is concerned in the news published by *O Liberal* and *A Critica*. While *A Critica* privileges a discussion over political and border affairs, *O Liberal* chooses health as the chief theme of its coverage. Both newspapers agree, though, that the environment and development should be among their first three most prominent themes. For them, the environment and development come as the second most prominent subject. Another similarity is that both *O Liberal* and *A Critica* have Indian matters as the third most prominent theme (Table 3).
Health

The greater discrepancies between the amount of coverage given to certain subjects by *A Crítica* and *O Liberal* were observed in the reporting of political and border affairs, health and scientific results. *O Liberal* mostly published news about themes such as health. As much as 11 percent of the coverage of *O Liberal* reports on the theme. Health as the first main subject matter for *O Liberal* is explained by a more thorough coverage of the cholera epidemics in 1991 and 1992 (11 percent) when compared to that of *A Crítica* (7 percent).

The fact that health coverage overall comprises one of the most prominent themes and is the most prominent for *O Liberal* is also related to high incidence of tropical diseases in the region. The lack of infra-structure to provide basic sanitation and meet the medical assistance needs of the population is also interconnected as 18 percent of the health stories brought infra-structure as a subsidiary theme and another eight percent as second subsidiary theme.

Political and border affairs

It is clear that *A Crítica* has made political and border affairs the most important point of its news agenda. The tone which these issues acquired relate to a nationalist approach of politicians with the leadership of Gilberto Mestrinho, State governor between 1990 and 1994. Amazonas State, for which Manaus is the capital, and its geographic location implies

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13 In *O Liberal*, “The malaria misery”, 30/4/90; “Tuberculosis continues to kill in Brazil”; “Free lance prospectors take malaria to Ceará State”, 10/7/90; “Dengue first appeared in Boa Vista, researcher says”, 10/1/91; “Cholera threatens all of America, says PAHO”, 20/4/91; “Pará prepares to fight cholera”, “51 cases of cholera in Brazilian territory”, 20/8/91; “In less than two days, the Amazon registers 15 cases of cholera”, 30/8/91; “Cholera may cause disaster in Manaus”, 20/10/91; “Four more under suspicion of cholera”, 20/11/91; “Life conditions attract disease”, 10/12/91; “SOPREN and CVRD warn against cholera”, 30/9/91; “Belém has 12 more cases of cholera”, 10/1/92; “Pará leads in number of cholera cases”, 29/2/92; “Belém will debate combat of malaria”, 20/4/92; “Amapá armed in the war against cholera and malaria”, 10/7/92; “Chagas disease without efficient combat”, 30/7/92; “Combat against cholera inside boats”, 30/10/92; “Cholera had not appeared in two months”, 30/6/93. In *A Crítica*, “Tropical diseases”, 20/1/91; “IMTM ready to treat cholera patients”, 10/3/91; “Malaria cases diminish in Manaus”, 10/4/91; “Cholera and social misery”, 20/4/91; “Secretary confirms new cholera cases”, 10/7/91; “Congress Commission sees cholera on Solimões”, 30/8/91; “Brazil has a total of 88 cholera cases”, 30/8/91; “Cholera reaches Manaus”, 10/10/91; “Malaria victimises 561 Macuxi Indians”, 30/11/91; “Siege to malaria and more than 100 cases”, 30/10/92; “Malaria and measles cause Indian deaths”, 20/2/92; “Hepatitis virus affects 300,000 people”, 20/5/92; “Indians more vulnerable”, 10/11/92; “Diseases are more dangerous than malnutrition”, 20/1/94.

14 Said to have started in Peru and have travelled down the Amazonas river, the epidemics quickly reached cities in the Amazon basin area, including Manaus and Belém.
in having border lines with three other key Amazonian countries Peru, Colombia and Venezuela. This factor might be considered as an influence in the nationalist attitude. The state of Pará, of which Belém is the capital, is closer to two Amazonian countries, Guyana and Surinam which do not have the same political and economic weight as Peru, Colombia and Venezuela do. This could be an explanation for A Crítica's coverage (13 percent) which is three times that of O Liberal (4 percent).\footnote{In A Crítica, “Andreotti arrives to see Waimiri-Atroari”, 10/3/90; “Governor protests against IBAMAs’s fines”, 10/10/90; “VII Air Force Command participates in the progress of the Amazon”, 21/10/90; “Collor accused of abandoning Amazonas State”, 20/6/91; “CPI to investigate clandestine runways”, 20/6/91; “USA uses ecology to its own benefit”, 20/7/91; “Patriotic explosion”, 20/7/91; “CNBB demands evidence against CIMI be presented”, 10/8/91; “200 clandestine aircraft over the Amazon”, 10/8/91; “Difficulties allow access to foreigners”, 20/8/91; “Colombia supports Amazonas State. Amazonas in defence of the Amazon”, 10/9/91; “Problems on borders to be clarified”, 30/1/92; “Good Morning, President”, 10/2/92; “Amazonian countries need support”, 10/2/92; “Venezuelan government will punish the murderers”, 10/2/92; “Regional co-operation”, 10/2/92; “Collor answers Mestrinho in 48 hours”, 10/5/92; “Army wants to reinforce Amazonian borders”, 30/1/93; “Free lance prospectors in jail by the hands of Guardia Nacional”, 10/2/93; “Iamar reiterates: the Amazon must be respected”, 11/5/93; “Army ignores manoeuvres on the border”, 20/5/93; “Marluce defends Calha Norte”, 20/8/93; “Braga: Ministry is an isolated policy”, 29/8/93; “Amazon: conspiracy or stupidity”, 29/8/93; “Amazon will have 5,000 men in military manoeuvre”, 30/9/93; “Iamar regulates Amazon council”, 30/10/93; “Shining Path and FARC united in the Amazon”, 10/11/93; “Military Command of the Amazon (CMA) applies strict measures to patrol the region”, 10/11/93; “Border is strategic area for guerrilla and drug traffic”, 10/11/93; “São Gabriel hosts military meeting”, 11/5/94; “Navy increases forces in the region”, 30/4/94; “Justice allows Greenpeace to stay in the country”, 30/10/94; “Amazonian block”, 10/12/94. In O Liberal, “Oziel proposes new kick off for Calha Norte project”, 10/3/91; “The Amazon and the Brazilian Guyana”, 20/6/99; “Campaign tries to obtain support for creation of Tapajós State”, 30/8/91; “Poverty is not responsible for armed conflict in the Hemisphere”, 10/11/91; “Separatism as a result of poverty”, 10/12/91; “Let the North not cry, but act in time”, 20/7/92; “Northern borders: A military matter”, 30/7/92; “Coup d’Etat that all are to repudiate”, 30/11/92; “Calha Norte caused damage”, 30/6/93; “Military troops manoeuvre in border area”, 20/8/93; “Protection of the Amazon thought over since 1990”, 30/8/93; “Military manoeuvre in the Amazon”, 30/9/93.}

This discussion does not imply that leadership from Pará State refrains from voicing a nationalist discourse. Figures such as Jâder Barbalho, the twice State Governor, and Jarbas Passarinho, Minister of Justice, at that particular time, did play their parts in the nationalist chorus. But because O Liberal had in Jâder Barbalho a first class political enemy, it did not allow coverage of the Governor, therefore, playing down his role in the debate.\footnote{In a move to face O Liberal leadership in the media market, as a source of political power, Jâder had, earlier in the 1980s, set up a media chain of his own. O Liberal has never accepted this and in the past has made its discontent quite clear. The political arena was different from the Manaus scenario at that time when A Crítica lent all of its support to Governor Mestrinho. The current situation is much changed as the now Governor, Amazonino Mendes, is supported by another newspaper in the city, Amazonas em Tempo.}

The then Minister Jarbas Passarinho, by having his headquarters in Brasília, did not receive the attention of the paper as much as a source available in Belém would have. That is understandable due to the lack of more effective correspondent work. It is possible, though, that one could dispute this argument as national news agencies provide material on Brasília.
affairs. But as a Minister, he was not inserted in the context of the news as a regional actor. News agency services treated him more as a federal government official and, by doing that, played down regional issues. Also known for his balanced right wing behaviour, Passarinho would hardly get as controversial as Mestrinho did.

Yet another explanation for such a high coverage of political and border affairs is related to Pará’s long standing history of internal conflicts. Amazonas played up the image of a threatened target because of its proximity to borders with more powerful countries than those neighbouring Pará. Nevertheless, the State of Pará as a whole has been much more affected by disordered occupation and exploitation of its natural resources when compared to Amazonas. By 1991, half of the region’s population lived in Pará, a situation that today is unchanged and one that increases pressure on resources when compared to Amazonas State.¹⁷ Thus, it is possible that O Liberal’s coverage reflects that and concentrates on internal issues¹⁸ rather than external or considered external themes such as political and border affairs.

Science

The coverage of scientific results comprises another discrepancy. In this case, it is O Liberal (10 percent) which leads with four times the amount published by A Crítica (2.5 percent) throughout the five-year period. That is probably explained by a stronger historic research tradition of Belém institutions when compared to Manaus. Scientific activity has been stronger in Belém throughout history. Its strategic location on the delta of the Amazon river facilitated, in earlier times, access to the region and scientists actually established themselves in the area from, at least, as far back as the nineteenth century. It is in that period that the 130-year Goeldi Museum (MPEG) was founded. Today, the Goeldi Museum along with the National Institute for Research in the Amazon (INPA)¹⁹ have been appointed centres of scientific excellence for the region.

¹⁸ In O Liberal, “Paraquapebas (southern Pará) landless people tortured” (30/8/91); “Campaign tries to obtain support for creation of Tapajós State” (30/8/91), implying the loss of territory by Pará with major economic consequences; “Separatism as a result of poverty” (10/2/91).
¹⁹ Not yet 50 years old.
The historical tradition to do research and to communicate its results made the Goeldi Museum a reference centre and an established information source (Bertho, 1994; Aragón, 1994). This allowed for the building of a local empathy toward the institution hardly found elsewhere in the region a very different situation from that of INPA and other institutions in Manaus. It was only in 1992 that INPA opened its doors to the public. Having been in Manaus for 40 years, the Institute just recently started to relate to the community in a more closer manner. Another characteristic that probably contributes to this is that researchers who work at INPA are mostly from outside the region. And although that was also the case of the Goeldi Museum, throughout its 130 years of existence, the institution has acquired locals as researchers, allowing for a closer approach by both the community and the press. The press coverage in Belém, reflects an intensification of institutional efforts to make science an item in the public agenda. Along with the Goeldi Museum, the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) and the East Amazon Agroforestry Research Centre (CPATU) are the institutions that most frequently appear in the press as scientists are introduced as sources in the news.

The presence of journalists with experience in scientific institutions and with an interest in covering science also worked as a facilitating factor to the coverage of research results in Belém. This, in combination with the setting up of press offices in almost every scientific institution in Pará (mostly from the early 1980s) established the more appropriate conditions for the news coverage of science. The set up of press offices is a reflection of the institutional recognition of both its role as information source and of their need for public support. The latter reveals a clear political move to make research institutions recognised by the whole of society as well as by the funding agencies. This is a trend that Manaus has yet to experience at the level that Pará has (Beltrão, 1996).

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20 The Evandro Chagas Institute is the only research institution located in Belém not to have a press office to date. Its core area of research is Life and Health Sciences.
Trends over time

The agreement between *O Liberal* and *A Crítica* demonstrated in the findings about having environment and development as one of the most prominent themes of coverage follows a world-wide, national and regional trend. It was in the years 1991 and 1992, mostly in anticipation of the Rio 92 Conference that the environment assumed its political nature and gained space in the press. From eight percent in 1990, the coverage more than doubled in 1991 (17 percent) falling three points in 1992 (14 percent). In the immediate period following the Rio Conference, coverage presents a sharp fall. After the uproar, environment and development account for as little as three percent in 1993 and four percent in 1994 (Table 4).

With the exception of 1991 when the environment and development issues took over 17 percent of the coverage and Indian matters received around five percent, Indian matters have a stable amount of coverage throughout the years. The average corresponds to around 10 percent per year. It is possible to notice, though, that the first year of the period, 1990, presented the highest coverage with as much as 15 percent for that specific year. It is

\[\text{some examples of news on the topic. In *O Liberal*, "Scientists discuss new environmental projects", 20/2/91; "A Latin American ecological alliance", 20/7/91; "Environmental Impact Assessment on BR-156 road needs redoing", 30/7/91; "Ecology, survival for all", 29/9/91; "SUDAM and Embrapa will take care of environment", 20/1/92; "Manatee in detriment of man", 20/4/92; "Ecologist's ethical compromise", 10/6/92; "Ecology is older than hegemony", 20/9/92; "Development and environment", 30/5/94. In *A Crítica*, "Rezek: Government rescues environment", 20/6/90; "Governor wants human populations benefiting from regional riches", 10/10/90; "CUT takes the Amazon to a national debate", 21/2/91; "Amazon, eco fight", 30/5/91; "Mestrinho alerts against social rebellions in the Amazon", 30/5/91; "Ecological scheme", 10/6/91; "PT opens debate about the Amazon", 20/9/91; "Ecological cease-fire", 10/2/92; "Agreement promotes forest policy", 30/4/92; "Mestrinho increases action for the defence of the Amazon", 20/5/92; "Project to evaluate environmental impact", 10/10/92.}\]
therefore possible to say that, alongside other themes, Indian matters start to have a smaller coverage from 1991 onwards.

Health coverage experiences a boom in 1991. Mostly due to the coverage of the cholera epidemics in that year, the percentage of news items jumps from two percent in 1990 to 17 percent in 1991. It was mostly in 1991 that health competed for coverage with environment and development. By 1992, health issues coverage is still high (11 percent), but a decline is observed in 1993 when coverage corresponds to five percent and three percent in 1994.

Table 4
Themes by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Environment &amp; Development</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Matters</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political, Border Affairs</td>
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<td>8.1</td>
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<td>15.4</td>
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<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Results</td>
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<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Industry Research</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Primary Economy Activities</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime &amp; Violence</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Phenomena</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deforestation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sci &amp; Tech Events</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infra-structure</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Culture</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-owning</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Populations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law &amp; Legislation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar to what happened in the coverage of environment and development, the character of discussions about the Amazon acquired a strong political tone from 1992 onwards. It is coherent with this factor that the press doubled its coverage of political and border affairs between 1990 (4 percent) and 1991 (8 percent), a percentage maintained in 1992. But in 1993, the coverage almost doubled (15 percent), only to fall, yet once more, in 1994 (6 percent). To explain the 1993 increased coverage there is the fact that 73 Yanomami Indians were killed by free-lance gold prospectors on the border between Brazil and Venezuela, creating a major political and diplomatic crisis and international outcry. Proximity (of Amazonas State to Venezuela) has worked as a news value contributing to A Crítica’s greater coverage of the matter when compared to O Liberal. The newspaper support to the Governor’s nationalist campaign also contributed to boost coverage of political and border issues.

Another stable, though smaller, type of coverage is that of scientific results. Though it was not assigned to any special page, coverage of science presents an average of seven percent a year. Most of the coverage, though, was concentrated in 1991 and 1992 when such information was directed or not to pushing government policy measures. With the increasing international pressure, regardless of the environmental destruction being one of the results of poverty as the economic conditions hardened in nations in debt, it was necessary to demonstrate environmental concern regarding Amazonia.

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23 "Massacre in the jungle: 40 Yanomami murdered", O Liberal, 20/8/93.
24 Expression taken from Willis, 1992.
25 The crisis, fuelled by international pressure, triggered policy action. Subsequently to the massacre, President Itamar Franco created a special Ministry of the Amazon, today, the Ministry of Environment, Water Resources and the Legal Amazon.
26 In O Liberal: “30,000 baby turtles dead. Pollution might be responsible”, 21/1/90; “Without advice, immigrants destroy Brazil nut tree native areas”, 10/10/90; “Ab’Saber condemns demagogy and asks for region’s ecologic-economic zoning”, “UNESCO intends to extend research in the Amazon”, “Brazil needs new researchers”, “Science contribution to the Amazon is still incipient”, “Free lance prospectors ask for more understanding”, “Economic order must also be taken into consideration”, 30/10/90; “Dengue first appeared in Boa Vista, researcher says”, “Science and technology face mal-distribution of funding”, 10/1/91; “Contamination threatens Tucuruí lake”, 30/5/91; “German geologist explains theory of refuges in Belém”, 20/7/91; “Amazonia should not serve as ‘guinea pig’, German professor says”, 20/1/91; “Brazil may repeat mercury tragedy”, 30/11/91; “High expectation over vaccine against diarrhoea”, 30/7/92; “Satellites will help studying Northern Coast mangroves”, 20/10/92; “Modernisation policy is disastrous, researchers say”; 30/10/92; “In the forest, cure for diseases”, 30/11/92.
27 Policy is very much influenced by international pressure. Recently, a WWF report pushed for regulation to protect rainforest in Brazil. Gazeta Mercantil, 27/2/97.
A very similar trend is observed regarding research management. Most coverage of the theme occurred in 1991 and 1992. Both scientific results and research management were backing policy measures. The latter demonstrated the government’s moves to improve management of resources supporting science as it is seen to carry the potential of giving answer to the ills of the environment.

Although natural resources management is one of the most prominent themes, its coverage fell by almost one third between 1990 (15 percent) and 1994 (6 percent). The trend points again to the search for solutions. By means of framing news primarily from the perspective of scientific results and research management, the debate is kept on the fence as the structural reasons of the problems in the region are more or less neglected in the coverage. Discussion was, thus, pulled away from the origin of the matter, i.e. exploitation of natural resources, and from possible practical solutions such as initiatives of preservation and conservation, needs for rehabilitation of deforested areas as well as improvement of resource exploitation conditions. By placing the debate on science, the discussion moved away from those that more directly damage the environment. In this aspect, science and the environment worked as perfectly neutral themes. It only became of political nature when nationalist concerns constitute the axis of the coverage.

Increase in science and environmental news is linked to the low profile of the private sector representatives at the time. It represents a shift from using union leadership and private sector representatives as opposed to using more scientists, NGO officials and Indian leadership as sources. This constituted an attempt to build a low profile for those most directly implicated in the devastation of the environment namely timber entrepreneurs and free-lance gold prospectors’ union leaders.

Coverage of commerce and industry more than doubles between 1992 (4 percent) and 1993 (9 percent). After the environmental wave produced by the Rio Conference and the impeachment of President Collor in September 1992, the new government, headed by Collor’s vice-president, Itamar Franco, launched a new economic policy, a package known
as Plano Real.\textsuperscript{28} It provided the scenario for the increased coverage of this important economic sector as it was a moment of economic growth and anticipation of presidential\textsuperscript{29} elections. Similar to what Hansen (1993a) describes as environment’s “downward trend in the beginning of the 1990s” (p. xv) as he points out the renewed interests in economic matters that put aside the environment as a social problems, Brazil experienced this phenomenon at the time of the implementation of the new economic policy.

Other themes also took on to the news and forced a decrease in the coverage of environmental issues. Among themes that have composed the variety of issues arising in the press at the time as a result of overall economic and political changes, are primary economy activities, crime and violence and infra-structure.

Primary economy activities were also affected by the Real. By 1994, the coverage of the theme had increased by four percent compared to the previous year. The coverage of such issues in the Amazon is a reflection of the country’s renewed economy and overall unchanged rate of exploitation of natural resources.

The major trend concerning crime and violence is the increased coverage in 1992. This was due to the coverage of a specific actor in the Amazon, a Kayapó leader, Paulinho Paiakâ. He was charged with raping a teenager. The news broke during Rio 92 and was transformed in the local and national press’s \textit{pièce de résistance} in June 92.\textsuperscript{30}

Infra-structure\textsuperscript{31} as a theme had but disappeared from the news by 1993 (1 percent). But in an election year such as 1994, it increased by six times similar to what had happened in 1991 also an election year. While 1994 was election year both for president and governor, 1991 was election year for Mayor. It is known that by the time elections are to take place, a series

\textsuperscript{28} Real is the Brazilian currency introduced by the Itamar Franco’s policy.
\textsuperscript{29} The Government’s candidate was their Minister of Finance and current President, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, sociologist and one of authors of Dependency Theory elaborated in Latin America in the 1970s.
\textsuperscript{30} “Paiakâ’s prison ordered”; “Redeção protests”; “Federal Police out of Paiakâ’s case”; “Girl of 15 says she is victim of Chief”; “Protest against coverage”; “Parliamentarians in favour of punishment”, \textit{O Liberal}, 10/6/92. “Paiakâ blames his wife on rape case”; “Despite mistakes, FUNAI comes out stronger”; “Chief in prison says he feels humiliated”, \textit{O Liberal}, 20/6/92.
\textsuperscript{31} Major construction works mostly directed to opening of roads, improvement of sanitary and health conditions in a given place.
of measures are carried out to improve cities' infra-structure as a means to improve potential vote. Candidates, in general, count on the support of the main leadership within their party. Whichever party member is in power at that specific moment in time, he or she is required to lend support. Whether they are mayor, governor or president, they always compromise to demonstrate local improvement to obtain votes for the party's candidate. The year of 1991, though, had yet another contributing factor that of the cholera epidemics which triggered a considerable amount of discussion on lack of infra-structure as it relates to basic sanitation in major urban areas.

Small coverage of pressing matters

In the Amazon region, issues such as land and deforestation and even those of human populations have been overruled by the more general, accommodating and thought to be neutral framework of the environment and development. Issues such as those regarding health and Indian peoples, for example, have maintained their places in the media arenas as matters continuously rising in the form of events which cannot be kept out of the media coverage.

As Hansen (1993) demonstrates NGOs are by far more organised and structured today than in early years of Environmentalism and have far more experience in their dealings with the media. The role of international NGOs in the Amazonian affairs is pointed out by Araújo (1991) and Ozório de Almeida (1991). In the Amazon, the more traditional and active NGOs are those representative of the Indian movement. Although there has been a tendency to

32 “Life conditions attract disease”, O Liberal, 10/12/91.
33 They gain access to the media as they co-operate with corporations: “SOPREN and CVRD alert against cholera”, O Liberal, 30/12/91. SOPREN is the Sociedade Paraense de Preservação de Recursos Naturais e Culturais da Amazônia (Paraense Society for the Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources of Amazônia) is one of the first environmentalist NGO in the Amazon. CVRD was a State-owned Company, now privatised, responsible for the extraction of iron ore and manganese in southern Pará and is soon to start exploiting gold and copper as well.
34 “We have had the opportunity to discuss the current state of Indian affairs ... we debated fundamental issues for us, among which how we have been conducted, the devaluation of our knowledge, as well as we have evaluated cultural, ideological, philosophical and technological conflicts”. Orlandino Melgueiro, Human Rights Co-ordinator for the Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), on debates during a Human Rights Seminar organised by COICA, in March 1994, in Manaus and published in A Crítica, 20/3/93.
“We will have a big meeting, stop [the commercialisation] and wait for government position to see what they will do for us [on provision of medical assistance and improvement in villages infra-structure demanded to compensate the loss of
place environmentalists and Indian leadership under the same umbrella, they constitute
distinct political actors (Ribeiro, 1991). Surprisingly and revealing of contradiction, the
environment and development issues have acquired prominence more through government
sources than through any other organisation or social groups.

Among the themes which traditionally have a major role in Amazonian life are land-
ownership, deforestation and mining. Surprisingly, these issues received little coverage
between 1990 and 1994. Since the environmental and specialised discourse, mostly
politically and science-oriented, took over the newspaper pages, issues related to the core of
the region's matters have been systematically played down. This reveals that the elites are
keeping crucial issues out of the coverage. There are exceptions when isolated events that go
beyond their control take place and cannot be kept from the news. Assassinations of leaders
of rural workers are one common example as is the seasonal burning of the forest to clear
soil for crops. The former gets coverage for its dramatic nature, irresistible to news, whilw
the latter would hardly be missed given that slash and burning consequences are quite
evident to the naked eye and assume greater proportions with the surveying power of
satellite imaging. Yet another exception is when conflict explodes in mining sites usually
resulting from confrontation between prospectors and Indians. Or yet another occasion is
when research results reveal increased mercury contamination levels in populations on the
river banks where mining takes place.

The episodic nature of news is a characteristic mostly noticed in regard to the themes of
land-ownership, mining and deforestation. A continuous underlying matter in the region,
land-ownership has triggered conflicts and high levels of violence in the hinterland. Land-
ownership is the most extreme of these cases as it completely vanishes from the coverage in
1992 and 1994. The conflicts were only brewing in the interior of the region while the
environment had become the issue of the day. Evidence of this is that years outside the

financial resources]. If it takes long, in a year's time, we will come back [to commercialise natural resources]”, João
Kayapó, son of Pangra, Kayapó Chief of the Kubenkranken Village, in O Liberal, 30/11/94.
35 “The eyes of the world turn to Xapuri”, A Critica, 10/12/90 (the trial of Chico Mendes' assassins).
36 “Slave work in two farms in Xinguara”, O Liberal, 10/10/01; “Slaves of the Third Millenium”, O Liberal, 30/12/94,
denounced an increasing proportion of slave work taking place in the State of Pará.
research sample have revealed land conflicts of great proportion. The Landless Workers Movement (MST) has grown stronger and has promoted the occupation of extensive unused pieces of land throughout Brazil but more recently paying special attention to areas in the Amazon region. As recent as April 1996, the State of Pará Military Police killed 19 people in a road blockade in the southern portion of the State. The dead were among landless rural workers in their plight to entitlement to a piece of land to work and survive upon. But it was only when the gravity of matters assumed a tragic magnitude that the press responded and published news about the conflicts.

Though low, the coverage of deforestation issues in 1994 goes back to the same five percent level of coverage it had in 1990. The years 1991, 1992 and 1993, but especially 1992, observed even lower percentages in the coverage. It is quite obvious that the elite had an interest in playing down deforestation levels. The Amazon as a whole was enough complication in the eyes of the international community. If deforestation could be played down it would represent one less problem zone for regional and national politics. In many ways the press helped to keep things in place according to the wishes of politicians. As the media function as a mediator between government and civil society, in the case of the Amazon and the coverage of deforestation levels, the framing of news shows, to a certain extent, a determination to endorse official decision-making and support to the Establishment.

Compared to other themes, mining is a different phenomenon altogether. It increases by almost three times in 1994 (14 percent) in comparison to the previous year, 1993 (5 percent), and 1990, the first year of the period under study (5 percent). As the extractive activities continue, the reports brought information on matters of mercury contamination of rivers as


38 A BBC 2, Assignment, broadcast on 23/11/96, details the organisation of MST and the land conflict issue in the State of Pará.

39 From 152.200 km2 of deforested areas in 1978, deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon had grown to 469.978 km2 in 1994. Source: Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais - INPE, (National Institute for Space Research).
well as the trespassing on to Indian territory by the prospectors. Increasing conflicts related to water pollution and prospecting in Indian territory are responsible for the trend.\footnote{In \textit{O Liberal}: “30,000 baby turtles dead. pollution might be responsible”, 21/1/90; “Yanomami, the most targeted by violence”, 20/7/90. In \textit{A Critica}, “Mercury contaminates Kayapó Indians in Pará”, 30/10/92; “Strike impedes work at Attorney General’s office”, 20/5/93; “Mercury: danger in the waters”, 11/1/94;}

**Links between themes**

As described in the research design chapter, aside the coding of the main theme of the news piece, the procedure also identified as many as two subsidiary themes were applicable. Findings show that although almost one third of health-related stories stand by themselves and do not present any subsidiary themes, approximately 20 percent of them discuss infrastructure matters in relation to major health problems. Other themes that appear as supporting to health are research management and human populations. Health also appears as a supporting theme to scientific results stories (13 percent).

In the coverage of another prominent theme, some 20 percent of the political and border affairs stories, are presented by themselves with no further discussion to related themes. But as many as 20 percent relate to environment and development issues as well as 13 percent relate to Indian matters. This confirms the assumption that the environment and development had taken a strong political tone in the period. It is also linked to the renewal of militarisation of borders nearby or inside Indian areas with special notice to the 1993 Yanomami massacre.

The issues that most frequently support Indian matters as a main theme are crime and violence (22 percent), land ownership (19 percent both as first and second subsidiary themes), mining (14 percent) and health (9 percent). Crime and violence bring Indian matters (38 percent) and land-owning (13 percent) as supporting themes. This reveals the framing of Indian matters and land-owning. Because of the intensification of conflict in the region, violence underlines Indian and land-ownership matters. The framing becomes one of crime since death is constantly present. By treating these issues as crime matters, news hides
the overall framework in which these themes are located at the centre of the regions most crucial political, social and economic problems.

Another even stronger association is that of natural resources management and research management with environment and development. When environment and development are the main themes natural resources management and research management are by far the most frequent first and second subsidiary themes along with human populations. The latter mostly as a second subsidiary theme revealing that human beings themselves are considered, within the coverage, as accessory to the environment. This also confirms a wide assumption that people are seen as external to the environment and not as its integral part.41

Natural resources and research management appear as subsidiary themes to almost 50 percent of the environment and development stories. Some other supporting themes to environment and development are political and border matters and human populations. Although this could be interpreted as an effort to improve production of information to support planning and policy-making, it is clear that the environment and development took on a strong political tone, consistent with the nature of the concept of sustainable development. If the framing applied were to treat the environment in a holistic mode, as suggested by the concept, one key element would not be left out of the whole of the process, and human populations would not appear as a supporting theme. In the specific coverage of environment and development, for instance, only seven percent of the stories bring human populations as a first subsidiary theme and another ten percent of the stories bring them as a second subsidiary theme.

The fact that human populations are seen as separate from nature explains that they mostly appear in the coverage as supporting theme. Whatmore and Boucher (1993) discuss that the separation between human and physical environment and point that “...'nature' does not exist outside the social relations of production but is itself (re)produced through these relations as social nature ...” (p. 167).

41 Authorities have, in name of regional populations, pressed for continuing exploitation of natural resources: “Governor wants human populations benefiting from regional riches”, A Critica, 10/9/90; “River populations suffer with disintegration of transport system”, A Critica, 20/5/91.
Among the more economically framed issues are primary economy activities which, along with other supporting themes, is associated with natural resources (21 percent) and research management (15 percent). This is a similar framing to the environment and development demonstrating that although the concept of sustainable development is an attempt to treat matters in a holistic way, economy as well as politics are some of the most current frames for matters of environment and development. Another economic link is revealed as an underlying facet to natural resources matters. Economy appears as a first supporting subject in ten percent of the natural resources management stories.

Found among other most prominent themes, research management presents links with natural resources management and scientific results. In 24 percent of the research management news, natural resources management appears as a subsidiary theme. In as much as 22 percent of the research management stories, scientific results appear as a subsidiary theme. In 19 percent of research management stories, it is the environment and development which come as the most frequent second subsidiary theme. Scientific results are also strongly linked to natural resources management. As much as 23 percent of the stories presenting scientific results as a main theme have natural resources management as a second subsidiary theme. These findings reveal a scientific frame to most matters related to the environment. As much as the emphasis is political and economic it is also scientific. In order to improve the environment's ability to be economically-sound, there is the demand for scientific support to identifying alternatives and provide the rational argument that supports exploitation of natural resources. This is only consistent with sustainable development discourse as it is aimed at by control structures throughout the world. In this regard, the Amazon and Brazil as a whole comprise no dissonant voice.

There were two fundamental subjects which represented Brazil's image in the eyes of the world and those of the Rio 92 participants. These subjects are natural resources management and research management (Table 4). In the years 1990, 1991 and 1992 as well, again, in anticipation to the event, a series of public policy measures were undertaken, clearly, to
prepare for the debate during the Conference and mostly for the criticism the country was to be the target of.

It is in 1992, that research management had its apex as a theme in the coverage. While themes such as deforestation, mining and land-owning were being played down in the news, research management alongside scientific results were steadily reported in 1991 and 1992. Behind only health, political and border affairs and environment and development for those specific years, research appears in the coverage in the whole of its planning aspects as well as those related to financial support and presentation of findings. Coverage of such issues contributed to support issues throughout the years in which Brazil’s international image was mostly damaged.

While the overall scenario pointed toward broader environment and development issues, themes that would give any evidence of change in policy, were identified by government as natural resources management and those related to the improvement of research management that provides expert knowledge said to support policy decisions. Both moves are demonstrated by the study’s observation of the coverage of scientific results which are at the same level as both natural resources and research management at seven percent of the total of the coverage throughout the period. More evidence of this scenario is provided by management of natural resources having as its most frequent supporting theme, environment and development (19 percent as first and 16 percent as second subsidiary theme). This reciprocates the fact that management of natural resources is one of the most frequent supporting themes to environment and development. Management of natural resources also presents political and border affairs (12 percent) as second supporting themes. Such trends can also be attributed to a political strategy implemented by international agencies such as the World Bank\textsuperscript{42} and the G-7 countries\textsuperscript{43} to improve their action in the region which in the past was environmentally damaging.

\textsuperscript{42}Detailed discussion in chapter III.
\textsuperscript{43}In 1989 and 1990, negotiations started to set up the Pilot Programme for the Protection of the Brazilian Rain Forest (PP-G7). First at the federal and political level, planning activities started taking shape. By early 1992, two regional scientific institutions had been identified as centres of excellence which would receive funding from the G-7 countries to update their research capacity and compromise towards scientific production in jointly identified and elected research areas. It is clear that such political moves took place prior to Rio 92. The fact that it took another three years before any funding came through is attributed to bureaucratic procedures.
In conclusion, both national and international spheres of power were pushing towards arranging matters in a fashion that would be satisfactory for both sides during the Rio 92 Conference. While Brazil was trying to convince developed countries of its efforts to solve Amazonian problems, developed countries were complying with a political compromise to aid such efforts by providing the financial means to strengthen existing scientific capacity as well as build more expert capacity. Coverage portrayed the debate as it was held in the regional and national arenas through the voices of regional and national and international actors in regard to the issues of environment and development and other more obvious policy-related matters (research and natural resources management). Discourse was supported by scientific evidence as Government rhetoric faced international pressure.\(^4\)

**A narrow perspective in news**

Several themes stand in themselves not presenting any other supporting issue. In this respect they are different from the Law which appears more as a supporting theme than a matter of discussion by itself. As much as one third of the news relies on a single subsidiary theme. Some examples of themes that receive such treatment are health and political and border affairs. Such approach reflects an effort to concentrate on the main theme in order to provide more in-depth coverage, thus, presenting issues in a more thorough manner. This is especially true in news about health and more specifically those related to the cholera epidemics where the number of cases rose day by day.\(^5\) Regardless of presentation of news which discussed aspects of basic sanitation and funding to improve sanitary conditions, most news concentrated on new cases, prevention, and hospital facilities to cope with the illness.

\(^4\) The results of the debate on whose responsibility it was and is to manage Amazon’s natural resources would only be felt almost a year after the Rio Conference. By May 1993, news broke of the arrival of financial resources sent by G-7. It seemed that the efforts to construct Brazil as a country worthwhile investing in the name of the environment had finally paid off: "G-7 funding for Goeldi Museum", *O Liberal*, 20/5/93.

\(^5\) In *O Liberal*: "Cholera threatens all of America, says PAHO", 20/4/91; "51 cholera cases in Brazilian territory", 20/8/91; "In less than two days, Amazônia has registered 15 cholera cases", 30/8/91; "Brazil has a total of 88 cholera cases", 30/8/91; "Findings confirm riverfront contamination", 10/12/91; "Cholera might have caused death of two fishermen", 20/12/91; "Belém has 12 more cholera cases and 130 sick people", 10/01/92.
Similar to what happens in other cultures, the coverage of regional issues is marked by an ethnocentric approach. News is far from the ideal stated by Reyes Matta (1980) that it "... is to provide the ... dimension of the project for change with its political and social justification, letting it be known from a broad and comprehensive perspective ..." (p. 49). Context is such an important element as "How people decode media texts depends on the different contexts in which they are read and the position of the individual in relation to the texts ..." (Burgess, 1990, p. 155). The reporting of Amazonian issues is not an exception and presents analysis of themes based on its local impact as well as further implications from a local perspective. A few items, though, introduce national or international political and economic frames.46

The narrow and localised perspective found in the news is especially surprising considering the importance of regional exports in the world market. The case of timber and mineral resources are the most obvious of those export products. This can be attributed to the loss of a tradition of independence and the notion of nationality (contradictory as it appears in the discourse of some) and the resigning to pressure of economic nature. Taking journalistic practices into consideration, narrow frames of reporting applied by regional newspapers are a result of the very journalistic practices and procedures which Peters (1993) and Dunwoody & Griffin (1993) see as an outcome of the culture shared between journalists and sources. Reporting that may be efficient can only afford diversity of views to a certain level. The level in this diversity is defined by journalists' varied (or not so varied) spectrum of sources. Other usual constraints in journalistic practices such as deadlines, space restrictions associated with a lack of appropriate training for journalists all contribute to a narrow framing of themes in the coverage of regional most pressing matters.

46 In A Crítica: "Gulf Crisis makes Petrobrás review its investments in the Amazon", 10/10/90 (Petrobrás is the Brazilian Oil Company); "Secretaries agree upon Amazonian Code", 10/8/91; "Shining Path and FARC united in the Amazon", 10/11/93. In O Liberal: "Road will connect Brazil to the Pacific Ocean", 20/9/90; "A Latin American ecological alliance suggested", 30/7/91; "The Amazon and the Brazilian Guyana", 20/7/91; "Transamazônica and Northern Perimetral", 29/9/91; "Poverty is not responsible for armed conflict in the Hemisphere", 10/11/91; "INCRA does not recommend 'Transfronteira', 10/11/91; "Debate over highway on Amazonian border restarts", 30/3/92; "Venezuela bombards mining sites", 30/1/92; "Peru denies responsibility for the 'cholera flight'", 29/2/92; "Oil spill may threaten the Amazon", 10/8/92; "Indians from 17 countries do not accept America's 500 years celebration", 30/9/92
Actors in the coverage

As described in the Research Design chapter, coding procedure allowed for the identification of the first four actors in each news item. The findings reveal that overall, authorities from the three branches of power (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary) and from federal, state and local levels, appear as the most frequent sources of information in the news items analysed. Scientific sources come second followed by union and professional association representatives, Indian leadership, and NGO representatives and international figures (Table 5).

Only 60 percent of the news items brought a second actor. Among those are official sources appearing in 27 percent of the news. Scientific sources again come in second, being cited in 11 percent of the news. Other actors, including NGO representatives, Indian leadership, Union and professional associations representatives as well as private sector representative, international figures, members of the public and workers represent a total of 20 percent. Forty percent of the news items brought a third actor of which 20 percent were official and 5 percent scientific. As few as 25 percent brought a fourth actor of which 15 percent are official and three percent are scientific.

It is rather surprising that military officials are not to be found among the most prominent actors given that political and border affairs are one of the most prominent themes (Table 5). The Army has been a strong element in matters regarding the occupation of the region. Proof of this is that the Secretariat for Strategic Affairs (SAE), the new name for the intelligence service of the deceased military dictatorship (SNI), remains a major player in so far as the Amazonian affairs are concerned. Similar to the low profile maintained by representatives of the private sector, military officials have kept a low profile since the redemocratisation of Brazil after the military dictatorship period.47

47 It is only more recently (November 96) that the federal government introduced new policy in an attempt to erase once and for all the "internal ideological enemy" face of the armed forces. Changes in the wording of the military forces' mission, establish specific priority to the defence of the Amazon and the Northern and Western borders of the country. IstoÉ, 13/11/96, n. 1415, p. 36
Official sources are the most cited ones throughout the years, followed by scientific sources. Both official and scientific sources are mostly cited in the years 1991 and 1992. Among official sources, the Executive branch of power is the one mostly represented. Legislative and Judiciary branch officials follow respectively (Table 6).

Among the scientific sources, Earth and Exact Sciences experts are by far the most relied upon. This contradicts the assumption that journalists are more likely to turn to social scientists as news sources (Dunwoody, 1986). Social Sciences experts come second followed by Health and Life Sciences. The finding reveals the greater impact of two scientific perspectives: one that firstly deals with natural resources reinforcing the dichotomy nature and humankind as human and social issues are treated from a secondary perspective. The economic importance of natural resources in the regional context and the emphasis given to it in the news explains why human populations are treated with comparatively less importance. Thus, the use of a specific type of sources is just a consequence.

In 1991, private sector representatives and union and professional association representatives begin to lose space as NGO representatives and Indian leadership started to rise up in press recognition. This is particularly true in 1993 and 1994 when NGO representatives seem to be better established in the news compared to previous years. The percentage of Indian leadership appearing in the news rose by almost four times in 1992 when compared with 1991 (Table 6).

As the Rio 92 event approached, it became necessary to give marginal voices some coverage. This, partially, explains the appearance of NGO and Indian leadership as actors in the news. NGOs also had become more active and conquered space in the media as a whole. Never before in such a sustained fashion had these actors been under such media exposure. When it did happen before, it was in an episodic fashion. One may argue that coverage at the

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48For operationalisation, see chapter IV.
49The case of the Indian movement, as discussed by experts such as Almeida (1994) and Ricardo (1996), is different from that of environmental and labour movements. It had been active for more than a decade before environmentalists became fashionable and workers improved the articulation of their strategies.
time of Rio 92 was also episodic, but, according to the findings, the consistent coverage lasted for a longer period of time. The impact of the event on the coverage is reflected in increased news between April 1991 and June 1992. Differing from other events, the UNCED Conference assumed an importance that gave it longer life span in the media agenda. Long before the event, reporting on Conference-related themes intensified as demonstrated earlier in this report (Table 2). Nevertheless, it was episodic: once the event was over, coverage of related themes immediately went down (Table 2) and remained low in the two following years (Table 1).

First actors

As explained before, in the identification of actors, coding allowed for the observation of the first four actors in each news item. The great majority of first actors (48 percent) appearing in the coverage is comprised by official sources (Table 5 and Figure 4). Among official sources, the Executive branch is the most frequently represented (40 percent) revealing the concentration of power on such branch which has been a historical tradition in Brazil with its presidential system. Legislative representatives account for as much as eight times less than Executive officials (5 percent). Justice representatives, account for only two percent of the total of cited actors.

As discussed in chapter II, where the scenario of this work is introduced in greater detail, in Brazil, most decision making is taken at the Executive level in Brasília. Even at the local level, the local representatives of federal agencies are the ones to be most relied upon as sources. The majority of decisions is made outside of the region. Lobbying groups are far less organised in Brazil, especially in the Amazon, when compared to those in Western Europe and North America.

The level of impact of regional news and sources who appear in the coverage of Amazonian issues at the central level can hardly be said to be felt at all. Unless locals hold key positions in federal government, regional politicians do not have much influence at the decision-making level. This holds even more strongly when the pressure is compared to that
exercised by political lobbies originating in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Ceará and Pernambuco. Comparisons with lobbying from North-eastern politicians are inevitable in the coverage.\textsuperscript{50}

From a critical perspective, regional newspapers actually point out such discrepancies and how they affect Amazonians. A \textit{Crítica}, for instance, establishes the parallel between the cyclical flood in the Amazon region and the also cyclical drought in the North-eastern region. The newspaper tries to demonstrate how much support North-east gets from Brasília and what is provided to the Amazon in similar situations of public disaster.\textsuperscript{51} In a different situation, that of the provision of fiscal incentives, another parallel is established, as the Northeast is claimed to receive more than the Amazon.\textsuperscript{52}

At any rate, mainstream news media have always been side by side with major economic and environmentally damaging interests in the Amazon such as logging and mining industry as well as land owners. In this context, lobbying is exercised at all levels of power to the benefit of an elite. Against this system, appears civil society in the form of social movements. With various goals, these entities have in the first five years of the decade managed to improve organisation and have come to occupy political arenas such as the media and the Congress.

In this complex setting, it is of public knowledge, that politicians not only write articles for newspapers, but also to use information published by the press to support their cases.\textsuperscript{53} As argued by some authors, legislators are keen to use media as a thermometer to constituencies' reactions. Press publications, therefore, are used and serve as arenas of public debate whichever interests involved. The limited reach of the regional press and the

\textsuperscript{50}Detailed discussion in chapter VI.
\textsuperscript{51} "Flood: nature's ritual", 30/3/93.
\textsuperscript{52} "Itamar extends SUDAM incentives", 30/4/94.
\textsuperscript{53} In \textit{O Liberal}: "The war and the defence of Amazônia", by Benedicto Monteiro, former Federal Representative for Pará State, 20/1/91; "Amazônia continues to be penalised", by Federal Representative for Pará State, Gerson Peres, 20/10/91; "Development and environment: 'The Amazon is the last page to be written in the Book of Genesis' (Euclides da Cunha)", by Jorge Arbage, former Federal Representative for Pará State, 30/5/94; "Suspended incentives for Amazônia", 4/7/90; "Legislation to protect the environment", 26/4/90. In \textit{A Crítica}: "Amazônia: conspiracy and nonsense", by Federal Representative for Amazonas State, Jefferson Peres, 29/8/93.
small coverage of Amazon issues in national newspapers is a factor that reveals a historic lack of political will and influence concerning the region's problems.

Scientific sources in all areas of knowledge account for 16 percent of those cited in the news. Earth/Exact scientists are the most popular sources among those of scientific background (5 percent). Natural and Social sciences experts follow with four percent each and finally, Health and Life sciences experts come last with two percent. Other actors, including NGO representatives, Indian leadership, Union and professional associations representatives as well as private sector representative, international figures, members of the public and workers represent a total of 21 percent. But as many as 11 percent of the news presented no source at all.

When observing first actors appearing in each newspaper, it is noted that both *O Liberal* and *A Crítica* heavily rely on official sources, but *A Crítica* is the newspaper that mostly relies on official sources comprised. They represent 57 percent of the sources cited as first actor throughout *A Crítica* coverage followed by *O Liberal* with 39 percent (Table 5 and Figure 4).

The second most frequent first actor for both *O Liberal* and *A Crítica* is scientific sources, with 23 percent and 9 percent, respectively. *O Liberal* uses scientific sources two and half times as much as *A Crítica* does. As difficult as the relationship with the scientific community may be, Belém has far more scientific tradition than Manaus. The research institutions in Belém have a closer relationship with the media than those located in Manaus. This is acknowledged by both journalists and researchers in the two cities. This might explain a greater reliance on scientific sources by *O Liberal*. Apart from building a closer relationship with the media over the past decade, research institutions have made themselves more available. As discussed previously, institutions have set up press offices and INPA opened part of its area for public visitation in 1992 in a similar way as the Goeldi Museum has done for 120 years. Researchers in Belém also outnumber those of Manaus, thus,
increasing the probability of being contacted by the press or contacting the press themselves.\textsuperscript{54}

Table 5
First actor by newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First actor</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>O Liberal</th>
<th>A Crítica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Officials</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth and Exact Science Experts</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Leaders and NGO Rep.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science Experts</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Representatives</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy, Workers and Journalists</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Figures</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Life Science Experts</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priv. Sector Representatives</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Public</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Official</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Dealer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 679 100.0 100.0 100.0

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\textsuperscript{54} Between lecturers and researchers at institutions in Pará and Amazonas, the former has 1.652 and the latter 1.258 individuals in academic positions. Source: PIUAL. 1995, p.11.
As mentioned before, it is surprising that despite the considerable amount of coverage of border matters, military officers are not more cited. Political and border issues in Brazil carry a very strong military element, because the armed forces are ultimately the actors who enforce national security. Perhaps, the Amazonas Governor, Gilberto Mestrinho, who orchestrated the nationalist campaign and created the paranoid climate was the central actor of the coverage as shown in the headlines. Thus, military officers themselves had their performance played down. It is clear that A Crítica as the newspaper that mostly covered the theme is also the one that uses more of these sources (3 percent) when compared to O Liberal (1 percent).

Even though A Crítica presents a considerable number of politicians as sources, they generally receive little coverage. This supports the argument that regional politicians unlike those representing the interests of other geographic regions in Brazil do not exercise as much influence as expected in benefit of their constituency. Some apply a discourse of victimisation and conspiracy to argue that there is no hope for the implementation of policy in benefit of the region, and, thus, it is useless to fight. Also politicians, in such a context, do not get covered as they are, overall, discredited in their ability as policy-makers.

Overall, O Liberal, as will be discussed later in this chapter gives its news an economic frame whereas A Crítica introduces a political frame. Nevertheless, in the economic context of specific themes, O Liberal presents 100 percent more union representatives (5 percent) than A Crítica (2 percent) and, comparatively, A Crítica presents more private sector representatives (3 percent) than O Liberal (1 percent). Because of the free trade legislation in Manaus, the city is a far more economically-oriented centre (see commerce and industry in Table 4). Commerce and industry are much more influential in the press in Manaus than in Belém. In Manaus, these two sectors of economy have better organised unions in comparison with those of the primary economy activities sector. The latter being stronger in Pará where tradition in exploitation of natural resources is much more established than in

Amazonas State. Thus, *O Liberal* discusses more issues of primary economy activities and less those of commerce and industry. In this scenario, *O Liberal* presents less private sector representatives who frequently appear in *A Crítica*. In comparison, though, it presents more union representatives than *A Crítica* does, because Belém has far more politically-active unions than Manaus.64 Also as discussed earlier, coverage of *O Liberal* concentrates on internal affairs where land conflicts appear. It is the rural workers’ unions action that, along side that of other unions, contribute to a more frequent use of such sources in the Belém newspaper. Another contributing factor resides in journalists themselves. Professionals in *O Liberal* newsroom have more tradition in political activism and in covering labour matters than those in *A Crítica*. *O Liberal* management has said in the past that it is aware and wary of its newsroom political profile not always aligning with the owners’ interests.

**Actors over time**

Among the main findings regarding usage of actors over the five-year period comprehended by this study is the increased appearance of government officials in the coverage. Official sources increased from 43 percent, in 1990, to 55 percent, in 1991. In the following years they averaged 45 percent of the actors cited as first actor (Table 6).

Despite the fact that overall, scientists account for the second most prominent first actor, scientific sources declined as the years went by. There was a 21 percent figure in 1990, that fell to 15 percent in 1991 and increased slightly (16 percent) in 1992. In 1993 and 1994, the average was 14 percent. Social scientists are the ones to present the sharpest fall throughout the five-year period.

Another trend observed in the period regards private sector representatives and union representatives. In 1991, they started to lose space as other types of sources such as NGO representatives and Indian leadership became more prominent as sources for the press. NGO representatives and Indian leadership appear as first actors in an average of eight percent of the news. The trend is once again related to the Rio Conference when the press

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54 There are 298 registered unions in Pará and 140 in Amazonas. Source: Ministério do Planejamento e Orçamento, 1995.
developed a tendency to hear voices that, though, heard before, were never given an opportunity to be heard as frequently as during the Rio 92. In the case of NGOs, one added factor in their relationship with the press is their heterogeneity and their media access. The heterogeneous nature of NGOs is a facilitating factor in their dealings with the press. As García (1992) argues "Interorganisational heterogeneity facilitates access to sources of information to the agencies of political decision-making, and to the news media" (p. 153).

Based on the findings presented on Table 6, some considerations are necessary as to some of the most remarkable trends. Health and Life sciences experts almost doubled between 1991 (2 percent) and 1992 (4 percent). During those two years the cholera epidemics dominated part of the coverage. While in 1991, most actors who appeared as sources in the reports were public officials, in the second year of the epidemics, 1992, the press turned to experts to respond to the continuing problem. In the first year of the epidemics, stories introduced the matter and presented statistics as well as informed about services available for the treatment of victims. Such information was mostly obtainable from public officials.

Table 6
First actor by year

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Officials</td>
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<td>47.6</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth and Exact Sci. Experts</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Leaders and NGO Rep</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sci. Experts</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Representatives</td>
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<td>6.9</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Figure</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health, Life Sci. Exp.</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Sector Rep.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Another observation makes clear that, the Judiciary branch does not provide many sources in the regional press. This could be related to the underlying credit that Justice as a whole receives from the press, from society and vice versa. Access to such sources is also another problem. Justice representatives appear on three occasions throughout the coverage: In 1990, when a Judge cancelled an order to expel free lance prospectors from Yanomami territory and during the trial of the two men accused of killing Chico Mendes. Two years later, Chief Paiakã’s trial, marks another of the few occasions in which Judiciary representatives appear in the coverage.

Military officials, though low in percentage, have an increased visibility in 1993. This is mostly due to the intensification of military manoeuvres in the region. The renewed policy for the militarisation of the borders, especially after the massacre of the Yanomami justifies the increase in the number of military officials in the press.

The clergy were considered among actors due to their tradition to work among the Indians and landless rural workers. Throughout the military regime in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, the Church played a fundamental role in the cause of these segments of society. But from the late 1970s, the Catholic Church, though very active, especially in areas such as southern Pará, has been playing down its profile due to Government restraints. The more progressive members of the Church, among which are those in agreement with Liberation Theology, are not accepted by conservative segments of society, such as the two newspapers under scrutiny. For conservatives, the clergy should concentrate on Church activities and not enrol in political matters such as civil rights.

The connections are still strong and the press is aware of it. The consistent presence of the Missionary Council of Indigenous Population (CIMI) in the coverage is an indicator, but the

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57 Many authors corroborate the argument that the Catholic Church has played a major role in Latin America. (Calderón et al., 1992; Bruneau, 1982 and D'Antonio & Pike, 1964, among many).
58 In late 1970s, two French priests, Aristide Camio e Francisco Gouriou, were imprisoned under the accusation of interfering in matters of national security due to their activities in southern Pará. Tried, they were expelled from Brazil.
59 Liberation Theology represents a return to community-based church, a popular church that was to address social demands. Its origins go back to event of the Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM) held in Medellin in 1968. By 1979, the CELAM was held in Puebla, Mexico. There, Pope John Paul II restricted the actions of liberation theologists and those in the progressive branch of the Catholic Church.
pastoral role of the clergy among Indians is not as strong as it used to be. While in the years of the dictatorship, Church representatives functioned as advocates of the Indian cause; due to the strengthening of the Indian leadership, they now more than ever speak for themselves.\textsuperscript{60}

As the decade progressed other links with the Church have developed and are observed in the findings. Among the more noticeable ones are those with the landless rural workers.\textsuperscript{61} Critics of the Church, though, will say that to this day the institution is more politicised than it should ever think it could afford to be.

\textbf{Links between actors}

The combination of sources in the news varies considerably. In most of the coverage, the same category observed as first actor is repeated in the second. When this is not the case, there will be no second actor at all. This is particularly true in cases where official and scientific sources and NGOs representatives are first actors.

In the case of government officials, when Legislative branch officials appear as first actor, Executive branch officials are the most likely to be the second actor. This reveals the strong hold of the Executive branch itself as it is seen in the manufacturing of news.

Official and scientific sources as well as NGOs representatives are the ones most likely to appear by themselves. This reveals framing of news based on three major types of discourse: the official, the scientific and the activist.

\textsuperscript{60} In \textit{A Crítica}, "Saterê people choose candidate for City Council" (30/1/92); "Indian Parliament might have a radio station" (20/11/92).

\textsuperscript{61} It is necessary to add though that the political party-orientation of the MST has limited a more obvious Church participation.
Framing of news

Presentation of news as it involves practices of selection and framing constitutes another dimension of this analysis. The editorial treatment applied to news, encompassing types of pages in which items appear along with the origin of such items, helps in identifying characteristics of news frames and news production practices.

In their format, both the newspapers analysed follow traditional news classification patterns. *A Crítica* and *O Liberal* present sections dedicated to local news, opinion, politics, economy, police, national and international news, arts, sports etc. Such an editorial organisation is more of a necessary systematisation of news publishing than an attempt to provide specialised coverage of matters. Evidence of lack of specialised coverage is the non-existence of environment, science or medical pages. News items of this sort are published throughout local, political or economy pages, according to editorial interpretation.

There have been a few unsystematic attempts to establish sections for such newsbeats. And although representing less than one percent of total items published under such page classification throughout the five-year period, environmental news only appeared in a special page in 1992.62 In that particular year, the environment represented four percent of the annual coverage. (Table 7).

As much as 66 percent of the items were published in local news pages (Table 7 and Figure 5). After local/city news page, the classification of news mostly found were those of opinion, politics and economy. The type of page classification reveals the most common editing practice observed in the regional press. It is consistent with the fact, earlier explained, that there is no tradition of science and environment sections in the regional newspapers. For this reason it is common that news is classified as local as it reports regional, state or city affairs. News about such matters is placed anywhere in the regional newspapers.

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62 As recent as 1996, *O Liberal* has made a renewed attempt to establish a science, technology and environment-dedicated page.
The four types of page classification (city/local, opinion, politics and economy) put together stand for an average of 90 percent a year (Table 7). The year of 1992, though, showed a fall in the overall percentage of these categories due to an increase in other categories such as police and environment news (Table 8). In the case of the police beat, a charge against Paulinho Paiakã, Kayapó Chief and important Indian leader, for raping a girl, was responsible for the increased coverage as news broke during the Rio Conference.

The appearance and brief introduction of environmental news pages in one of the newspapers, i.e. *O Liberal*, is a result of the agenda set by the Rio 92 event. The new approach to matters related to the environment, with mostly political and economic underlying interests, created the conditions for the rise in coverage and momentary appearance of pages dedicated to environment news. It was in that time period that the theme started to have more coverage being classified specifically as such or related to the overall national picture and the politics regarding the environment itself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7 Page classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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63 Police alone stands for nine percent of the items published in that particular year, higher than politics or economy pages.
64 *O Liberal, 30/5/92 and 10/6/92.*
65 While the political frame is predominant in *A Crítica, O Liberal* concentrates on an economic framing of news.
66 Other includes: Arts, Variety, Special, Latest, and General News.
Due to the controversial character of sustainable development as well as the eagerness to find remedies for the Amazon, it is understandable that it would generate a considerable percentage of opinion pieces in the news (11 percent) (Table 7). The specialised nature of sustainable development has revealed the importance attributed to expert opinion and the publishing of opinion and feature pieces in the newspapers under analysis is evidence of it.

Findings also allow the inference that sustainable development and environment issues have an overall link with the economy in the region as well as in any given setting. A trend to frame the environment with an economic approach in the news is noticed from 1992 onwards, showing a considerable rise in 1994 (23 percent), considering that in earlier years the percentage was never higher than 6 percent (Table 8). This is demonstrated by *O Liberal* in its positioning of news in its pages. *O Liberal* reveals an economic frame in comparison to *A Crítica*. A more political framing of the news, though, is observed in *A Crítica*. 

![Figure 5](image-url)
Due to trends in voting and political preferences, public office candidates (State Governor and Mayor), supported by *O Liberal* group, had recently lost most elections. Thus, there was a need to play down politics due to recent defeats and the *Sistema* elected a more economic approach which still allowed it to keep historic political alliances. This time around, support was given with a different approach and emphasis, that of economy, of the need to strengthen private sector, one that could no longer count on the benefits of Government alliances. Despite the difficulties faced by the country in 1990 with the economic plan, *Plano Collor*, which confiscated national savings, it was still safer for *O Liberal* to give news a local or economic frame than venture into the by now even more uncertain terrain of politics. The economic approach also became an editorial orientation of the new coming management. The image cultivated by *O Liberal* is one that wants to reveal professionalism, business-driven attitude, and at the same time one that plays down the acquisition of power through politics.

As a result of the local political dispute, *O Liberal* coverage misses out on political issues. It also reveals extreme contradictions such as on a specific occasion in 1992, when the State...
Government organised a Symposium, Simdamazônía. When there was coverage it was based on what scientists and other political actors had to say. News always omitted the origin and the organisers of the event. In the end, two pieces of news published by O Liberal on the same day contradicted one another. In one item, where the name of the Governor leads the story, the headline reads "Simdamazônía ends and presents no solutions". Another signed by a national news agency columnist, Joelmir Betting, the headline reads "The voice of Amazonia". After a synthesis of the recommendations produced in the Symposium, the article concludes by saying that "Simdamazônía brought together scientists and entrepreneurs who live in the Amazon and demonstrated knowledge of regional issues." The example illustrates that the overall political scenario interfered dramatically in the coverage. The only time the Governor is mentioned in a headline is again in a negative light. The State's politics blinded the newspaper in its portrayal of the public debate. If it had not been for the fact that news was produced by a contracted agency it would have not been published altogether. The policy of the newspaper was openly and completely to boycott the governor's acts completely.

Coverage in A Crítica has been demonstrated to be of a more political orientation. In Amazonas State and more specifically in Manaus, political power is dictated by economy. The city is a free trade zone with an industrial district with manufacturing companies such as Samsung, Sony, Sharp, Honda, Phillips, among others. While the industry is mostly owned by multinationals, commerce is in the hands of locals. The power of finance and its support to political enterprise define the political game in the State. Even though, Manaus and Amazonas State have not been immune to recession, their financial status and privileges in the form of fiscal incentives and government subsidies for the free trade zone, diminished the impact of economic hardship in Amazonas in comparison to other areas in the region. Manaus economic stability has allowed A Crítica to have a more noticeable political frame.

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68 Sim in Portuguese means Yes, da means of the. The event and the final document were to reveal and represent the State's common grounds in regard to the region's matters. Yet another initiative in preparation to the Conference in Rio.
69 "Great Projects stimulate tropical diseases", O Liberal, 30/1/92; "Debate gathers region scientists", O Liberal, 30/1/92.
70 "Indians try in vain to meet Governor", O Liberal, 30/10/92.
71 "Entrepreneurs fear lack of support", A Crítica, 10/11/90; "Suframa: unbelievable taxation", A Crítica, 10/8/91 (Suframa is the Agency for the Manaus Free Duty Zone); " Ericsson closes factory in Manaus", O Liberal, 20/2/93.
Nevertheless, the newspaper's economy pages, apart from publishing national economy news, also emphasise the coverage of the local economy.\(^7\)

Overall, the approach to local news struggles over whether to give themes a more narrow and in-depth or a more comprehensive and broad frame. It has been possible, though to observe attempts by both *A Crítica* and *O Liberal* to publish news which places regional themes against national and international contexts. The city of status of Manaus as a free trade zone and the region's proximity to neighbouring countries has stimulated reporting attuned with the whole of the context. As discussed before, given the wave of criticism of the devastation of the region's ecosystems, the economic framing by *A Crítica* tried to address external pressures. By framing news within an economic perspective, the newspaper reinforced arguments in favour of the use of natural resources and against those of pure preservation.

Simultaneous to the economic framing of news, reports carried an international framing. Such editorial strategy is particularly observed in 1991 and 1992 as external attention was drawn toward the region. Inside Brazil and in the Amazon itself, moves to defend sovereignty expressed in nationalist discourse argued that there were hidden international interests behind the debate about the region. News reports about numerous events in the region had contributed to the attention gained by the Amazon in the specific period. Events such as the trial of the men accused to murder Chico Mendes, in 1990; plans to open the *Transfronteira* highway;\(^7\) the levels of deforestation; the long struggle for the demarcation of Indian territory; the cholera epidemics are some of the examples found in the coverage.

The constructionist approach introduced in this analysis aimed at identifying a conjunction of factors influencing the news reports. It was also my objective to draw links between events as they were reported in the press as a means to build meaning in the overall portrayal of the Amazon region. Economic, international and political frames shown in the news reveal a combination of forces and interests. Such diversity of interests not only drew

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\(^7\) "Plan to invest US$ 3 billion in Amazonas", *A Crítica*, 20/2/94.

\(^7\)*Transfronteira* is a road that will connect Brazil to the Pacific Coast in Peru. The implications of the opening of the road have been cause of concern as it will affect social, economic and environmental systems (Almeida, 1992)
international attention to the Amazon region in the first half of this decade, it also stirred the
debate in regional and national fora.

Science and environmental matters

As previously discussed, the regional press has no tradition of covering issues such as the
environment and science in a systematic fashion. This explains the fact that, except for
scattered initiatives to edit material on science and the environment on the same page, there
has been no attempt to organise and publish such issues in a systematic fashion.74

Despite the lack of systematic coverage, scientific results are among the ten most frequent
themes accounting for seven percent of the total coverage (Table 4). Thus, it is
representative among regional themes which can, at least, be interpreted as beneficial to the
public policy debate as environmental issues are a crucial information resource for decision-
making.

This reveals of the importance given to these matters by the regional news organisations.
Executives within the news business have argued that there is no advertisement revenue as a
result of coverage of such issues. One could argue that the government itself could be a
source of advertisement, as it has been in other areas most notably social security and health.
As research is mainly carried out by public institutions already pressed by the lack of
financial resources, the use of public funding to pay for advertisement as a marketing
strategy is seen as a most offensive practice. Most of the time, advertisement campaigns
come as a result of an agreement between the client and the medium. As the first launches a
marketing strategy, the second agrees to increase coverage of specific issues of the client's
interest.75

74 O Liberal, 20/4/92 and more recently also in O Liberal, from September 1996.
75 Scientific results are argued as of most social importance and, as such, able to conquer space in the media agenda. There
has been a controversial decision of the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), in Belém, under a new marketing approach,
that has bought advertisement space in local newspaper. Throughout a decade, the University had gained the recognition
and, more than ever before, had been a source of information about the region. Recognised as such by the media and as a
whole by the community, it had conquered exclusive space in the everyday coverage of affairs in Belém. When the
decision was made to pay for the publication of an agenda of events every Sunday, it opened a precedent and risks having
to pay more every time the University wants to see its work in the news.
As recent as 1996, a weekly page published in *O Liberal*, is completely dedicated to science, technology and environment. Advertisement in the page comes from Petrobrás, the Brazilian oil company, and CVRD, the leading mineral resources exploration company in the region, among others.

**Origin of news**

From the content analysis, it has been possible to draw another dimension of news presentation revealed in the regional press. This dimension relates to where news originates. The analysis shows that the most frequent news throughout the coverage is locally produced stories. They account for 60 percent of the news items, followed by features, totalling 19 percent and those generated by national news agency with 10 percent (Table 9). Only five percent of the coverage was generated by the newspaper's correspondents. Editorials represent another 3.5 percent from which one may infer that, despite the controversial nature of sustainable development, it did not generate editorial pieces as it might have been expected. Interviews are not a current form of news. Only seven interviews related to the theme were published during the whole of the five-year period. International news agency-generated stories represent less than one percent of the whole coverage.

**Table 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of news item</th>
<th>Liberal [n=360]</th>
<th>Crítica [n=319]</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally produced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondent</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This pattern is consistent with the editing procedure described earlier. The publishing of news related to regional, state and local levels in local pages is a pervasive practice. Despite the known use of agency material in support of local journalistic production, most news about regional and local affairs is produced locally.

Basically due to economic restrictions on newsroom budgets and a lack of established correspondents throughout a region of continental dimensions, some journalists in the region argue that news agency material use is a common and frequent practice in the local press. The findings contradict the alleged practice of using news agency-generated stories even if news took place in the region. Politics also plays a role in the decision not to have correspondents spread in the region. As the centres of power are the capitals of the states, Belém and Manaus, covering news in the hinterland would mean voicing interests outside the mainstream. Since the newspapers have always associated themselves with the local elite, the practice would be counter-productive and contradictory to their own interests. When the press does cover other micro-regions it does so in extreme circumstances of natural disasters, assassinations, accidents and other sources of catastrophic news, complying with some of the most current news values.

The business logic of these newspapers is they already pay for news agency services provided by more powerful and not so financially-restricted businesses in the South-eastern region of the country.\textsuperscript{76} Hence, they should not pay correspondents or spend on extras such as hired flights and stipends for journalists to gather news elsewhere other than in the city. Though, gathering news should be the fundamental task of the press, the business does not care greatly whether news brings the outsider’s view instead of the insider’s perspective. News businesses in the region do not worry whether the news presents better quality if reported by local and, supposedly, though not necessarily, more knowledgeable journalists. Lack of competition in the markets of both of the newspapers facilitates this practice.

\textsuperscript{76} Most newspapers in the South-eastern region own news agencies. Among those are \textit{Folha de São Paulo} and \textit{O Estado de São Paulo}, in São Paulo and \textit{Jornal do Brasil} and \textit{O Globo}, in Rio de Janeiro.
One may see the procedure described above as contradictory to the earlier argument about the allegiance between the press and the local political elites. It would be possible to question the editorial practice as it, by allowing, publication of external views, risks harming local elites' interests. As previously revealed in this analysis the reporting by local journalists does not necessarily guarantee the defence of the interests of local elites. Given the political inclinations of local professionals, the news is not clear reflection of elitist views. Much evidence has been produced throughout the analysis to prove that an increased diversity of voices have risen in the press arenas in the Amazon. In addition, the combination of social movements activity and the need of the private sector and the armed forces to keep a low profile, have facilitated the increased appearance of other actors in civil society. Journalists also reveal their interests in giving space to such voices. A silent guerrilla war takes place in everyday journalistic practice in the region's newspapers. Faced with this, it is possible to infer that regional practices escape patterns of political economy and news production models.

As an example of some other regional constraints in the coverage of news, it is a fact that it takes more to fly in a jet from Belém to Manaus (2 hours) than to fly from London Heathrow to Köln/Bonn Airport (1 hour). If a reporter has to cover news in the southern portion of Pará, for instance, not only is one restricted by scheduled flight (if any, there is one daily flight to Marabá, the main city in the southern micro-region), but also by costs. If news breaks late afternoon, the newspaper has three options: to hire an aircraft; to wait till the next day for the commercial airline scheduled flight; or to print news based on television reports of that evening or based on news agencies-generated stories from the services paid by the newspaper. It is often the case that all alternatives are used to report on the news broken at a late hour. Sometimes there is no more than one possibility and that is for news to be generated from agency material on which television news also relies.

If the newspaper, as is the case with both *O Liberal* and *A Crítica*, owns a television channel and has television correspondents in the geographic area where an event takes place, the newspaper coverage most probably relies on the television-generated material much to the

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77 Morning circulation newspapers such as are both *O Liberal* and *A Crítica*, close their editions by 11 P.M.
exasperation of print journalists. Unable to cover the events, they feel diminished in their professional practice having to rely on television reports. Provided the enterprise belongs to the same corporation, it mostly occurs as co-operation, though not necessarily. This is a recurrent practice at *O Liberal* as its sister company, *Televisão Liberal*, keeps correspondents in key micro-regions such as the southern portion of Pará State. Elections, seizure of smuggled timber, road blockades, are among some of the news that in the past have been generated through the co-operation between the television station and the newspaper as they are part of the same media conglomerate.

The fact that only five percent of the news are generated by correspondents is especially revealing when double that percentage is generated by national news agencies. In a region of the proportions of the Amazon it is almost impossible to cover the complexities of the problems in micro-regions as diverse as southern Pará, Santarém, Tefé, São Gabriel da Cachoeira among many other problematic areas such as the borders with Colombia, Peru and Venezuela.

The considerable number of features is also a common characteristic among regional newspapers. There is a local culture of gaining social recognition and status by having articles printed in regional newspapers, a common practice in the media outside the region as well, one may say. In the Amazon, this practice is spread out. Among those competing for space, mostly, in the Sunday newspapers with larger edition and double the weekdays circulation, are government officials, politicians, university lecturers, scientists and other members of the local intelligentsia, as well as friends of the family members and owners of the business. Unless the feature is produced by one of the newspaper journalists, which is rare, or free-lance writers, even more rare, most feature writers earn no money for their work. This is also a corporation strategy since the newspapers on Sundays increase the number of pages because of advertisement, and there is need for more text. It is an inexpensive way to fill up Sunday paper that otherwise would be left full with adverts. Non-paid writers are major sources of text for the Sunday papers. For business this means that there is no need to hire more journalists or contract the services of free-lance writers. It is impossible to judge those who publish under these circumstances. But as far as most
scientists and lecturers who write feature articles for the newspaper are concerned, it is possible to extract information from their writings that otherwise would be left out of the coverage altogether. In this reside some benefits of a non-paid labour practice that, in the end, prevents better pay and employment for journalists. It is obvious from the findings that *O Liberal* is, of the two newspapers, the one that publishes more features written by scientific experts.  

Features as described above are published alongside editorials in Opinion pages as well as throughout the newspaper on Sundays and on weekdays according to the need to fill in newspaper space. It is a common practice to "save" articles left unpublished on Sundays in order to fill in the blanks in weekdays' editions. Of the 72 pieces published in Opinion pages, only 24 are editorials, accounting for one third of the total (33 percent). As many as 48 features, representing 67 percent of the feature items as a whole, were published in Opinion pages.

*A Crítica* published most of the features (22 percent) and *O Liberal* is the newspaper that most published editorial pieces (4 percent) (Table 9). *A Crítica* published over 50 percent of the features in Local and 16 percent in Opinion pages. Both newspapers also published features in Economy and Politics pages. But, different from *O Liberal*, *A Crítica* published features in World/International pages as well.

**Analysis of visual elements**

In the overall analysis of content, the symbolic power of visual materials is one that also contributes to the building of meaning of regional issues in the Amazon. The study does not take Barnhurst's (1996) view that visuals are substitutes of text as well as comprise determinant factors in the definition of public. Different from the author's perspective that visual data are "... the prime constructors of reality and motivators of human action." (p. 165), in this analysis visual elements compose the whole of the structure of the news. This is

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78 In *O Liberal*, "Human occupation of the Amazon", 10/10/90; "Profitability in the extractive activity in the Amazon", 20/1/91; "Non-industrial fishing in the Amazon", 10/3/91; "Cattle ranching is not the villain against ecology", 29/9/91; "Soil for agriculture in the Amazon needs correction", 10/11/91.
especially considered given the limitation in the use of visuals by the newspapers targeted. In general, the two newspapers under analysis did not print many photographs, cartoons, graphs. Almost 60 percent of the news items were published with no photograph (Table 10). Some 27 percent were published with one and 11 percent published with two or more photographs.\(^7\)\(^9\)

Other forms of visuals constitute cartoons, maps, tables and graphics in general. Only three percent of news published one cartoon. In the case of maps, tables, and graphics in general, only two percent of the news brought one type of illustration other than photograph or cartoon.

More than 40 percent of the items presented some form of visual material. As demonstrated in Table 11, a total of 298 visual items was published by the two newspapers throughout the five-year period covered by the study. Visual items in this count are photographs, cartoons, maps, graphics or any other type of drawing. A Crítica published the largest number of visual resources, with a total of 167, accounting for 56 percent of the visual material published. O Liberal published 131 visual items equivalent to 44 percent of visual items published in the period.

Similar to O Liberal, A Crítica publishes more photographs of government officials than any other type of visual material. But different from O Liberal, A Crítica presents a more diverse set of actors in the photographs. These include writers, teachers, union leaders and artists who have their photos more frequently published. On the whole, the lack of visuals in both O Liberal and A Crítica is compensated by the diversity of actors introduced in the text.

\(^7\)\(^9\) Not more than seven photographs per item.
Table 10
Visual items

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<th>%</th>
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<td>One photograph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two photographs</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three photographs</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Four photographs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five-Seven</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</table>

Table 11
Visual items by newspaper

<table>
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<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Visual items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Crítica</td>
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<td>167</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>O Liberal</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>298</td>
<td>100</td>
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As discussed earlier in this chapter, public officials are among the most prominent actors in the coverage of the Amazon between 1990 and 1994. Among those most portrayed are executive branch officials and scientific experts, a practice which is consistent with the fact that, in both newspapers, these actors are the most cited in the news throughout the period. It is also from the portrayal of multiple actors that discourse takes shape. These types of sources are portrayed in situations of work where authority-invested appearance is emphasised.\(^8^0\) For government representatives, the more frequent environment are their own offices or public appearances, occasions in which they are being interviewed or delivering speeches. In both newspapers, most photographs present portraits with identification in the caption.

\(^8^0\) "Scientist asks for more research on arbovirus", *O Liberal*, 20/11/91; "Scientists establish conservation areas".
O Liberal is the newspaper that most publishes scientific expert's photos. Different from A Crítica, O Liberal mostly presents regional experts. Their photos most frequently show research environments where the legitimacy of their knowledge can be more clearly portrayed. For those working in experiments, they are normally captured as they wear white lab coats and manipulate laboratory materials and equipment, a most common portrayal of scientists. Expert knowledge is a strong element in the debate of Amazonian issues and, thus, is presented by the news media and reinforced by continuous press reliability on scientific sources.

Among other actors portrayed are many Indians. O Liberal hardly ever identifies these actors in the photo caption. Unless the person represents a well known leadership as it is the case of Paiakã, Indians are never named. Two exceptions are made. One to Paiakã who was frequently in the news along with his wife Irekrã due to charges of raping a minor in 1992. The other exception is Joaquim, an Indian Chief who left the village and went to University. As an educated Indian he is named in the piece. A Crítica always identifies the Indians whose photographs are published as they are usually leaders in their communities.

The portrayal of Indians in such manner only proves a contradiction between what is published and what Almeida (1994) says in regard to the strengthening of the movement to confront hegemonic structures and a mostly anonymous role they have played in the process of solution of social problems. Regardless of their continuous struggle for their right to self-determination, to their territory and natural resources, a tradition has been developed of others speaking for the Indians. Most sources speaking about Indian issues are doing so on behalf of the Indians, as their representatives, though, not necessarily invested in such a role by the Indians themselves. It is Ricardo (1996) who says that “The agenda placed by the national and international society for ‘the Indians’ in Brazil in the past years, has worked as a mechanism of pressure which produces representation or representations of generic indianness” (p. 90).81

81 My translation. With the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, there came a widespread practice to turn existing Indian associations official, by which some Indian peoples incorporated “mechanisms of political representation to be able to deal with the institutional world, public or private, national or international, as well as to negotiate demarcation and control of natural resources, medical assistance, education, transportation and communication issues and commercial matters [putting their products in the market].” (Ricardo, 1996, p. 90).
Some examples of this representation are found in the coverage as on many occasions, experts speak on behalf of the Indians: "So far, development in the Amazon has been based on cattle raising, colonisation and mining activities. It is necessary to change this perspective and adopt an alternative model that of extractivist reserve. It is the rational use of the forest respecting ecology and fixing man to the land", says geographer Olga Maria Schild Becker, representative of the União dos Povos da Floresta (Union of the Forest Peoples). The defence of the same values, though with completely different purpose and in this intrinsic vested interests, is appropriated in the language used by other actors such as government officials.

Similar examples were found in the content analysis when experts and clergy have been spokespersons for the Indian. "Those who intend to reduce Indian land by establishing areas in accordance to the number of inhabitants in each community, do not take into consideration these peoples’ culture. The Indian live from hunting, fishing and gathering activity, therefore cannot be restricted to a small space", Father Albano Temus, general secretary of the Regional I Branch of CNBB, the Brazilian Bishops’ National Council.

Apart from those who speak on behalf of the Indians, there are those who talk about them and allege to speak of truth, as Meira does in an article in O Liberal, where he says:

> There is an intention to overestimate the real situation of the Yanomami Indians in front of the world via distortion of information, exaggeration of the situation and by spreading non-truths. All of this with the objective of taking away from Brazilians the legitimate possession of an immense territory, rich in natural resources which foreign nations, fake anthropologists, and fake priests (fortunately not all), seek to extract from national sovereignty.

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82 "Extractive reserve is alternative for the region", O Liberal, 30/9/90.
83 "Arthur preaches rational exploitation of the forest", A Crítica, 30/5/92 (Arthur Virgilio was at the time the Deputy Governor to Amazonas State).
85 "Calha Norte caused damage" and "Signs of drug smuggling", O Liberal, 30/6/93.
86 "CNBB demands evidence against CIMI be presented", A Crítica, 10/8/91.
87 "The truth about the Yanomami", O Liberal, 10/2/90.
Also because of the nature of the news published about the Indians and of much conflict involved in their rise into public life, a considerable number of authorities portrayed come from the Judicial System. Thus, all judges or court officials who had their photograph published in *O Liberal* are authorities responsible for the handling of Paiakã’s court case. The same applies to *A Crítica* that published Judiciary officials photos within news about the trial of Chico Mendes murderers. Apart from these situations, no other official from the Judiciary appears in photographs throughout the coverage. And very interestingly, there appears no representative of the Judiciary in legal processes involving entrepreneurs for crimes against the environment.

The sphere of power is not only represented by members of the judicial system. Politicians as well as religious and military officials are some of the actors who appear in the news. The *preference* for one or the other, varies according to the newspaper. Different from *A Crítica* which publishes many photographs of politicians, only one appears among the actors photographed for *O Liberal*. While *O Liberal* publishes photos of religious officials, *A Crítica* publishes none. In contrast, military officials are constantly portrayed in the pages of *A Crítica*. This is only consistent with the close relationship between the State Government, who, at the time, received unconditional support from the newspaper, and the military commanders in the Amazon. *A Crítica* goes to the extent of publishing photos of military officials from other countries such as Venezuela and Colombia.

In this, what becomes clear is what Chomsky (1989) calls the clandestine operations and secret wars and covert operations, which "... is often a good measure of public dissidence" (p. 19). The language of war introduced by the Amazonian newspapers resulting from the voice of official actors reveals that the State itself has been incompetent to control and has on many occasions favoured extreme measures to repossess the region. What is observed is the re-enactment of the tenets of the old (renewed as need be) 1960s discourse of *integration* originating in the military forces: "There is international covetousness over the region which intends to overrule the Brazilian people to govern its own territory".  

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88 *A Crítica*, 20/7/91.
89 *"Patriotic explosion", A Crítica, 20/7/91.*
A tendency to rely on international authorities is also found in the coverage where again differences between the two newspapers apply. While *O Liberal* portrayed two international figures, both English, Prince Charles and Lynda Chalker, Overseas Development Minister,\(^9\) *A Crítica* published many photographs of international figures including German MPs, foreign scientists as well as Amazonian countries officials from Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia.\(^1\)

Private sectors and NGO representatives do appear but very rarely and, when they do, they mostly have their photos published in *O Liberal*. The fact that *A Crítica* took on a more obvious political nature than *O Liberal*'s, explains the absence of private sector actors. Nonetheless, according to García (1992), given the environmental movements “access to the mass media, they have incorporated new environmental meanings into popular and political culture” (p. 163). What is relevant to this study is the contention expressed by authors such as Leiber et al. (1993) that “organisations with the ability to channel the direction of a social problem may do so in order to benefit themselves” (p. 329). Whether they are representatives of traditional elite or not, actors can exercise their language through, among other the media channels to strengthen their points of view.\(^2\) This is not to deny, but rather to reinforce, a perspective that “communicators as well as their audiences are participating (‘bargaining’)” in “a mutual and dynamic process in which all participants are actively engaged” (Renckstorf & McQuail, 1996, p. 7).

Freelance prospectors, fishermen, rural workers, working class representatives in general and crime victims are among other actors also included in *O Liberal*'s coverage of the Amazon. With the exception of crime victims, these actors are not identified in the captions, in contrast to the similar procedure applied in the publication of photographs of Indians. This is revealing of the marginal role attributed to these actors by the media. Freeland prospectors and rural workers are mostly anonymous actors or are portrayed as such. Most

\(^9\) "Brazil proposes ecological tax for the maintenance of the forest", *O Liberal*, 28/4/91.
\(^1\) It is common to find international figures in *A Crítica*: "Brazil and England will analyse the Amazon", 27/2/90; "Andreotti arrives to see Waimiri-Atroari", 10/3/90.
\(^2\) "Ecology, survival of all", *O Liberal*, 29/9/91.
times they appear in group photos. In reality, when portrayed as individuals, they have either been victim of criminal aggression or are already dead.

The photographs that are not purely portraits and have been published by both newspapers are of more or less informative nature. Those revealing novelty and representative of matters developing in the region, show research environment, Indian territory, military manoeuvres, deforestation, transportation of logs, mining practices polluting water resources, slave work, lack of sanitation in urban areas, flood damage, trade (fisheries, timber, mineral resources etc.).

Findings reveal that captions express much of the misery in the region. Thus, the portrayal of uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources is shown through photographs of the “Results of slash and burning practices seen from State roads”.93 Text in captions also analyse: “Slash and burning remains the greatest problem to preserve the forest”; and demand explanation: “How many wood logs have been transported during strike?”.94

The language used expresses the situation in 1991, as the result of the increased deforestation: “Images of destruction: slash and burning reduces vegetal coverage in the State”.95 Other activities implicated in deforestation are also portrayed: “After interdiction, coal oven still burning. Industry asks Court for time”.96 Side by side with deforestation appears the damage caused by mineral resources extraction: “A moon hole left in Serra do Navio: fear that it may turn into a ghost town”,97 and the indiscriminate industrial fishing activities: “Shrimp fishing boats closer to the Coast than permitted by law”98 or “Tucunaré might disappear”.99

93 “Helicopters and 60 men against burning”, O Liberal, 30/8/90.
94 Public servants strike which affected, among many, services for the protection of the environment.
95 “Deforestation reaches 12 percent in Pará”, O Liberal, 10/9/91.
96 “War against pollution in Rondon”, O Liberal, 10/12/93.
97 “Serra do Navio wants to survive”, O Liberal, 10/10/93.
98 “Industrial fishing does not affect non-industrial practices”, O Liberal, 10/4/94.
Cyclical natural disasters such as flooding throughout the Amazon Basin, especially in the Negro river, in Amazonas, and Tocantins river, in Marabá, Pará State\textsuperscript{100} and the drought in Marajó Archipelago\textsuperscript{101} represent valuable visual material for the newspapers. In situations of natural disasters there is a remarkable difference in the language used in captions. While \textit{A Crítica} is more of a distant observer, \textit{O Liberal} tends to speak from the perspective of those affected, the river side populations. Both in times of flood or drought, words such as “abandoned”, “unsheltered”, “precarious conditions” are more frequent. \textit{A Crítica} takes it from a distance. At least in these situations, the newspaper shows a tendency for detachment, as it warns of the danger of the flood by informing readers on the rising levels of the waters\textsuperscript{102} and the economic losses caused by the disaster.\textsuperscript{103}

The captions also convey the human disasters with images of lack of basic sanitation,\textsuperscript{104} slave work\textsuperscript{105}, mercury contamination\textsuperscript{106}, tropical diseases\textsuperscript{107}. There are photos showing the natural beauty of the region. Beautiful scenery is shown in a rather pragmatic context where nature serves specific objectives: Jari, a beautiful river that in old times served the purpose of murder, by drowning, the enemies of local oligarchy;\textsuperscript{108} Anavilhanas, an archipelago in Amazonas, and a project to transform it into an ecological station to be used for tourism purposes.\textsuperscript{109}

Hope expressed through research and information on policy action is also revealed in photographs published in the two newspapers. While research is presented as an indicator of a few solutions to regional problems, policy is shown as an indicator of action. Research

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{100}“Unsheltered suffering in Marabá”, \textit{O Liberal}, 20/3/94.
\item \textsuperscript{101}“Waters abandon their favourite sons”, \textit{O Liberal}, 30/11/94. The archipelago is located on the delta of the Amazon river and is part of Pará State’s jurisdiction.
\item \textsuperscript{102}“Flood causes a rise in water level equivalent to 28.10 m”, \textit{A Crítica}, 11/5/93; “CPRM forecasts flood of the century in the Amazon”, \textit{O Liberal}, 20/5/93.
\item \textsuperscript{103}“Flood causes losses of 30% in cattle ranching”, \textit{A Crítica}, 10/6/93.
\item \textsuperscript{104}“Belém consumes açaí with high levels of contamination”, \textit{O Liberal}, 20/6/90. Açaí is part of the staple diet in Pará. It is a juice made out of a fruit with the same name that grows in a palm tree. It is eaten with manioc as a side dish to dried, salted meats (fish, meat, shrimp).
\item \textsuperscript{105}“Slave work in two ranches in Xinguara”, \textit{O Liberal}, 10/10/91; “Slave work increases in rural areas”, \textit{O Liberal}, 30/1/94; “Slaves of the Third Millennium”, \textit{O Liberal}, 30/1/94.
\item \textsuperscript{106}“Mercury level in Tapajós river is alarming”, \textit{O Liberal}, 10/1/93.
\item \textsuperscript{107}“Four more under suspicion of cholera”, \textit{O Liberal}, 20/11/91; “Findings confirm contamination of Bay”, \textit{O Liberal}, 10/12/91. The headline refers to the Bay of Guajará on which Belém is located.
\item \textsuperscript{108}“Diseases are more dangerous than malnutrition”, \textit{A Crítica}, 20/1/94.
\item \textsuperscript{109}“Rich Colonel of bad reputation”, \textit{O Liberal}, 30/12/91.
\item \textsuperscript{109}“Decision postponed on Anavilhanas Park project”, \textit{A Crítica}, 30/11/94.
\end{itemize}
assumes different characters as it is portrayed in photographs in the two newspapers. It is usually translated into work carried out by institutions such as the University,110 Goeldi Museum111 and the Evandro Chagas Institute112, in Belém, or those involving co-operation with other institutions, such as INPA, Embrapa/CPATU and UNAMAZ, among others.113

Research has not lost its character of denouncing damage to nature in the coverage of O Liberal and A Crítica. The press covers scientists who denounce pollution to ecosystems such as mangroves114 and rivers115.

In terms of policy action, the newspapers have published photos of those of more obvious nature. The special note of military manoeuvres116 which undoubtedly provided visual material of most interest and news worthiness as the action was part of the renewed policy to militarise the region. Actions taken against illegal activities also have guaranteed space in the newspapers pages: “Wood cargo confiscated from ferry”117 or “IBAMA confiscates 100 tons of nets”118 are some of the captions in these reports. Present is also the language of what might represent success in exploiting timber “Carauari: 240,000 m³ of timber”,119 “Wood logs may be exploited. Industry to face competition”120 or yet the intent of discovery of more natural riches also produce some of the images published in the newspapers.

A few examples manage to capture the tone that some policy-makers want to give to policy and some researchers contribute to, that of research and policy working hand in hand as revealed in the links between themes such as the environment and development and natural

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110 “University wants to decipher the Amazon”, A Crítica, 10/1/92; “University reaffirms compromise: science”, A Crítica, 10/3/92; “Satellites will help mangrove studies on Northern Coast”, O Liberal, 20/10/92.
111 “Museum donates science kits and gives new meaning to science teaching”, O Liberal, 10/7/91; “Fish spawns out of the water”, O Liberal, 30/7/94.
112 “Great expectation on vaccine against diarrhoea”, O Liberal, 30/7/92.
113 “30,000 baby turtles dead. Pollution might be responsible”, O Liberal, 21/1/90; “Scientists define conservation areas”, A Crítica, 10/1/90; “Embrapa wants to protect cupuaçu crops”, O Liberal, 20/1/91; “Universities want insertion of environmental education into syllabus on routine basis”, O Liberal, 30/7/91; “CPATU installs databases in laser disc”, O Liberal, 10/1/93; “CPATU gives priority to technology generation”, O Liberal, 30/5/93.
114 “Satellites will help mangrove studies on Northern Coast”, O Liberal, 20/10/92.
115 “IBAMA looks for responsible of oil spill”, A Crítica, 10/11/93; “Polluted lake threatens reservoir”, O Liberal, 30/8/94.
116 “Military troops manoeuvre in border area”, O Liberal, 20/8/93; “Military manoeuvre in the Amazon”, O Liberal, 30/9/93; “Shining Path and FARC united in the Amazon”; “CMA (Military Command of the Amazon) applies strict measures in patrolling of the region”; “Border is strategic area for guerrilla and drug traffic”, A Crítica, 10/11/93; “Navy increases forces in the region”, A Crítica, 30/4/94.
117 “IBAMA confiscates 350 wood poles”, A Crítica, 30/6/93.
118 “Industrial fishing net confiscated by IBAMA”, A Crítica, 30/9/93.
119 “Carauari is the biggest timber exporter in the region”, A Crítica, 10/7/94.
120 “Wood export in the Amazon”, A Crítica, 30/11/94.
resources and research management. Scientific knowledge that verifies the need to create environmental reserves.\(^{121}\)

The humour side of news expressed in cartoons is not a high note in these two newspapers coverage. Each newspaper has one cartoonist who basically produces the main cartoon by the daily. The work is published in the opinion page where the leader also appears. On some occasions, these professionals are required to produce cartoons to accompany news pieces. This usually happens when there is a sarcastic facet to the news or when simply there is no photograph due to some operational matter being the more frequent the fact that no photographer was assigned or that the film did not turn out right. A preferred theme is the satirical treatment of officials putting them on the light of ridicule questioning their authority and instigating distrust.\(^{122}\)

One could say that due to so many miseries attributed to the Amazon, there would be no environment for humour. Indeed very few cartoons portraying issues related to the region appear in the coverage. *O Liberal* is the newspaper with the most number, 13 in total. A *Crítica* published only three. Regional elements are revealed as the drawings portray Indians, *caboclos*,\(^ {123}\) pollution, hammocks, trees, animals in general with special emphasis to alligators, snakes, death (i.e. the figure of “Death” and graveyards), researchers and authorities.

The very conditions of the region provide open terrain for scepticism and cynicism stemming from cartoons as they reveal caustic human representations. Health matters is one of these examples as they appear in cartoons that show “Death” giving toilet paper to a child suffering from diarrhoea;\(^ {124}\) a sad-faced man looking at the sewage running by shacks in Belém’s poor districts (*periferia*);\(^ {125}\) and a man running away from many types of insects.\(^ {126}\)

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\(^ {121}\) A birds’ airport”, *A Crítica*, 29/11/92; “Archipelago on Negro river to be protected”, *A Crítica*, 27/2/94.

\(^ {122}\) *A Crítica*, 20/5/92

\(^ {123}\) Characteristic inhabitants of the region. Ethnic group originated in the miscegenation of Indians and European Colonisers.

\(^ {124}\) *O Liberal*, 20/11/91.

\(^ {125}\) *O Liberal*, 10/4/91.

\(^ {126}\) *A Crítica*, 20/1/91.
The environment appears in several forms. To illustrate ecological disorder, O Liberal published a cartoon in which a banquet takes place and the main dishes are trees, alligators and snakes. Two years later, A Crítica published one where an alligator is coming out of the oven ready for consumption. Deforestation is also a recurrent theme in cartoons where animals along side fallen trees provide the symbols of environmental damage. Other symbols are pollution of rivers by the use of mercury for extracting gold.

Violence perpetrated in the rush to occupy the region is symbolised in a cartoon showing a sign that reads “Manelão’s mine” and points toward a graveyard. The image summarises some of the more serious conflicts in the region that of the exploitation of mineral resources by free lance prospectors and the disputes resulting from it.

Indians are also portrayed in two different cartoons, both in O Liberal. In one situation an Indian is sitting down with a sad face in a position that could be read as passiveness and hopelessness. In another cartoon, Paiakã, who had been accused of raping a minor, is shown in the village posing a threat to his fellow Indians.

Authority as a value is questioned in O Liberal’s cartoons. Both policy-makers and experts are criticised in this type of visual item. One of them shows a meeting of the SUDAM’s Council meeting where only one, out of eight Amazonian governors, was present. The cartoon provides an interpretation of the importance attributed to the region’s matters by regional authorities. The cartoons that portray experts reveal distrust in the effects of discussions held in a conference held in Belém, in November 1992. The drawing shows speakers at the conference table looking at felled trees and pollution coming out of

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127 Title of an International Seminar held in Belém, in October, 1990.
128 O Liberal, 20/10/90.
129 A Crítica, 20/5/92.
130 An astronaut inside a space shuttle overlooks the Amazon burning forest. O Liberal, 10/7/94.
131 O Liberal, 20/2/91; 20/3/94
132 O Liberal, 20/2/91.
133 O Liberal, 30/7/91.
134 “Free lance prospectors ask for more understanding”, O Liberal, 30/10/90.
135 O Liberal, 31/3/91.
136 O Liberal, 10/6/92.
137 O Liberal, 20/5/94.
factories. In another sarcastic attack of scientists, a cartoon portrays a scientist using magnifying lens searching for a *mapinguari*, an enormous terrestrial mammal extinct for millions of years. This is the Amazon's equivalent to the search for Big Foot. A researcher with the Goeldi Museum in Belém currently studies the possibility of occurrence of *mapinguaris* in the Amazon.

Issues of human population, more specifically related to population growth, also deserved some attention from *O Liberal*’s cartoonist. He drew lots of people “raining” on an umbrella over Belém’s skyline. News accounts that over half of the Amazon population lives in Pará with increasing problems to the State, and, in particular, to the infra-structure in main cities.

Cultural values also appear as a theme in cartoons. On one cartoon of the few published by *A Crítica* shows a symbol of the myths built around the region that of the lazy, laid back people who are always enjoying a swing in their hammocks. The feature discussed cultural identity and regional values.

**Conclusion**

Analysis of the regional coverage of sustainable development issues in the Amazon has allowed understanding of broader political, economic, social and cultural perspectives regarding the Amazon. The intricacy of Amazonian matters is consistently portrayed by the two newspapers analysed between 1990 and 1994. The nature of the concept from which the study set out to investigate, i.e. sustainable development, is revealed in print news in the period. Also revealed is the spectrum of interests which constitutes the forces in a society. In its struggle to consolidate democracy, Amazônia expresses maturity in voicing a diversity of points of view. Evidence demonstrates that the variety of themes which appear in the coverage reflects the interdisciplinary character of the concept. It is apparent from the news

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138 *O Liberal*, 10/11/92.
139 *O Liberal*, 20/7/94.
140 *O Liberal*, 29/1/91.
141 *A Crítica*, 20/9/92.
that the media capture the very nature of the Amazonian dilemma in all of the contradictions intrinsic to democracies.

The unique character of the Amazon has proved a fertile terrain for the understanding how a society expresses itself and builds meaning around issues relevant to its people. Though interests have at times overshadowed underlying problems, the press has signalled issues that, given their gravity, have become central later in the decade. It is intrinsic to the Amazonian reality that power relations are still centred on the problem of land ownership. The politics in the region and Amazônia’s relations with central government, private enterprise and international corporations are marked by the tensions surrounding the land problem. The coverage of regional affairs has in many instances demonstrated that the media perceives the urgency of the matter.

Given the urgency of the land question, its environmental and economic implications, constraints common to news productions processes have not stopped coverage of events directly related to the matter. While this is not a comparative study, it is possible to make inferences about how the regional media distance themselves from the news coverage in the newspapers if the so-called national press. In concentrating on the views of regional actors, with the obvious exceptions pointed out throughout the analysis, I have been able to capture the endogenous perspectives. The value of understanding how Amazonians view their problems is completely distinct from other attempts to assess specific matters from the point of view of national media or even international media. It has been an opportunity to have an insider look at how “we”, not “they”, perceive Amazônia.

It has not been my intention to prove that Amazonians are the more competent to solve the region’s problems. It was not my goal to prove that the region’s citizens are capable to, by themselves of finding solutions for their problems. By analysing regional perspectives of the Amazon, I have, instead, attempted to expose the internal processes that trigger public debate about local issues. In many ways, despite the fact that Brazil is a federation, the Northern region, the Amazon has partially remained a Colonial outpost. Many of the problems that the region is faced with today result from external actions. More than to be
heard, the Amazon fights for autonomy, fights for the right to self-determination. To reveal the opinions and actions of Amazonians is to demonstrate that they are articulate and able to intervene in the decision-making process that may open way to solve historical problems. It is the input of the region’s culture and experience that has made this study relevant. It is by hearing “our” voices that Amazonians may stop some of the tragic decisions taken in past policies. The media, in general, and the press, in particular, have been instrumental in this scenario. Both regional media structures and professionals have contributed immensely to open local debate about pressing issues. Their practices have also, with no doubt, prompted national and international debate about Amazonian problems.142

The discussion of the variety of themes emerging in the coverage demonstrates the level of conflict that is ultimately an outcome of external/internal and internal/internal frictions. The re-enactment of conflict takes place in more obvious fashion in the region itself. But many of the facets of conflict are found outside the Amazon. The multinational character of the Amazon extends the regional affairs to various spheres. The eight Amazonian countries have diverse interests in the region and so do their partners in the political and economic circles.

An evidence of the various forces involved in the Amazonian question is that one of the most prominent themes is one that concentrates on geopolitics and national security. Political and border affairs as revealed in the news underline the continuous conflict of forces inside and outside the region. Regional coverage in the first half of the 1990s re-introduced the international dimension of the region. The debate on environment and development issues reveals the economic framing of news where the exploitation of the natural resources and that of labour (in mining, cattle ranching, logging, primary economy as well as in commerce and industry) show the enormous gap between major economic forces and regional populations. The latter is affected by crucial matters such as the concentration of land ownership, the lack of infrastructure and health services.

Despite differences in themes elected as of more prominence, both newspapers portray the diversity of issues at stake in the definition of policy for the Amazon region. Public officials

142 See detailed discussion in chapter VI.
are still the loudest voices when decision-making is concerned, but the building of meaning around regional issues is collectively exercised by forces in organised civil society. Actors revealed in the news in the first half of the 1990s are of a most diverse nature. Indian and labour leadership, the Church, the armed forces, the private sector as well as scientists and public officials are overall responsible for the representation of the Amazon within the region. In a different language, visual resources, with special attention to the cartoons, reveal the ability to identify and criticise matters of major concern for the region.

Social change in the form of redemocratisation and social movements action triggered by political and economic drastic trends in the various arenas of Brazilian society and as whole of Latin America, provided a scenario for the more ample public debate of Amazonian issues. The regional press has been able to demonstrate such a trend as well as open space for the debate. The role of the media as public arenas in the resolution of social problems is fully observed in the regional press. Both A Critica and O Liberal were able to capture the changes in discourse introduced by their sources. They were also able to make such changes more visible as they revealed the rhetoric in each and every actor. The private sector should be especially noted for it changed its rhetoric and strategically retreated from the coverage as the Rio Conference was about to take place and non-governmental sources conquered the newspaper pages. Also worth of notice is the low profile kept by the military as border affairs became an issue of increased debate in the press. After more than two decades in the centre of Brazilian politics, in the new democratic times, it was in their own interest to be low key in the national and regional scenario.

Issues of regional development are marked in the press by the newly-introduced rhetoric of sustainability. In the regional news of the early 1990s, the concept of sustainable development is used by all actors. Actors present in the coverage accompanied the world trend and started to speak the environmentally-sound rhetoric. The press captured the trend and revealed it in an increased coverage of issues related to environment and development.

As the press opened space for the discussion on how to develop the region in a sustainable fashion, coverage introduced an increased diversity of perspectives in the debate for the
solution of social problems. From the most conservative and authoritarian and positivist to the more progressive, democratic and critical, discourses take shape in the news, through the voices of the most different actors. Contradictory views filled the continuous discussion of what the future of the region might be. Opinion pieces and features suggested alternatives: some far from feasible in the regional scenario, others more pragmatic and yet others that emphasise the consideration of a combination of forces present in the region. These later recognising, in the news media, fundamental arenas of debate. Despite the overall complaints against media practices, the press is acknowledged as an essential contributing institution to the democracy.

Not without confusion over concepts and on the underlying ideology of sustainable development, the press was able to exercise its democratic role as demonstrated in examples provided throughout the analysis. Also as a result of the confusion and major contradicting interests, the press signaled issues that gained force in the news in the second half of the decade. Such indicators are identified in the reporting of four major issues: 1. militarisation with increasing emphasis on surveillance and the renewal of the national security discourse well known during the military regime; 2. the worsening of the landless workers problem and the rise of their organised movement, the Landless Workers Movement (MST); 3. the separatist movement in the Tapajós basin in Western Pará; and 4. the continuing Indian predicament for territory demarcation.

In the dynamics of social movements as they are portrayed in the press, historical critics of the system, such as Almeida (1994), observe the intensification in the Amazon of the "multiplicity in forms of Indian and peasants organisations, marked by an increased autonomy in face of the State apparatus" (p. 536). The portrayal of rural workers and Indians, and scientists and NGOs as done in the regional press has not stopped the strengthening of their moves in defying hegemonic structures.

143 "Slave work increases in rural areas", O Liberal, 30/1/94; "The mark of everyday violence", O Liberal, 20/11/94; "Slaves of the Third Millenium", O Liberal, 30/11/94.
144 "Campaign tries to obtain support for creation of Tapajós State", O Liberal, 30/8/91; "Separatism as a result of poverty", O Liberal, 10/12/91.
145 Demarcation was faced with even more constraints as the government, in years outside the sample, was to approve laws restricting Indian territory.
A more recent example of the rise of new actors and the mobilisation of social forces is the increasing force shown by the Landless Workers Movement (MST) signalled in the media during the 1990/94 period. It has forced, in many cases, through violent action practised both by MST and the State, the State into a redefinition of agrarian reform. All of these challenging the stability of law and order emanated from State structures.

The different framing of regional news observed in A Crítica and O Liberal demonstrates that, according to a constructionist approach to news analysis, the overall context of each newspaper defines the packaging of news. While in A Crítica, news is politically framed, in O Liberal it is economic framing that applies most. The political and economic scenarios in Manaus and Belem provided the conditions for the different treatment of news. Matters more directly related to news production such as that of ownership also proved to interfere in the framing of news. Political and economic alliances between media and local elite emerge as the explanation for the difference in news packaging in Manaus and Belém.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the news media have allowed space for more public dialogue on matters of interest to the region, within the region, as it is discussed by regional actors. Both newspapers responded to the more comprehensive nature of the Amazonian problem. They were able to identify the sustainable development scenario in the early 1990s and responded accordingly. Coverage of events as well as that of matters closer to each individual newspaper also contributed to the framing of regional news.

The analysis shows that the coverage captured the diversity of themes and provided a variety of perspectives. It demonstrates trends over time as the debate of regional issues takes place. This is not without problems such as that of the need to provide better context to news. The lack of in depth, systematic and organised coverage of issues such as science and the environment is one of the many problems and of a more serious nature. As policy decision-making demands information, it is essential that knowledge is thoroughly available and discussed in the news. The participation of regional actors in the decisions directly affecting their lives depends a great deal on access to knowledge and to arenas of public debate such
as the media. Democratisation of information and of the media is basic to enable the region to choose its future.

Some limitations in the treatment of issues are of professional nature such as the lack of appropriate journalistic skills due mostly to absence of proper education and training. Others still, are related to the economic restrictions, imposed by each individual business policies. Constraints of far more complicated nature are also identified, as vested interests implicit to media ownership prevent coverage from achieving better quality standards. Historic political and economic interests going as far back as Colonial times and the fight for regional independence from the Portuguese Crown are some of the many great limitations to achieving a coverage that is consistent with the extension and the complexity of the Amazonian issues. Nevertheless, the press in the region has with, many constraints, contributed to the discussion of social problems which comprise the exercise of democracy which Amazônia has historically pursued.
Chapter VI
Press Coverage of Amazônia: A Journalistic Perspective
Analysis of Interviews

Introduction

The content analysis previously presented draws a partial picture of the Amazonian press coverage of sustainable development issues. While the content analysis’ findings introduce the most prominent themes and actors appearing in the coverage as well as aspects of news framing and newspaper format, interviews have been conducted as a means of identifying the wider context in which news is produced. By investigating general journalistic practices, this research intends to assess the production of regional news as the media build meaning around themes relevant to Amazônia. This chapter provides the links between the findings in the news content analysis and the discourses identified in the coverage. Political preferences, cultural differences and professional and production constraints affecting the outcome of the news become clearer through the perspectives revealed in the interviews with journalists.

The journalistic profession has become an institution in its own right. As Ericson et al. (1989) argue the construction of news has a close relationship with the culture developed between journalists and their sources: “... The reality of news is embedded in the nature and type of social and cultural relations that develop between journalists and their sources, and in the politics of knowledge that emerges on each specific newsbeat.” (p. 377). Thus, analysis of journalists’ perceptions of issues involved in the coverage of complex environmental and development problems is essential.

As the media are responsible for defining “... for the majority of the population what significant events are taking place...” and they “... offer powerful interpretations of how to understand these events” (Ibid., p. 57), journalists’ testimonies are fundamental. They reveal characteristics of organisation, practice as well as ideologies that have a direct influence in the framing of news.
In assessing the role media play in creating meaning around issues of importance in Amazônia, this research analyses and discusses processes of production of meaning and overall construction of social reality as suggested by Berger & Luckmann (1966). For Dahlgren (1985), “Collective interaction, intersubjectivity, cultural patterns ... are the basis for much of the sensemaking we do in everyday life.” (p. 10). Moreover, “Media-inspired meanings can contribute to a sense of belonging and community; alternatively they may strengthen social relations of domination, in which case ... meanings have an ideological dimension.” (Ibid., p. 10).

Based on a constructionist framework, where processes of interpretation are the basis and media represent public arenas of debate, it is relevant to analyse how journalists attribute meaning to complex social problems. In this particular case, the social problem regards environmental matters as suggested by many authors (Strodthoff et al., 1985; Solesbury, 1976; Burgess, 1990; Hansen, 1990; 1993; Cottle, 1993; Hannigan, 1995). As this study looks at policy issues related to sustainable development in Amazônia, the role of journalists in this process is of significance as suggested in the literature (Whatmore & Boucher, 1993; Yearley, 1988 and 1991; O’Riordan, 1989; Ribeiro, 1990; Borquez, 1993; and Kingdon, 1995).

As Dahlgreen (1985) argues “... media information may fail to transmit information, but meaning emerges nonetheless ...” (p. 11), thus, the views and the perceptions of journalists who cover the region are representative of local perspectives that create or maintain meaning about Amazônia within the region.

**Who are the journalists interviewed**

Thirty journalists were interviewed following the original plan set out in the research proposal. Of these, eight work in Manaus and 22 in Belém. The discrepancy is due to the low level of response of journalists contacted in Manaus. A total of 16 journalists were contacted in the Manaus, of which only 50 percent accepted to be interviewed. Lack of time and financial resources prevented me from staying for a longer period of time in Manaus to
persist and try to increase the number of interviews in that city. Nevertheless, several attempts were made to establish contact by telephone and fax from Belém. Due to the low level of response in Manaus, more journalists were interviewed in Belém. All interviews, but one, were carried out face to face. A Manaus respondent, away at the time interviews were carried out in the city, sent answers by fax.

It is possible that the fact that research, for historical reasons, has more tradition in Belém than in Manaus (Bertho, 1994), made journalists in Belém more welcoming of interviews carried out for academic purposes. Another factor that has accounted for a more responsive sample in Belém is that being a journalist myself, I worked with many of the Belém journalists on and off for more than ten years.

Because there is no tradition for journalists to specialise in the field of science or the environment in Amazonia, it was necessary to target a diverse sample of professionals. Most journalists are involved in the production of news on science and the environment work in the news media and in research institutions, universities and other government agencies. Professionals of journalism working in press offices or editorial and publishing departments were, therefore, included in the sample. Thus, the sample is constituted by 14 journalists who work in news media outlets of which 11 are in newspapers and three in television. Five journalists work at universities, five in research institutions and yet another group of five works for government agencies in charge of science, technology, environment, planning and policy-making in the region.

Eighteen of the interviewed professionals are men and 12 are women. Just over one third of them (11) are in their early 30s, eight in their 40s, six in their late 30s, three in their late 20s and two in their 50s. As many as 26 of the interviewed journalists have university degrees, two have not completed their degrees, one is in the middle of obtaining one and another has a Ph.D. Among those with university degrees, four have some Postgraduate education (three in Communication and one in Business Administration), and another group of four in the process of acquiring an M.A., of which three are in Communication and one in Law. Two thirds of the sample have first degrees or incomplete university education in

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1See detailed discussion in chapter V.
Communication, most of whom specialised in Journalism. Only one has specialised in Public Relations. Six of the interviewees have degrees or are at the stage of acquiring a degree in the Social Sciences. The remaining five have degrees in various areas including Mathematics, Law, Agronomy and Languages.

The average number of years of experience is 15. Eleven have up to ten years of experience, twelve of them have between 11 and 20 years of experience, and six have more than 20 years in journalism. The journalists’ interest in covering the environment, science and technology, and regional development, averages in length of time approximately ten years. Twenty interviewees revealed that they have had an interest in the area for about ten years, eight have had an interest for up to 20 years, and two of the interviewees indicated that they have had an interest for more than 20 years.

Among the 30 journalists interviewed four have received The Esso Journalism Award. Two have been recipients of the regional category of the prize more than once. Three of them can be considered veterans for the number of years dedicated to journalism and one belongs to a newer generation of journalists.

Due to the levels of poverty and resulting restrictions in access to higher education in Brazil as a whole and in the Amazon, in particular, the journalists interviewed in this study belong in an intellectual elite group. As the intellectual elite they represent, journalists have acquired a mix of interests throughout their professional experience. Such interests are mainly of political, social and economic natures. Their reporting reflects such interests as well as the links established with politics, political parties, economic groups and other interest groups ranging from professional associations to non-governmental organisations in fields as varied as social work, ethnic relations, the environment, popular culture, the arts etc. As a result journalists in this sample represent a variety of interests and groups from political parties, social movements, corporations as well as government.

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2 The most recognised award for journalists in Brazil sponsored by Esso, the oil company, in collaboration with the National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ).
Contradictions among the various interests become quite clear. An example is provided by journalists who, though working for public educational and research institutions, remain critical of government institutions. Another example is that of professionals who work for news organisations nevertheless, are ready to fight abuse of power. In these situations, professional and political interests speak louder and journalists become more like any other social actor representing his/her own labour rights and, thus, aligning with other workers who constitute a force much exploited by hegemonic groups within and outside the region.

This is not to say that there are no journalists who, on occasions, align with government and corporations. This obviously happens and always will as long as the professional relations require the building of source relations that facilitates collusion. Most information about the environment and regional development lies in the hands of government, especially considering that most research is produced in public institutions. Thus, the reporting of development and environmental issues under the described circumstances cannot ignore official sources. As social problems are portrayed in the news and constitute items in the agenda of the State, policy issues reported in the news most rely on public officials involved in the process of decision-making. It has not been long since a variety of social actors have more effectively taken part in the public arenas of debate in search for solution to social problems. Only recent times have seen coverage of new social actors. The overall change in the political scenarios marked by redemocratisation and the rise of social movements is responsible for this trend which journalists have, in general, managed to report on. Actors outside the government sphere are representatives of interest groups of various denominations from environmentalists to unions and ethnic leadership. They have risen in the Amazonian scenario and therefore cannot be ignored by the press. Throughout these overall developments, journalists have more or less openly established relations with the diverse spectrum of new social actors which has immensely facilitated access to their voicing their claims in the press.

For reasons of confidentiality, the names of the journalists have been changed. To facilitate the identification of testimonies, I have classified them by region and place of work and now list the journalists' attributed names accordingly. Vítor, Cláudia, Ísis, Theodora, Grace, João, Antonio and Serafim work in Manaus. Vítor, Ísis, Antonio and Serafim work for
newspapers. Cláudia, Theodora, Grace and João work for universities and research institutions.

Anita, Lídia, Nelson, Laura, José, Pedro, Joana, Ruby, Carlos, Emile and Sergei work in several of Belém’s universities, research institutions and government agencies. Lucas, David, Oscar, Paulo, Bernardo, Fernando, Rafael, Suzana and Roberto work in Belém’s newspapers. Only Orpheus works in the private sector.

How journalists build meaning around sustainable development

A series of questions were presented to the interviewees (Appendix B). Initially, journalists were asked what main Amazonian issues have become news since the 1980s. Once the main themes had been identified, they were asked to provide the overall scenario in which they perceive how Amazônia and its problems fit in contemporary world. Among other questions presented to the journalists are overall issues of news production such as how they choose their sources and how they relate to them; what type of information they look for; what their understanding of sustainable development issues is; how they manage to work with specialised language presented in matters of the environment, science, development among other themes. Journalists were also asked to discuss trends in the coverage and the main differences and similarities between the regional and the national news about the region.

By analysing these interviews, the research can draw an overall scenario of how themes about sustainable development are covered in Amazônia. Thus, the study contributes to an understanding of the broader political, economic, social and cultural regional aspects and perspectives as they influence and frame the news agenda and, potentially, the definition of public policies.

As this study analyses sustainable development issues in the Amazon and the rise of social movements in the region, it is important to assess overall aspects of change as it is portrayed in the media. Interviewing journalists demonstrates their views of the social changes and social actors in regional movements.
Due to the lack of systematisation of procedures in regional news rooms, such as the absence of editorial meetings, participant observation was ruled out. Interviews of a formal nature and structured content were envisioned as an effective way to gather information. A schedule containing open-ended questions was applied and a uniform set of data was produced. This method was applied as a means to apprehend the perspectives of the journalists who construct the Amazon for regional audiences. In this context, analysis of interviews allows insight on interpretations about the region by those from the region itself. This constitutes a fundamental element in this study where I attempt to look at meaning constructed from a regional perspective.

**The historical frame of contemporary coverage of regional issues**

As discussed earlier in the content analysis chapter, Latin America as a whole experienced in the 1980s a period of redemocratisation and a rise of social movements making claims on a variety of issues (Calderón et al., 1992). Political amnesty allowed exiles to return. In the early 1980s, Brazil saw a wave of intellectuals arrive, some of whom had acquired status of leadership as nationals in foreign countries. Others benefited from the years of exile to acquire University higher degrees. Upon their return to Brazil, some went back to their regions and Amazonia as well, experienced the arrival of these new actors.

Experience accumulated in the political struggle and in years of exile gave a more comprehensive political perspective to exiles. Upon return, some went into public life, others into academia. Also as discussed in the content analysis chapter, from early to the mid 1980s, the Amazon observed the emergence of a renewed local leadership resulting from overall changes in the political scenario. Leadership did not stem exclusively from political parties which by then composed a multi-party system. Other types of leadership appeared and one in particular was clearly based at universities and research institutions in the region. Simultaneous to the emergence of such leadership, who had been gaining increased visibility, social movements latent in the region also became more active. Among these movements those representative of rural workers, Indians and free-lance prospectors are of most significance.

3For more detailed discussion, see research design in chapter IV.
Political changes facilitated a more effective participation of regional leadership in the design of policies. The role of the news media has been acknowledged in recent regional policy. The new leadership comprises an intellectual elite. Their approach to regional problems recognised the need to produce and strengthen regional capacity to build endogenous knowledge (Aragon, 1994). It is from this point, that research institutions and universities in the region renewed their political role with special effects in the region’s future. Some critics say that this interference has done nothing to save the region from the continuous assault on its resources. Lucas, a free-lance journalist and university professor, working in the region for over twenty years and interviewed for this study, said in a recent public meeting that “We did nothing to stop the process of exploitation. We sold ourselves.” But it was the action of the new leadership and the social movements that opened up public institutions to society as a whole. In the process, communication was acknowledged as indispensable. As the new group opened channels of discussion, there came a confrontation with local media and allied interest groups.

Until the historical moment of redemocratisation, local media had acted as channels for the elite in power. Always of a right wing political orientation, local media as well as their allies could not and have not accepted the emergence of a new generation. The new leadership, though not of radical nature, was prepared to assess critically the economic and political elite in their earlier activities in the region. Worse still was the fact that most in the new leadership, by then, had no political party affiliation. Local news media, O Liberal, in special, acted in boycott to the group. A campaign was in place to demise the new leadership and in support of those who symbolised the continuation of the traditional elite in power.

Pedro, who, at the time of changes, worked for one of Belém’s newspapers, acknowledges the difficulties in “... imposing our interests, the interests of the region from a political point

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5 No obvious links with local oligarchy are found among members of the new leadership.
6 Universities and research institutions are traditional arenas of diverse political thinking. As such, they were especially targeted by the military regime.
7 Held at the Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, in September 1996.
8 More changes are on the way as in the 1996 elections the Partido dos Trabalhadores’ (Workers Party) (PT) candidate for Mayor in Belém, Edmilson Rodrigues, won. It is a historical event as no other Executive Branch position in the State has been held by an Opposition leader as far left as the PT.
of view.” At the same time, he identifies trends and Amazonian action in key positions: “I see that changes have started to take place. It is evident that there are processes taking place less via the politicians or the political interests and more through the intellectual capacity of a few who have been able to occupy strategic space in the regional and national scenario. They are a few, but they have started to make a difference.”

David, a reporter for more than 20 years with the Belém press, shares Pedro’s view. Despite some scepticism he acknowledges that “there are people working. It will be a long term and painful task, even with financial loss to their careers, but they are willing to do the job. This is very good... this is a better government” [federal], despite its political physiologism, ... it is much more concerned with the valorisation of Amazonian issues.”

Both Pedro and David, after many years in the newsroom, started working in the university environment, one as journalist and the other as a lecturer. It is possible that this new situation has influenced their perspective on the possible influence of local leadership in policy-making. Experience and proximity to circles of decision-making such as the regional universities, allow these professionals to scrutinise political action and its results.

The only way to overcome the blockade imposed by the local media to the newly risen leadership in the mid-eighties was by means of demonstrating that the circle where the group had originated, academia, the research environment, was scientifically able and politically articulate. Recognition was gained through the demonstration of their scientific expertise. Science again was working to legitimise actions. Journalists working with the new group, mediated the process of making science public. They initiated a series of activities within these institutions to gain scientists confidence in journalistic work. This phenomenon took place in both Belém and Manaus. Professionals such as Pedro, Joana, Rafael and Ruby were active in conveying science to wider audiences. To a lesser extent, journalists such as Laura, Theodora, Carlos, Anita and José supported this not all organised action. Though unsystematic, public communication of science has had a considerable long term impact. For

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9 The design of the 1995 Environment Ministry through the Amazonian Affairs Secretariat, document Política Nacional Integrada para a Amazônia Legal (Integrated National Policy for Legal Amazônia) is the more recent move of policy design with the direct involvement of regional social actors.

10 In the past decade, members of the leadership have entered the federal level of decision-making in key positions influencing Amazonian policy design.
over a decade now, traditionally closed institutions came to understand their role in a redemocratised society. Much of the work of persuasion was the result of relations built by journalists with scientists (Albuquerque Barbosa, 1996; Beltrão, 1996).

As the new leadership’s activities evolved and some members acquired formal party affiliation in the Left and Centre of the political arena, media groups renewed their animosity. They went through a new period of blockade unwilling to report on such individuals or any of their actions regardless of relevance and newsworthiness. Again, in the early 1990s, a new silent battle was established. Universities and research institutions with new administrations increased the efforts to put research in the news agenda. Press offices played a fundamental role opening up space mostly in the newspapers, but also in other media. The whole context was more positive towards the publication of science and environment-related news as shown in the content analysis discussion.

Overall, this scenario is much the same in both Belém and Manaus. But the press in Belém has resisted far more the rise of the new leadership. A reason for this resides in the fact that Manaus institutions were not, then, as articulate as Belém’s. Thus, leadership in Manaus seemed a lesser threat to local elites than it did in Belém.

Resistance among researchers in co-operating to communicate their work also represents a barrier to communicate science as well as to bring public recognition to institutions. Though not as strong as ten years ago, resistance related to the press is still very much present today. Nevertheless, a continuing process of understanding the importance of their work in the political scenario as society walked into democracy, helped to eliminate obstacles. The rise of science and the environment in the news agenda and the resulting coverage of science and environmental news has forced journalists in Brazil to become more efficient in their dealings with the scientific community (Bueno, 1988). This is especially true as the latter

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11The media also introduced some initiatives in the field at that time. In the 1980s, a public radio station, Rádio Cultura, in Belém, started productions targeting rural areas, using agriculture research knowledge. In these programmes, journalists discussed environmental issues as they related to life in the hinterland in activities such as the seasonal slash/burning practices in soil preparation for plantation of seasonal crops. By early 1990s, the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) initiated a television production for which the main goal was to communicate research results originated in institutions throughout the region. The programme, Academia Amazônia, was, according to its creator, a television version of the Goeldi Museum news bulletin, Destaque Amazônia, started in 1984.
also have had opportunity to acquire confidence in news producers and relations between journalists and specialised sources have improved throughout time.

**Press and democracy: new elements in the old journalistic profession**

Similar to what has happened world-wide, the environment has come to be identified as a social problem of major dimension in contemporary Brazil. In Amazônia, the environment in all its political, economic and cultural dimensions represents one of the region's most crucial problems. As a reporter for one of the two papers analysed in this study, Ísis points out "... recent developments in science and in society stimulating the exercise of citizenship." According to her, "ecology and the environment stopped having negative connotations ... [and] became part of a politically-correct discourse".

In order to build a more comprehensive scenario in which journalistic practices take place, one of the first questions posed by this research to professionals regards the relationship of press and democracy. All journalists acknowledge the role of the press in democratic societies. They remain, though, sceptical of the possibility of fully responding to such a commitment as they recognise the involvement of political and economic interests impeding a professional practice attuned with democratic principles. Journalists also point to constraints imposed by political and economic controls, as suggested by Hall et al. (1978), as a result of concentration of media ownership under a legislation that allows for no democritisation of communication means in Brazil.

The more experienced and politically articulate journalists are those most concerned with press and State relations. The role of the press in democracy was pointed out by a number of the interviewees in both Belém and Manaus. Regardless of their ideological preferences or political affiliations, most of them, at some point, have been activists and, therefore, recognise the links between their profession, press structures and democratic societies. Their activism took and still takes place in various spheres from registered political parties to non-governmental movements and unions.
Matters regarding media ownership and the nature of communications legislation in Brazil were addressed by Vítor. A reporter with one of the leading regional newspapers, he says that “The press has a fundamental role in people’s lives ... determines matters in society. In Brazil’s case, one has to be careful, because the mass media are not democratically distributed and, thus, are not democratic in their practice.”

Journalists’ analysis of the press role in democracy varies from an idealistic perspective to one of a more pragmatic nature. Bernardo, an experienced journalist and editor with one of the two major newspapers in the region, analyses the press role as one that needs to acquire legitimacy with its audience. He says: “The press could be a legitimate channel of people’s aspirations, bearing no compromise with any type of interests. If only the press were not arrogant, were able to acknowledge mistakes, and avoid sensationalism... it would have more legitimacy in society’s view”.

João, a journalist and University professor in Manaus, echoes Vítor and Bernardo, as he emphasises that responsibility to ensure a democratic role for the press lies with journalists. He does not think journalists understand the dimension of their professional role. For João, journalists lack understanding that “... their mission is of major importance in the construction and consolidation of democratic values in social life ... The truth is that many of them because of their own incipient democratic experience ... do not respond to society.” The entrance of young and considerably inexperienced journalists in the market and departure of the older generation partially disarticulates the compromise with democracy. Lack of tradition to fight employers, injustice and authoritarian rule impedes the younger journalists to foresee and handle conflicts in their daily craft.

The history of the authoritarian regime in Brazil is still much ingrained in press orientation and practices. Media owners, with a few exceptions, were ready to collaborate and comply with the military regime. Democracy comes at a cost to these groups who have had to identify new partners in the new times. Serafim, an editorial writer and university professor with more than 20 years working in the region provides support the claim: “... the press is not yet totally free from its ties with authoritarianism. This is damaging to the coverage of environmental phenomena. Powerful groups ... influence the news media because the
coverage of their interests is at stake.” This view is shared by Paulo, one of the few journalists working exclusively as an environmental reporter. For him, “Newspapers are more interested in logging [for its economic relevance] than they are in the preservation of the flora. This is yet another barrier for us in daily news production”.

Links between local media groups and major business exploiting the region became more clear in conversations with the interviewees. David, who before working in Belém was for many years a correspondent in the Amazonian hinterland, expresses this view: “There are many interests involving Amazônia from different countries, governments, business groups. This is actually a historic repetition [of Colonial times] when Amazônia was seen as a great warehouse [providing for all].” The reinforcement of myths, further discussed in the language and discourse analysis chapter, is very much a daily practice within the regional media.

The power of the press

As this research explores the relationship of media coverage, democracy and policy-making in the Brazilian Amazon, journalists were invited to present their views on the potential of the press to influence changes in policy. Similar to their reactions on the press role in democracy, journalists, in general, acknowledge the press influence in policy-making, but, apart from a few exceptions, are sceptical of major changes in public policy as a direct result of reporting of regional problems.

Grace, who works at a university’s press office, believes in the impact of the press as it provides information potentially taken into account in policy-making. She argues that: “The press has great power ... It is fundamental to influence decision-making in regional development public policy. When a coherent journalistic piece is published, it can have considerable impact.” For her, this power is impaired by institutional processes. She is concerned with the need for institutions to publicise knowledge: “Matters treated in the scientific circles have to leave their environment in order to be known ... It is the press that

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12 For a comprehensive discussion, see the theoretical framework in chapter III. Analysis is based on Yankelovitch, 1991; Kamieniecki, 1991; Borquez, 1993; Spitzer, 1993; Graber, 1994.
attributes salience to issues. And if the press treats matters with the necessary respect, it will be exercising its role in the process.”

In Grace’s assessment, she regards society’s perception of regional matters and agrees that: “It [the press] might have contributed to discussion, to change people’s attitudes, to provide more information about reality so people know how things will affect their lives.” In respect to prompting change in policy, Grace is reticent, but provided two examples: “The demarcation of the Yanomami territory is an example of pressure where the news media have played a major role since the 1980s. Another example is the coverage of Chico Mendes’ assassination.”

To emphasise the potential of media impact, as Grace does, is not enough for some journalists. Working in an environment with longer tradition of communicating science, Lidia and Carlos go further in their analysis. According to them, it is necessary to introduce dimensions of a specific concern with the communication of expert knowledge and public policy in the discussion of Amazonian issues. This is of particular importance in the coverage of sustainable development for one of its characteristics is participative decision-making which has major weight in constructionist analysis. Both Lidia and Carlos are journalists from a new generation who have worked in both research and government institutions and the local media. The younger or less experienced the journalists the more utopian their approach. It also appears that their affiliation with public institutions makes them less pragmatic than those professionals who work in the daily press. It is undeniable though that the transit of journalists from the local media to public institutions and vice versa has provided both sides with diverse perspectives of their own. This has certainly created some conflict but has also widened the views of both the press and the public sector. Many of the journalistic strategies have been adjusted and assimilated by both which facilitates interaction and bridges much of the distances between the media and potential sources.

In a more simplified and utopian approach, Lidia defends that “The role of the press is to influence the decision-making process of public policy. The press has the ability to call attention of the public and the government towards what is happening in the country.”
Although acknowledging the press's ability to call attention to certain matters, Lídia points out that “... in Brazil, there is a governing elite which has no interest in discussing regional matters.” Carlos adds to this concern when he says that press coverage of science is too fragmented and unsystematic. In his opinion, “Policy is way too general for the press to discuss. The press only deals with what really attracts public attention.” The content analysis provided evidence that contradicts this much current assumption. On several occasions, but mostly in issues related to development and economic policy, regional funds and fiscal incentives, policy is extensively discussed in the newspapers pages both in Manaus and Belém.

As commented previously, there are journalists with a more pragmatic view on the potential of the media to influence policy-making. Usually working in the daily press, they are even more sceptical than most. “The influence [of the press] is zero,” Paulo says. In regard to the impact of news media coverage of environmental issues, he emphasises it is episodic and not at all systematic in nature. Bernardo agrees and confirms the view: “... influences are episodic, sporadic and unimportant in regard to what is essential to this rich region filled with misery.” In the acknowledgement of the need to provide science and the environment with more systematic coverage, there is no disagreement among different generations of journalists. Carlos much younger than Paulo and Bernardo shares the latter’s opinion. For Carlos, though, it is the constraints in news production processes that dictate the result of the coverage. As demonstrated in the content analysis, coverage of regional issues has inherited the characteristic of event-centred nature. The episodic characteristic of news has proved pervasive in the media and the reporting of the environment is no exception. As sceptical as Paulo is, he concedes, as Grace did before and as Rafael will, that though “Coverage is not necessarily directed toward environmental problems, news sometimes has hit the target and government, feeling the pressure, has been forced to react.”

Serafim also adds to this view when he argues that “There has been some influence, especially for the increase and development of the press’s relationship with public power. There have always been attempts to provide conditions for social change. But as far as being achieved, that is a different story...” For Sergei, who has been working in news media in the region for over 15 years, “The press has a positive role as it may open discussion on matters
of interest to the community.” But although “The press provides the space”, Sergei stresses that it is “the community [that] has to take on the task of enhancing the debate.”

Paulo, Bernardo, Serafim and Sergei all have in common many years of experience. They have witnessed earlier moments in the history of the region and the country. This perhaps has made them more sceptical than the younger journalists. This is very much the position taken by Theodora and Roberto. Though they work in different environments - she in a research institution and he in a daily newspaper -, their agreement resides in the experience of an older generation compared to that of Carlos, Joana and Lídia. For those anxious to see change in the region, news media give no contribution. Theodora, a journalist working at a research institution, says that: “It maybe that influence is exercised to improve debate, but it has never changed anything.” Roberto, who works in one of the leading newspapers and other media under the same ownership agrees: “The press does not allow repercussion, resonance to force major changes. One does not see radical change in what is the Amazônia of today and that of the times of the military regime... The Transamazônica is still there .... subjected to poverty ... a major mistake.”

Journalists offer contradictory testimonies on the impact of the press on policy decision-making. Theodora herself, despite manifest distrust, declared that “... when the national press embraces a cause, it is able to influence and bring changes, but in the case of the Balbina dam”. Whether pressure was exercised locally, regionally or nationally, “... nothing changed and the dam has been built, despite the fact that it does not generate all the energy demanded by the city of Manaus, Amazonas State. The same situation applies to Tucuruí, in the State of Pará”, she added.

Lucas disagrees and, as pointed out by Grace, believes that it is possible to mobilise public opinion. According to Lucas, “When the press is mobilised, interested, it can mobilise public opinion over even a technical matter.” A free-lance journalist who has been covering regional matters for almost three decades, Lucas is determined to demonstrate that debate established via the press can bring about change. His view is one of an individual nature. In a reference to the case of the Tucuruí dam” in the State of Pará, earlier on brought up by

13 Located 600 km from Belém, the capital of Pará State and built throughout the 1980s.
Theodora, Lucas attributes the increase of public debate around the issue to a series of articles he wrote: “I wrote about the closing of the Tucuruí floodgates everyday. A stream of public opinion was created ... everywhere you went there was discussion whether it should be closed or not; how it should close; whether there would be a drought; whether levels of salinity in the water would increase. It became a very popular debate thanks to the fact that my column discussed Tucuruí everyday. It was such a phenomena to the extent that some Eletronorte directors came to Belém and spoke with the owner of the newspaper asking that I stop writing, because they could not cope with such an attack.”

Journalists from a younger generation have also provided examples of change. In the case of Rafael, professional experience started at public institutions. It was only after his training at research institutions that he went to work at the daily press and television. Rafael, who has ten years of experience and has covered major issues throughout the region mostly for newspapers but also for television, attributes the international pressure to the fact that public opinion started to weigh more in regional matters. “The press has been able to influence public opinion and public opinion has been able to reverse policy decisions and others to be yet made.” Similar to what Mendes (1992) argues, Rafael gives what he believes is a perfect example of international pressure along with organised local civil society changing history. It is the case of a dozen dams planned for the Xingu river, one of the most important of the Amazon’s tributaries. According to Rafael, thanks to pressure in which the news media played a definite role in making the matter visible, government completely abandoned the idea. “In an incredible marketing strategy, [the Indians] by holding the meeting in February 1989, in Altamira," made government give up the idea to build the dams in the Xingu.”

Some journalists find assessing the role of the press in social change a complex matter that allows for no direct answers. They have chosen examples in Brazilian contemporary history to demonstrate the impact of the press. One more recent, though not regional, example is that of economy and the impeachment of president Fernando Collor de Mello. Nelson, who has worked in newspapers, television and private businesses, argues that the press lacks social compromise. He says: “... the press has proved to influence decisions. The recent

14 State owned power company.
15 One of the major cities in Pará State.
economic history of the country is a proof of that ... But it [the press] is not able to influence public policy because it transfers to the public an equivocal concept of government, of government system. It has also acted in a manner that lacks social compromise”.

Although a member of the older generation, Nelson does not show as a sceptical approach as his peers do. He actually aligns with Laura, who is his junior and has worked for one of the leading newspapers in the region as well as at a regional research institution. Laura says: “I do not believe in the press influencing decisions or public opinion. It becomes an instance of decision-making itself ... It goes beyond the role of mere influencing public opinion... The mass media, today, are the power ... The impeachment of Collor is evidence of that ... The news media accused, judged and condemned before society was able to decide for itself.”

So far I have analysed journalists’ views on the potential of the press to influence decision-making. Their views vary widely, ranging from the more idealistic to the more pragmatic. Journalists have both a positive approach to the press performance and a cynical opinion about the press attempting to impact regional policy. Some professionals believe that the regional press does influence and provide examples in contemporary history as evidence of their argument. Others state that the press lacks the necessary social compromise to defend regional interests. Some point out that the press has a compromise but one based on elitist interests. Others still believe that the press has become a power in itself and that it acts regardless of other constituted powers in society. Opinions vary mostly according to age and experience. There seems to be no major disagreement among journalists in Belém and Manaus. In fact they seem knowledgeable of each others’ distinct environments. There is no major disagreement among journalists working in the daily press and public institutions.

The political and economic framing of the news agenda

Of most importance in this study is the Amazon scenario as it relates to national and international, political and economic frames. Journalists were responsive to the implications of politics and the economy in the discussion of regional development.
The transition to democracy is still very much alive in the Brazilian public and professional imaginary.\textsuperscript{16} Politics is always remembered as a result of the discussion of the role of the press in the region. Similar to what Laura and Nelson had earlier pointed out, Grace chooses to refer to Brazilian recent history to contextualise the role of the press and trends in coverage and professional practices.

As acknowledged by many interviewees, the press in Brazil has played a distinctive role in crucial moments of the country's history: during the military regime, during the \textit{Abertura} years, and as recently as 1989 and 1992 in the rise and fall of Collor de Mello. For better or worse, the press, again directed by political and economic interests, played its role as arena for public debate. This was not different when the environment became the focus of coverage alongside sustainable development issues.

Orpheus, who started his career in print journalism and now works as a press consultant mostly to politicians and the private sector, appraises the international interest in environmental issues in Amazônia as one of strategic character. Though Orpheus is a unique journalist and differs from the profile of other interviewees, he presents views common to others. Different from other interviewees, Orpheus is the only journalist to work in private sector. He owns a communication agency andcirculates in both private and public sectors with ease. An experienced journalist, he is one of the most efficient "spin doctors" in contemporary Amazônia. According to Orpheus, the developed nations were responsible for themes such as that of sustainable development to come to light in the news media agenda: "The repercussion of environmental issues triggered, internationally, by Developed countries, confirms them as allies. Because of foreign countries' concerns with Amazônia, environmental issues gained attention and prominence in the news media." At the same time, Orpheus argues that the type of interests implicit in such consensus expresses the differences between First and Third Worlds views of social and economic issues. "The economic and social issues pressing a Third World country and the concerns with the environment do not carry the same significance to those in the First World ... For some it is easy to leave the forest alone, while people are starving."

\textsuperscript{16}The imaginary is seen as an ensemble of interpretations of a given community. It is the result of a collective production based on daily routines and social relations. It comprises the views, meanings and symbols attributed by a social segment or the whole of the society to a given theme. Detailed discussion in chapter III.
Similar to Orpheus's and Rafael's opinions, Antonio also acknowledges international pressure, especially in regard to Indian matters: "There is great external pressure from NGOs and the World Bank which partially funds the demarcation of Indian territories." While international interest, at one point, turned to the Amazon, a South-eastern newspaper correspondent in the region, Antonio says that locally "The Indian cause lacks prestige from the newsmedia. Nowadays, if I try to suggest coverage of an Indian theme, people reply: 'Indian? Again?'" It may be that for South-eastern newspapers, this is no longer a matter of interest. According to the findings in this study, Indian affairs have remained as one of the anchors of the local coverage of regional problems.

Covering the government: collusion and threats

If the economic implications of sustainable development issues in the Amazon are closely linked to major international interests, local politics also play a decisive role in the definition of the news agenda. A characteristic that underlies the relationship press/government is one of dependence as it implies a continuous collusion of interests. As Theodora says "The media are dependent on government." If one newspaper aligns with the State government, for instance, it publishes press releases sent by governmental organisations. The practice is described by Oscar, a reporter with one of the two newspapers analysed, as one of white license type. Oscar says that the press in Amazônia is still trapped into the white license journalism: "The newspaper publishes news as they are sent by official agencies. There is no questioning of origin, of the truthfulness of the matter, no other sources are heard..." This is an opinion shared across the sample by Manaus' Theodora, Antonio and Serafim, and Belém's Vítor and Nelson.

Nelson who has worked in the local press, in the private sector and in public institutions also agrees with the argument that the press is dependent on government. He emphasises a lack of social compromise on the part of the press and the collusion it embarks on: "There is a lack of compromise on the part of the press ... the smaller the community, the least

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17 Due to a practice of advertisement quota distribution among media.
18 The denomination comes from the fact that in Brazil official vehicles carry a white registration license plates, whereas ordinary vehicles carry plates yellow in colour.
politically developed the society ... In the Amazon region, [the press] is more dependent on government system and government decisions, because the media need government resources [financial] ...” He uses a typical example of what goes on in the Northern region: “Mining in the region: The government does not have a policy for the issue ... it allows devastation [of ecosystems] ... especially in Pará State ... and the press for not reporting enough acts in collusion with economic interests of both Government and the private sector”.

In Manaus, Theodora says that *A Crítica* has managed to keep a balance in the press as it is not supportive of the current State Government. *Amazonas em Tempo*, the second circulation newspaper in the city, is pro government and only publishes positive news about Amazonino Mendes, the Governor. *A Crítica* has had its days of close links with government, during the Gilberto Mestrinho administration as demonstrated in the content analysis. Serafim agrees that *A Crítica* is setting an example as he analyses the country’s recent history, when the press release was news. “The more newsrooms and editors are conscious, the less there is space for press releases”.

Antonio, as the only outsider in the sample, provides a different view. According to him, practices of threat and revenge are common in Manaus. There are those who warn against any negative coverage of government as Antonio testifies. A newcomer, the reporter was told, soon after his arrival, to be “Careful. This is a powerful group. They can harm you …” in a reference to the current Amazonas State Government. “Everybody is afraid of government, of what the governor can do,” Antonio. For him, such political practices result in lack of access to information “... as it has happened to *A Crítica*. The newspaper “... has no access to government information all the way from the police station to the Governor,” Antonio says.

Although it is still possible to argue for the press as public arenas of debate, due to its complexity and lack of democratic tradition, any analysis of the Amazonian press has to take political and economic interests into consideration. Nevertheless, the fact that professionals in the region acknowledge such problems, is in itself a demonstration of concern and awareness.
Official sources and accountability

“The most reliable source is the official source for the newspapers in Pará,” If there was any conflict involving Indians, instead of interviewing them, “the first thing they [the journalists] did was to interview the FUNAI" superintendent. The victims might have been in hospitals, anywhere, it did not matter, they would first hear the official source”, Bernardo says. Coverage of the Amazon by the regional press is no exception to the observations gathered by studies in the field of communication. For those from both inside and outside the region, similar to what happens in many other environments, covering issues in Amazônia, means mostly relying on official sources. The building of a source circle becomes even more difficult for those who come from out of the region.

Lucas recognises public service as his major source. “I have learned that among the medium layers of public service ... there are honest, competent and hard working people .... They never take personal advantage.” Here, there is a distinction between official sources and official sources. For some, official sources are those with authority, invested in power and ready to acknowledge the press. In this specific case, Lucas is describing those who have information, but remain unnamed simply serving as a reference to identify information. But even journalists who corner authorities, are ready to please their sources in order to cultivate their loyalty. Only Lucas and Ruby acknowledge a practice of favour exchange: “If the source is a good source but a vain one, you can publish a note in the social diaries ...” This registry section of the newspaper where public figures appear for reasons of the most various origins i.e. birthday, marriage, anniversary as well as professional achievement, is much relied upon to spark interest on issues. According to Lucas, the publication of such notices opens doors. Ruby acknowledges the practice at the press office of a public institution where she works. Lucas also acknowledges exchange of favours. “I never exchange information for a favour in the press, but I can exchange it for a favour outside the press”.

19 National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), the Brazilian government agency in charge with Indian affairs.
Economic powers and policy-making

“The press in Amazônia depends upon groups which have benefited from fiscal incentives as far back as the occupation of the region started in late 1960s, early 1970s. What force has the media to influence public policy if it has to respond to these economic groups’ interests, of this or that traditional family... What public policy can the media influence in this system?” David asks agonising over what he believes is society’s inability to fight back oligarchic powers. Experienced, David has seen much in his profession. Obliged to move from the hinterland to the capital of the State thanks to threats to his life as a result of his reporting, David is sceptical. Although he, along with Pedro, Nelson, Vítor and other experienced reporters in Belém and Manaus, acknowledges the press potential to fight back hidden interests, he emphasises the forces working against such a potential.

Hegemonic interests discussed in the literature (Gitlin, 1980; McCoy, 1988; Palmer, 1993; Reeves, 1993; Barbero, 1993) are obvious to those who cover and attribute frames to Amazonian news. Vítor voices the dilemma: “Interests are well spread in the news room, in the news agencies. Though we acknowledge the press as arena for public debate, we cannot say that it reflects that practice in democratic environments. Matters that should be more discussed are not because of economic problems.”

Economic interests are also reflected in matters regarding policy. And it is again the more experienced group of journalists who explain the scenario. David and Paulo agree with Nelson who says that there is no mining policy. According to Paulo: “There is no health policy, no environmental policy, no welfare policy.” David, who has consistently covered mining issues in the Tapajós river region, of most importance in the Amazon basin, despises the incipient coverage of environmental issues even before and especially after 1992. He says that “... the economic crisis during the Collor government hit the region so hard” that “[it] distracted the press attention from environmental issues”.

Lack of attention is not an exclusive attitude of the news media. Government acts in a schizophrenic manner towards the region. It sometimes acts as if the region is unimportant and, at times, emphasises a discourse that attributes the Amazon with its due significance.
An example comes from Amazonas State, where Theodora exposes the contradiction: "Amazonas is a power in itself, full of [natural] resources. Since when has the Federal Government invested here? Never... Why is there no economic interest? Because it is expensive and it is far [from the centre of decision-making]... Amazonas is the tail of the country."

Belém and Manaus, Pará State and Amazonas State do not differ much in the treatment they receive from government. Neither do they differ in the treatment the press dispenses to issues that carry hidden or open economic and political interests. It is quite clear from journalists' testimonies that the political and socio-economic scenario along side other factors shapes news agenda and news framing.

**Sustainable development, politics and social movements: the setting of an agenda**

**The meaning of sustainable development and the press coverage**

Stemming from what Peet & Watts (1993) attribute as the "contradictory character of relations between societies and natural environments" (p. 248), an anthropocentric approach to matters of the environment and sustainable development is revealed in journalists' perceptions from both cities and working in the private and public sector.

Grace allows no doubt about where her view stands: "It is from the perspective of mankind that the environment has to be thought about ... The animal is important, the tree is important, but the man is more important ..." In line with Orpheus' previously expressed concern, Grace adds that "It is very important that environmental balance is achieved as long as it does not impede progress." For Orpheus, "One has to cut [trees] in order to develop. It has to be done ... without devastation, but it has to be done. If a tree is slashed then one has to ensure that the whole of it is used, transforming the tree in money without damage to the environment."
Serafim also voices concerns about the implications of development in the region for human communities. Acknowledging the importance of a healthy relationship with the environment, he emphasises that it must work to the benefit of mankind: “The concept of sustainable development has many implications. Development, for whom? For mankind. We are to maintain a productive relationship with nature ... a relationship that does not condemn us to death, hunger ... in Amazônia.”

While some make clear where their environmental views lie, others such as Nelson are more concerned with the definition of concepts. Yet, others such as Paulo and Vítor fear reinforcement of long standing myths about Amazônia. For Nelson, “Sustainable development is a new standard of living, a new concept of economy practised through the rational use of raw materials from the forest, the river, the mangroves, the floodplains.” In a more pragmatic approach, Paulo and Vítor voice worries about reinforcement of a myth, that sees Amazônia as a sanctuary. Vítor says: “It is necessary to stop looking at the region as a sanctuary or else as a mere producer of goods and services. If the latter is the case, then such ability should be directed to the benefit of the populations, to diminishing misery and poverty.” Vítor goes further to acknowledge new concepts that, according to him, have helped change that view. He says that the concept’s definition is useful to introduce rational thinking and undermine myths: “If the concept of biomass is not a popular concept, at least it expresses ... a more rational value than world’s lung or ecological sanctuary did in regard to Amazônia ... and now we have sustainable development. What is it? Not many people know...”

Paulo says that “Amazônia has always been news outside the region itself. But it has been under the perspective of the exotic: the forest, the rivers, the tourism potential and the mineral potential.” That also contributes to news values well ingrained in the press such as that of sensationalism. Grace argues that “If there is a language [exclusive to the press], that is the language of scandal. In order for something to gain importance, it has to have a spectacular and sensational side to it.”

It is possible that because “Journalists most often speak the discourse of power and knowledge produced by those in charge” (Peters, 1993, p. 83) and, in this specific case, not
only that of the authorities, but also the discourse of scientists, the concept of sustainable development lacks better explanation on the part of the regional media. The fact that sustainable development practices are in place in the region since ancient times by endogenous peoples of Amazônia did not matter when the new concept was recently introduced. Under such denomination and operationalised from a perspective alien to the Amazonian reality, the concept represents an even greater challenge for those who communicate and build meaning of regional issues.

When considering the anthropocentric view of journalists as they approach regional matters, it is useful to recall Hall’s (1978) argument that the media are only “secondary definers” of a news agenda and of meaning attributed to social problems. It is the sources of news who constitute “primary definers” (p. 57). Though, no interviews have been conducted with sources, it is possible to extend such a view to those whose discourses are heard in the regional press. As discussed in the content analysis section, the variety of discourses is allowed by a journalistic practice that reveals a variety of fora.20

The increased democratic practice in government and the decentralisation of power are important for both the environmental policy-making and the redefinition of communications policies as Lima (1993a, 1993b & 1996) has specifically suggested for the Brazilian scenario. This opinion has been earlier supported by journalists in Belém and Manaus. Vítor, Bernardo, Serafim, João have all emphasised the need to democratise the media.

**Politics of the concept**

Apart from the anthropocentrism revealed in their own perspective, when discussing concepts and language used in the press, journalists also present the audiences as one of their main concerns. Their main interrogation is the public’s ability to understand concepts. How to deal with specialised language and how to make it understandable to the readers and the public in general is what haunt journalists working in Amazônia.

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20 See content and discourse analyses in chapters V and VII.
While some journalists concentrate on the media ability to give meaning to specialised types of information, others seem more preoccupied with public participation in debates of social issues within and outside the media arenas. Bernardo believes that “The readers lack and demand more information. Readers in general are becoming interested in the news only. I have the impression that journalistic debate has lost its power.” “A press such as the French,” Bernardo says, “brings analytical articles and establishes a forum of discussion. As for ours, I am not certain it does that”. Alia, who works for a university, believes that the press has been able to transform the concept of sustainable development in order that the public may understand it. Bernardo, who has experience of working both in the press and public institutions, disagrees completely. He says that the ordinary citizen on the street has “no idea whatsoever” of what concepts such as sustainable development means. According to Bernardo, citizens “so concerned with the day to day survival in a country with great inequalities of wealth, cannot be bothered to understand such terminology, let alone take part in public debate of policy-making. Not to mention that, regardless of any manifested interest, they have no access to such a debate”.

As Bernardo concentrates on what the audiences are interested in and actually manage to take from news, Grace is more concerned with the efforts by journalists to make concepts more understandable. While Bernardo is critical of the needs of audiences, Grace is concerned with what journalists can do. This might be explained as she works in the public sector and has to make sure she delivers information understandable to both journalists and audiences. She acknowledges that there has been some change in the way journalists treat specialised language.

João, who besides being a journalist, trains new professionals, also senses positive changes. “We did not find news items on Amazonian issues presented with the courage we find today. There have been both a quantitative and qualitative change in the discussion of regional affairs. As João is mostly active in the university environment, he tends to attribute such changes to the role academia has played in preparing professionals. For him, “The role of the university, of academia, offering a better prepared professional has facilitated a change in discourse [one that considers science and the environment as themes worth of coverage] in the press.”
Of all the sources of divergence, this constitutes the one of major disagreement among interviewees. Roberto, Nelson and Bernardo, who have traditionally worked in newsrooms and non-academic public institutions, blame university training as the source of all mistakes made by young journalists. They say the university has been unable to prepare human resources needed by the media. A further discussion on journalistic training will follow. Nelson sums up the difficulties: “Government does not generate news, information; media businesses show no interest; journalists do not attempt to get better qualification and lack determination in a more personal project; and the University does not respond sufficiently nor correctly in training professionals.”

Besides problems with availability of well-trained professionals, the ability to define concepts lies with the political demands on the news agenda. Paulo insists that the use of sustainable development terminology implies an overall change in political attitude. As an example, Paulo says: “The timber entrepreneurs started [in the early 1990s] to feel the pressure ... and decided to bring specialists into their staff. Through their [entrepreneurs] union and association, they are trying to change their image and show that they are interested in protecting the forest.” Both the private sector and the government appropriated the new terminology. For Paulo, exploitation of natural resources is no longer a matter of economics only, as, for him, “authorities acknowledge the environmental aspect of the matter and actually give it priority”. As earlier discussed, Paulo and David are among the few who agree upon trends in current policy which addresses Amazonian issues from an improved planning perspective.

Paulo’s assessment of the rise in environmental coverage holds the political nature of the newly introduced concept of sustainable development and the lack of understanding by journalists responsible for misleading audiences. Paulo also pointed out sources’ equivocal understanding of the information they are providing the press with. “Sustainable development is a political issue today and regards quality of life. It is from the use of sustainable development concept that newspapers have been able to have a better understanding of the environment.”
As demonstrated in the content analysis some regional political leadership generated controversy with their views and interpretations of sustainable development. Serafim, one of the interviewed journalists, points out that "...a most courageous attitude of Governor Gilberto Mestrinho, allowed for some concepts to be better known by the general public. I believe that, to a certain extent, he was very much responsible for the wave of sustainable development debate. Before that, the terminology suffered from being talked about by economists only." Serafim's lack of criticism of Mestrinho demonstrates the most far right wing political perspective among the journalists interviewed. It is interesting to notice that his assessment of Mestrinho is evidence that in Serafim's point of view whoever takes possession of language by its mere use is responsible for its popularisation. This explains and supports the observations in the content analysis that sectors which had no tradition of usage of the term, let alone the practices implicit in the concept, appear in the press as defenders of the tenets of the new ideology.

Social movements

It has been argued that the rise of social movements in Latin America and in Brazil (Escobar & Alvarez, 1992), and in the Amazon (Castro, 1992; Schmink, 1992), in particular, created conditions for a more ample regional debate in media arenas especially of issues relating to the environment and development. Journalists' views collected for this study provide the professional perspective on the matter and reveal that journalists are aware of this rather complex scenario.

All interviewed agree upon a boom of the debate on environmental issues from 1990 onwards. The regional press started to report on the environment, more frequently, though unsystematically, from that year onwards. The trend is that, though reported in the 1980s, the environment became more visible in media coverage as it gained stronger scientific support. The framing of news about the region acquires scientific evidence and begins to emphasise the environment as the centre point of regional problems. By then, social movements were also better prepared to provide media with information. According to David, Paulo and Laura, news in the 1990s stopped being pure denunciation of regional problems to acquire scientific support based on research produced about the region and mostly done in the
region. Most of the experienced journalists such as Lucas, Nelson, Paulo, David and Theodora, felt a need to relate as far back as the 1970s to give a more comprehensive and historic overview of how the region has been covered. It traces history and provided further context and background to this study.

According to Laura and in agreement with what Nelson has said, coverage started out by targeting “the Great Projects run in parallel to the increased land ownership problems. As for the environment, it was inserted in the regional news agenda as recent as 1990.” Lucas fights this passionately. He accuses those who make this argument of “lacking memory”. He says that since the 1970s there has been coverage of Amazônia in regards to the environmental impact of major infra-structure projects such as Transamazônica and the construction of dams such as Tucuruí and Balbina. He cites the example\(^2\) of a national magazine *Realidade*\(^2\) which in 1972 published a special edition dedicated to Amazônia.

“The strengthening of human rights organisations, environmental organisations .... and the scientific community’s greater willingness to pass information to the media” are some of the factors, according to Vítor, that provided the conditions for the rise of criticism against major infra-structure projects being carried out in the region. For Vítor, the press is prompted by social movements to cover certain issues. Vítor argues that the newsmedia only targets certain issues due to pressure from society. Despite setting the agenda, the press does so “pushed on by social movements”. As a result many of the projects which were criticised in the 1980s, “proved the necessity of more extensive public discussion ... especially in the case of Balbina [dam], where the cost/benefit analysis ... has demonstrated an enormous loss for society”,\(^2\) Vítor adds. According to Vítor, if news media set the agenda, it is the social movements that trigger the items in said agenda. The journalist sees that actors in civil society are responsible for inserting social problems in the news agenda. Vítor also sees that the press is more responsive than pro-active when compared to social movements.

\(^2\) He had previously used the same example in an interview given to Oliveira, 1990. 
\(^2\) *Realidade*, Year VI, n. 67, published by Editora Abril. 
\(^2\) Damage mostly caused to the Waimiri-Atroari Indian populations who had their villages submerged, had to be transferred and most certainly lost territory. Fauna and flora were also damaged, where, most of the time construction went ahead regardless of environmental impact assessment. No time was allowed for inventories and studies between the time of the decision to build the dam and the inundation of the area.
Though agreeing with Vítor, Roberto is more critic of the press. Roberto accuses the press of "... arriving at matters too late, missing out on the opportunity to indicate issues, denounce beforehand, to anticipate matters." This only reinforces Vítor's view that it was only after the organisation and consolidation of "movements for the protection of flora and fauna and human rights in the region that such projects started to be more discussed within the press." Such an increased debate resulted, according to Vítor, from a combination of factors, where the "scientific community also played a major role as it provided more information to the press ..." The fact that the press started questioning the construction of the Balbina dam "only after suffering pressure from society" explains, according to Vítor, that "the newspaper [A Critica] had no interest in democratising the information, to say the least, at a time when there was information among the scientific community that the project was not to go ahead."

While there are journalists who hold the social movements responsible for bringing such matters into the press arena, others place such responsibility on individuals. Joana bases the construction of a press agenda on the efforts of individuals. According to her, having worked for the past ten years at one of the most important research institutions in the region, she cannot understand why O Liberal does not have a science or environment beat or page. "If issues emerge and develop, it is exclusively due to reporters' initiative based on experience and source relationship," Joana argues.

If events, among other factors, mark the endurance of coverage of certain matters in the press arena, individual journalists in the region are responsible for the discussion of science, environment and, ultimately, development issues in a longer and steady basis. It is Vítor's and Joana's arguments that if the press has its interests, so do journalists. Given that a lot of the coverage is based on individual journalists' decision, subjectivity is a major factor in the carrying capacity of themes. In support to that, Theodora says, "Whether there was a science page or not, we could always accommodate the stories in whichever page [usually local/city news pages]. We always managed to bring endogenous scientific work into regional news."

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24It was not until 1996 that the newspaper began its science and environment page.
Alongside examples so far provided by journalists, a more recent example of the potential of the press to establish a policy agenda is the theory that similar to what has been happening in Mexico with the Zapatista guerrilla in Chiapas, the most southern portion of Pará State will experience the same with the moves and occupation of considerable areas by members of the Landless Workers Movement (MST). As demonstrated in the content analysis, the regional press had signalled the matter in the first half of the 1990s.

Bernardo says that “The rise of the environment in the news agenda has played down matters of land ownership in the region that nevertheless persist to be of serious and dramatic proportion as recent incidents have shown”. According to him, “Matters related to the environment suffocated the coverage of the agrarian conflict in the newspaper pages. We have also had more urgent issues such as the design of the new Constitution [1989], the impeachment of the president [Collor], the Eco 92. Maybe agrarian conflict only becomes news when 60 people are killed as they were in Corumbiara. If one person is killed, then, it is not newsworthy.” This is indeed an analysis that anticipated more conflict. The interview took place in August 95 and in April 96, Southern Pará and the World saw one of the worst yet confrontations between police forces and landless people in contemporary Brazil. Rural workers blocked the main and only road in the region to demonstrate against the lack of land. Nineteen rural workers were killed and at least another dozen women and children are feared to have had their bodies hidden by police.

Bernardo pointed out that land conflicts which dominated the news coverage in the 1980s, along with Indian matters, seems to have given way to matters considered “greener” in the 1990s. As Antonio said earlier Indian matters “lack prestige” in the newspapers agenda.

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26 Rural workers with no property to cultivate who move into non-productive land part of the extensive estates - *latifúndios* - for which Brazil as a whole and, in Amazônia, Pará State, in particular, has become quite known for.
27 The first time I heard the comparison between the Brazilian situation and the Mexican movement, was in July 1995, in Manaus, from Antonio who presented yet another example, regarding the coverage of conflicts in Indian territories in the Amazonian State of Roraima, where the governor is said to have declared that he only rules over 12 percent of the State. The remaining 88 percent are already officially demarcated Indian territories or are being fought for by them. Roraima’s case was also signalled in the coverage in the first half of the decade as analysed separately. The State Governor among other political leaders sustained a campaign against the demarcation of Indian territory extending even more an ongoing land conflict.
28 Assassination of rural workers in Corumbiara, Santana do Araguaia, in 1995, and Eldorado do Carajás, in 1996, the latter located in Pará most southern and troubled portion.
News production about the Amazon

Journalistic assessment of regional press coverage

There has been a considerable amount of criticism about how the media in general covers Amazônia. As a rule, news items have been found to lack context. Narrow framing of news is seen by Laura as "Matters are treated in a most isolated form. There has hardly been any effort to bridge regional matters with overall frameworks ..." Isis, a reporter with one of the two newspapers analysed in this study, agrees and criticises a common argument among media ownership that "... items about the environment are not regarded as good commodity in the news business."

An added problem to narrow framing is the presentation of concepts in the news. In Bernardo’s opinion, "Concepts work in an isolated manner: concept on one side, practice on another. There is no way to treat concepts, but to translate them into practice. How to put sustainable development into practice? How to put nature at work to assure subsistence for the poor? ... Even for those in the press, the ideas of sustainable development are difficult to deal with."

For Isis, who has experience in both the newsroom and the university environment, the local press has given superficial coverage of Amazonian issues. A political activist, Isis agrees with Nelson who says that the press lacks social compromise, but for her, it is also "providing coverage [that is] misleading of matters". In her opinion, the national press presents a different situation. According to her, "There has been some improvement in the national press coverage due to some journalists being interested in practices of science journalism." Nevertheless, "The misinformation and mistakes in news about the Amazon are still strong and investigation usually does not go beyond trivia." Isis assesses regional coverage as "non critical, [comprising] shallow news pieces that mostly use no more than one source. It seems as if there is only one source worth of trust, when, in fact, it [the press] can count on alternative views to counter argue official information. But it is only if the

journalist is a professional who is critical and acts ethically that he breaks through such barriers." Isis and Vitor were the journalists who more openly acknowledged the role of social movements influencing the definition of a regional news agenda. They are both from Manaus and of all interviewed journalists demonstrated a greater level of criticism sharply associated with their own activism. This is not to deny that other journalists lacked in criticism or in recognition of social actors’ ability to influence the setting of the news agenda.

José, who is currently working as a press officer in a State Government agency but has been covering regional issues for radio and television since the early 1980s, shares Laura’s and Isis’s criticism about the lack of context in regional news. For him, Amazonian matters are “... treated in a very isolated manner. We hardly see any connection being made between matters that are ultimately consequences of international politics and markets such as the exploitation of mineral resources.” Although the content analysis pointed out occasions where such a connection was present, overall the coverage is far from reaching the analytical character social problems demand.

Information about the Amazon lacks context, background, history and most of all alternative voices to those of official sources. In matters of selection of sources, Serafim endorses Isis’ opinion as he emphasises the importance and the need to diversify sources, “leaving the vice of having official sources as the only ones able to speak to the press ...other sources need to be selected ... Such sources are specially those who do not take part in the formal powers,30 CIMI³, CNBB,3 the unions ... the NGOs in general.”

Regional cultural differences are another area of friction. Orpheus argues that the continuous migration in the region does not allow people to identify themselves as citizens of the region3 and therefore they act as if disconnected with reality, living through days in order to find means of survival. “People do not perceive themselves as citizens, do not realise their role in the life of the region. This is a result of the process of occupation with which

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30 Emphasis added.
31 Missionary Council of Indigenous Population (CIMI).
32 Brazilian Bishops’ National Council (CNBB).
33 A point of absolute relevance to matters of land ownership and hardly ever addressed by the media as it harms major economic interests in the region.
Amazônia has been faced in the past 20 years in the name of development.” The lack of a sense of belonging affects relations at all levels and is a factor in the way journalists perceive local and national coverage as much as those from outside the region perceive Amazônia. Many journalistic practices reflect one way or another the differences discussed above. Sensationalism is a universal characteristic in the press and prejudice against the North increases misunderstandings.

As evidence of the fact that misunderstanding and differences are not confined to those outside the region, coverage is found to have been produced within the region and still present distorted information and incompatible accounts of the reality in Amazônia. As Theodora points out, “Some journalists are so accustomed to the situation that no longer see or find or even try to search for anything worth covering that is of importance to the region.”

As discussed in chapter II, the newspapers considered as having national circulation are those produced in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. But every major city in the country has its own newspaper. Some differences, similarities and overall relationships between the news produced regionally and that produced for the national press were revealed in the interviews. As expected, journalists pointed out that the national press has a different approach to the production of news about the Amazon as it lacks a better understanding of regional issues.

Considerable criticism by interviewees is centred on Globo which mostly implies the television network, but also the newspaper, O Globo, among other media which comprise the whole of the largest communication chain of the same name in Latin America. Criticism is also directed at the coverage produced by Folha de São Paulo, the biggest circulation paper in the country.

Cláudia, who at the time of the interview worked for a research institution in Manaus, acknowledges efforts made by both the regional and the national press, but points out a series of problems which she has been faced with for reasons of untruthful, sensational pieces broadcast or published by Globo network media. She believes that Folha de São Paulo treats matters in a more serious, in depth and responsible fashion: “Reporting is more
elaborate with citations and references, more consistent.” Cláudia attributes this to the fact that “The press in São Paulo and Rio, has science beats, .... give better treatment to news ... [and that] Those who produce news are better prepared for the job.” For her, the whole problem of bad coverage of regional affairs lies with unqualified journalists. “There is really a lack of professional training here,” Cláudia concludes.

Theodora is another of the interviewees to criticise Globo. Her comments are directed at the “emotional and shameful” Globo coverage of the seasonal floods in the Amazon basin. “If Globo covers the flood, what is it going to say? Same thing: ‘Poor ribeirinhos!’ They are going to die.” In agreement with the point made by Orpheus about regional identity, for Theodora, this is an example of a typical reaction of those unfamiliar with the culture of the region who tend to portray matters from their urban perspective. This is not to say that there are no problems and that there is no need for better planning, infra-structure and aid to approach the population in times of floods, nor to say that there are no journalists who do their job in a proper manner. But these are exceptions. In A Crítica, for example, the phenomenon is portrayed as “Flood: a nature’s ritual”. Despite the lack of assistance to those affected and a better infra-structure to help the situation, the phenomenon is a recurrent event.

Anita, who at the time of the interview worked for a research institution in Belém for more than ten years, disagrees with Theodora and others. Anita does not think that it is only the press outside the region that provides distorted accounts. She agrees with Cláudia that it is the local journalists who are incapable of doing a good job. “The local press always treats regional matters in a sensational manner, with no responsibility, no fact-checking. They do not have enough knowledge of the issue, of what is actually happening nor about what the source is talking about”, Anita says.

Roberto also draws a parallel between the regional and the South-eastern press: “Because Amazônia is a very diffuse concept, one sees a limited influence of the regional press in the

34 Rather surprising argument since Folha has acquired a format with short, summarised news accounts similar to USA Today.
35 Inhabitants of the margin of the rivers in the Basin. Who move up and down from higher lands to the flood plains, according to the river’s regime.
36 A Crítica, 30/3/93.
solution of problems. I am not sure the press in the region has influence as does the press in Rio and São Paulo which has a different profile ... The private sector there has a different concept of what the press represents, not only in terms of marketing and publicity, but how ready they [private sector representatives] are to deal with public opinion ... The press in Amazônia is far from devising a role for itself and from realising the best way to relate to public opinion.”

João says that among other difficulties faced by the press in the region and more specifically in Manaus is that: “The mentality of the entrepreneurs is not daring.” There is no need to make much effort because there is a comfortable way out: “The press in general has transformed itself into a space for publicity and to meet audience demands for national news items which overrule everything else... I am afraid that this phenomenon also applies to the regional press... I see A Crítica as an example as it is better structured, business-driven. There is yet another example in the city, the Amazonas em Tempo created to defend the thinking of the Manaus Free Trade Zone business.”

Along the same lines, Roberto says that “… news coverage has become a commercial process restricted by the newsroom budget.” This is a relatively new approach and concept in the regional press. Roberto is one of the first journalists in the region to perform a managerial role in the newsroom. The entrepreneurial approach is due to professionalisation and to market demands as family-owned companies want to survive. It was not always like that. In the 1930s and 1940s, newspapers had more of a political connotation serving more as a tribune, than a commercial purpose as it happens nowadays.

Besides media compromises with the market and general politics, aspects of internal organisation are also considered as journalists assess problems inherent to news production. Bernardo attributes most difficulties to the industrial nature of the press. “The industrial production of newspapers is a terrible thing. Everything has a set time, everything has to be done, preferably, ahead of time ... and news as a result is [throughout the process] faulty. There is no concern in following up news because of the urge to cover new facts each and every day.”
As discussed before, news is constrained by the formats available for its presentation. David says that the content of news is disregarded to the benefit of format. "If the news item is short with a sensational taste and a nice photo, it stands a much better chance of being published than an in-depth article on the logging industry in Pará, for instance. Unless it has been 'ordered', an item on the issue [logging] has no chance [of being published]. When have you seen a lengthy article on export?", he asks.

A crucial point for the coverage of the region resides precisely in the complexity of the concept of Amazônia as Roberto pointed out. The multi-faceted region with a culture of its own and a dimension that has historically threatened national identity is not portrayed in full in the media. To have regional issues and identity suffocated or dispersed in a coverage that does not reflect the urgency of Amazonian matters serves a number of interests. On the journalistic side, the impossibility of relating to alien values makes journalists from outside the region face even greater difficulties than those from there. If journalists from the region have many limitations in their coverage of Amazonian issues, those from outside find it even more challenging. But as a result of professional demand, journalists unfamiliar with the region report about local problems and run into the potential danger of distorting the facts.3

To aggravate matters, according to Vítor, "The national newspapers ... Folha de São Paulo, O Globo, O Estado de São Paulo ... live an identity crisis. They are neither national, paulistas nor carioca. But neither A Critica nor O Liberal comprise an Amazonian press." In fact, coverage of regional news is orientated towards the territory where each newspaper is located, i.e. Pará and Amazonas. The newspapers do not maintain correspondents in strategic areas of the region, therefore, do not cover the region as a whole. Lucas and Nelson agree that it is impossible to cover matters from a regional perspective without correspondents. The only way it has been possible to publish news from elsewhere

37 Pará State is a major exporter of raw goods such as mineral resources, timber and the so-called Brazil nut, known in Brazil as Pará nut where they originally come from there.
38 A Channel 4, 22/5/96, Dispatches, focused on logging activities in the Amazon. The crew followed logs illegally extracted in Indian reserves in Southern Pará all the way to England. The reporter for what can be interpreted as a lack of understanding of local mechanisms, completely missed when the illegal timber became legal in what is a well spread practice of forging documents in order to legalise the product so it can be taken out of the forest into the markets.
39 Born in São Paulo.
40 Born in Rio de Janeiro.
in the region is by using news agency material which is a setback as they do not necessarily reveal a regional perspective of the problems.

The involvement of communities in decision-making has been pointed out in a number of studies conducted in a variety of scenarios. Citizenship is emphasised and recognised as actors assume new roles in the debate to identify solutions to social problems. Among the myths built around the Amazon, Grace reminds us of the frequent misleading portrayal of locals. According to the Manaus journalist, "The Amazonian citizen is taken in the political scenario from a folkloric point of view. For them [those outside the region], the Amazonians are colourful and beautiful, exuberant and folkloric. The Amazonian has no political weight, and very little economic contribution, so he does not take part in the overall panel of Federal Government interests." Though coverage may still be discriminatory of certain actors such as the ethnic groups, this is an assessment that finds no evidence in news coverage of the early 1990s. This is especially true considering that the press cultivates the ability to report on new leadership rising to influence decision-making. Grace in this respect lines up with Lucas, discrediting any of the endogenous moves to bring about changes in benefit of the region.

The lack of political will to make the Amazon a heavy-weight influencing the country's policies is a major point of agreement among the interviewees. A useful parallel is drawn by Grace who compares the Amazonian scenario to that of the North-eastern region of Brazil and its annual droughts. She says that coverage of Amazônia is fragmented when compared to the coverage of the drought in the Northeast. There is a very strong political element in this situation. North-eastern leadership has been far stronger than that of Amazônia as pointed out by Rafael who says that local politicians, members of Congress, are far less articulate and able to influence decision-making in benefit of the region than those of the North-eastern states. Rafael supports the view by saying that "local politicians fight among themselves more than they have been able to raise interest in federal government and the nation as a whole toward Amazônia."

Another problem that affects the coverage of regional issues is the definition of the role of the press. While some insist on the educational role of the press as an alternative to deal with
Amazonian matters, others emphasise a political role. "A newspaper should publish more environmental news," Vítor suggests given that the environment "carries strong political significance." For Bernardo, it should cultivate its educational role: "If there is interest on the part of the press, it is necessary that it be in the vanguard of campaigns and ..., this should be done in an educational manner, so even the children understand the urgency and complexity of matters."

Cultural differences

Apart from the complexity of the region itself, journalists also believe problems in the South-eastern papers' coverage of the region can be attributed to cultural factors. Differences in culture between North and South become increasingly obvious. If at one stage in history, most differences were those between East and West, there has been a shift of a struggle between North and South mostly debated from the perspectives of development and widely debated in Rio 92.

The scenario is one where Latin America, Africa and Asia negotiate and often confront Northern Hemisphere countries. Within Brazil, this is a historical characteristic and also a major source of debate: there, the South is developed and the North underdeveloped. The South and Southeast regions are far more industrialised and receive greater attention in the form of investment and provision of funds from federal government than those in the North, North-east and Central-western regions. This is a historical factor due to how the occupation first occurred as settlers came to Brazil in Colonial times. The situation creates an environment of non-understanding and considerable prejudice especially at the way the South sees the North. The journalistic culture is very much enhanced by this underlying difference in Brazilian cultures. As part of journalistic practices, ignorance is overcome by means of arrogance. It is possible to identify this characteristic given that a considerable number of journalists interviewed for this study talk about the other journalists, excluding themselves from the criticism.

Peculiarities exclusive to the region "break through codes and formal structures of communication", Paulo says. If reality as well as science are dynamic, the proportion
acquired by such dynamics in the region is quite formidable. In a scenario of continuous change, the very particularities of the region support the communication structures not as excuses nor as explanation, but as ways of understanding the processes the region is experiencing. The continuous process of change demands that those trying to make sense of the trends and those communicating them need to learn how to benefit from what is endogenous and original. Antonio suggested that Folha de São Paulo has set an example and established patterns to improve journalism. Whether it is an example to be followed or not, it seems to be a question journalists ought to ask themselves. Regional journalism as other areas have done can only improve, as has already been demonstrated in the analysis, by searching for its own path, one that may better suit the purposes of making sense out of the disordered scenario of Amazônia.

This is far from being a consensus in a context where some ignore local sources and accuse them of incompetence, such as Lucas does. Lucas says that “The insensibility, the lethargy and the torpor of the sociedade de fronteira [frontier society], better called colonial” is unbelievable, according to him. “It [Amazonian society] is unable to transfer its perception... to public opinion”. As long as this is the very interpretation that one makes of oneself as part of that society, processes of understanding are but non-reachable goals. Instead of labelling society and acting as if in a superior fashion, it seems that a more coherent attitude would be to identify within the distorted picture those who are able and can contribute to the debate. Gathering forces, rather than creating confrontation can only be a more strategic, if not intelligent, approach in finding solutions to issues long lacking resolve in Amazônia.

João hopes that “we can understand better the [specialised] discourse so we can practice journalism with more knowledge, freedom to be critical and ability to analyse Amazônia herself." And as a result, make this debate resonate elsewhere...“

**Trends in the coverage**

Despite any scepticism and harsh criticism, journalists are able to point out positive changes in the coverage in the recent Amazonian past. Nelson provides an overview of trends in the

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42 Amazônia is a feminine word.
coverage from the point of view of a news producer: “Regardless of all difficulties faced by
the local press, it has evolved since the 1970s. I believe that the organisation of civil society
through NGOs and government organisms targeting the environment has demanded a more
accurate type of news, helping to create a new image for research and even institutions such
as the Goeldi Museum ...” This reveals that not only the private sector was fighting to
change its image, but also public institutions were as well.

Another trend observed by Nelson is one of a possibility of diversifying sources. While in
the past, journalists had to rely on official sources, according to him, now they can count on
a greater variety of non-official sources. In this, he endorses Serafim who mentioned the
need to reach out for sources outside the formal powers. Nelson notices that the press has
begun to acknowledge these other sources: “What was published then [late 70s]? The
official version, except for two or three other sources that were able to provide alternative
information... At that time the NGOs did not generate environmental information as they do
today...” It is not only the press that is beginning to take notice of these new actors. The
actors themselves have improved their strategies to approach the press.

The diversification of sources is not on its own a solution to improve the coverage of
regional affairs. Ruby questions the journalists’ ability to understand what they cover. Given
the limitations, journalists encounter a wider range of issues and approach a diverse set of
actors, but they remain loyal to the official sources. In Ruby’s view this is still a current
practice: “With very rare exceptions, our colleagues do not have sufficient knowledge to
cover [science and the environment] in depth...they limit themselves to the official source. In
truth, they do not have the appropriate professional skills nor count on infra-structure to do
so. And the businesses are not willing to invest in better training.” Nelson endorses her view
and recalls a national debate about government decision to go ahead with a surveillance
system known as SIVAM43 to be installed in the Amazônia: “Although there was a meeting
in Belém of the professionals involved in the matter, the local press ran a mere registry of

43 SIVAM is a US$ 1.4 billion military surveillance system to be set up in the region. Planned by the Federal Government
Strategy Affairs Secretariat (SAE) and Military Ministries, it combines a telecommunications network that receives satellite
images as well as those produced by radars in aircraft and on the ground. According to the authorities, the system’s main
objective resides in the space traffic monitoring, and control of deforestation, illegal mining, any other form of devastating
practices as well as drug traffic. O Liberal, 30/8/93.
the event. This is a direct result from the lack of training and individual professional limitations."

Despite difficulties and limitations attributed to the press, journalists are ready to acknowledge positive trends in the professional practices and in the resulting public debate in the news media. Carlos points out a general trend that, though of a subtle nature, ultimately influences the production of science and environment news in Amazônia. According to him, "Throughout the past ten years, there has been a boom of specialised publications. Others already circulating have had the opportunity to be consolidated. This, to some extent, improves the whole of the process, giving more confidence to sources in the fields of environment, ecology, research."^[4]

One of the producers of Academia Amazônia, Emile says that they can afford the time "...to submit the text to the source," for her evaluation. I prefer it that way ... But it is still a matter of continually understanding the material and trying to find the best way to convey the information which will be as good as is our understanding of the issue is."

**Limitations in the press coverage**

There are several nuances to the limitations and difficulties observed in the press coverage of Amazonian affairs. Overall some of these implications are more clear such as those involving the complex character of regional issues and those of actors. As suggested in the literature (Gamson, 1988; Bagdikian, 1990; Golding & Murdock, 1991), journalists in the Amazon also point out the numerous interests and powers as relating to media. Others relate to the more operational and professional nature of the press business.

Media resistance in systematically covering science and environment in the region has not facilitated access to specialised information. For communities directly involved in the

^[4] Mostly resulting from institutional action, there has been an improvement in the way specialised information is treated in the media. Some of the examples are the Goeldi Museum’s Destaque Amazônia (a bi-monthly news bulletin) and in the Federal University of Pará television programme Academia Amazônia (broadcast on Sunday mornings on a public network, TV Cultura). Due to more time allowed for production in both formats, journalists have been able to minimise mistakes and improve quality.

^[5] Source is also a feminine word in Portuguese (a fonte), what explains the use of feminine pronoun, she/ela.
process of developing Amazônia, information is essential for public debate, as argued by Dunwoody & Griffin (1993) and Whatmore & Boucher (1993) in their studies of environmental issues in the USA and in England. Institutional providers of specialised information had not until ten years ago developed a tradition to relate more openly to the press. As a political strategy, it was necessary for them to become known, thus, gaining public recognition and support in times of even shorter funding for research and education.

The overall political and economic changes experienced in the Amazon from the 1980s, provided more appropriate conditions for: 1. Institutions to be recognised and act as sources of expert knowledge; 2. The press to report on matters from this more specialised perspective; and 3. Journalists to improve quality of reporting on matters of specialised nature directly affecting the Amazon.

Laura who first worked as reporter and then editor in a Belém’s newspaper, talks out of her experience of working at research institution. She says that government institutions need to realise their public function. For her, institutions need to “be more visible to the public, by opening up, showing results, discussing proposals, policies. The fact that every government organisation, today, has a press office in operation is a reflection of the change, the attempt to create a channel of communication with the media and society”. Despite the political role the scientific community has had historically in Brazil, this cannot be taken as a mere act of good will. The institutions desperately need public relations strategies to protect themselves from disappearing altogether.

Antonio and Nelson partially disagree with Laura. For them, it is not enough to have press officials. These professionals are not necessarily prepared to respond to the demands of the media. According to them, for lack of better education and training and a lack of provision of structure on the part of the institutions themselves, journalists inside the research institutions are not well equipped for the job. Nevertheless, a trend has been observed in the past ten years as institutions have improved liaisons with the media in the region. Overall society’s recognition and acknowledgement of the media’s role combined with the
universities' release of graduates,46 facilitated the increase of public debate. João is a strong supporter of this argument.

On the issue of press offices being unable to provide information to journalists, Vítor says that reporting is impaired by the unavailability of data. His daily work faces many problems: "The first problem is that of a lack of statistics [on the research institution side]. Second, a lack of organisation within the press. Third, the research institutions' inexperience in communicating science. And finally, the lack of a more solid relationship between the media and the sources, basically scientific institutions." He recommends that scientific institutions should organise themselves to speed up the information provision process.

Suzana, who has worked for research institutions and currently works at a Belem newspaper, agrees with the Manaus reporter. She mentions the lack of systematically organised information at research institutions: "There is no research institute which can provide us with quick information". Perhaps this is not so much a matter of the information not existing, but not being ready and available to journalists in the required format. Most of these problems lie in the demands of the news production process and in the speed required to process news: internal pressures of time, space and the fact that "media reporting is underwritten by notions of 'impartiality', 'balance' and 'objectivity'" (Hall et al., 1978, p. 57).

Some other journalists emphasise that newspapers are not well prepared. "There is a lack of internal planning to identify issues ... deserving attention," Joana says. This may be related to the fact that Vítor works for A Crítica and Joana, who works for a research institution, is not closely familiar with how O Liberal operates. Nevertheless, taking Roberto's account as a news manager, Joana's assessment is not far from being true. Businesses, according to the interviewees, also carry considerable responsibility for the difficulties faced in the coverage of regional issues. Similar to what happens at the individual level, "... the business has no interest in investing in the professional. It does not regard news beats such as science and environment of importance...", Anita accuses.

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46 Formal university education in the field in the region dates to 1969 when the University of Amazonas, in Manaus first offered a Journalism degree. It would take another ten years before the University of Pará were to offer one.
The majority of journalists interviewed are able to put the regional scene in perspective and in context. But they are unable to see the local press doing so. They mention a few exceptions which are based exclusively on the practice of a few professionals and colleagues. As Joana says: "The more systematic, scientific and investigative type of coverage developed has been the result of sole initiative of individual reporters who have throughout time built experience and sources."

"Amazônia does not receive a systematic treatment in the news," Lucas says and Joana strongly agrees. "The region is treated as a mere episode of national life," he argues. "The once existing correspondents bureaux are no longer here. The permanent correspondents have now been replaced by free-lance professionals. The few active reporters maintained in the region by the big press have little time and they are too young and parvenu ..."

Antonio says that people in the region have no sense of the pressure journalists experience. "Maybe you can come back next week, they say. Come and have a cafézinho with us and we can talk about it," he reproduces a conversation with a source. "But the newspaper is published tomorrow and I cannot wait ..." Such an attitude is not exclusive to sources in the region. It is a well-known attitude among those who do not wish to speak to the press. In most cases, urgency is on the press not on the source. It is unlikely that Antonio has not been faced with similar situations in the South-eastern region of Brazil. But it is easier to reinforce the myth of a laid-back Amazonian culture rather than acknowledge the problem as one among many originating in journalist/source relations..

Ísis, a Manaus reporter, has a more balanced interpretation of the problem. She says that "The lack of understanding of the peculiarities and the aims in the professions of journalists and scientists has prevented better relations among them. It is society who loses in the end." The differences in professional cultures reside in constraints inherent in each profession. A developed ability to understand sources of conflict is necessary to narrow the gap between journalists and experts.

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47 Brazilian small portion of strong coffee. Similar in size to expresso, though not as strong.
It is true that there are controls in the processing of scientific knowledge, but so are there in the production of news. Although audiences and journalistic perceptions of the audience are important parts in the controls applied to news, journalists face a number of additional factors. News is influenced by the restrictions imposed by the business, by the access to sources and information. Journalists are also constrained in the amount of time and space available to deliver the news. As for scientists, the obstacles reside in obtaining funding, and in the procedures of specific areas of research.

In many ways the cultural differences can be seen as similarities. For both journalists and scientists, financial constraints and difficulty in obtaining data apply. Both professional categories are faced with demands by their organisations. Nevertheless, because the ways science and news are perceived are quite different, journalists and researchers still face difficulties in communicating.

**Newsroom and management**

Addressing some of the structural and organisational problems raised earlier by Joana, Roberto says that administration, management and planning in the press are crucial. The news production process in the regional press, according to him, “lacks planning and minimum management”. In Roberto’s experience, the editor often assigns a reporter to an issue which he or she does not have any idea of the meaning. Editors send reporters searching for news neither the editor nor the reporter understand. “Which usually becomes a big mistake or results in no news at all.”

For Roberto, one of the major problems in the press organisations occurs “.... because there is no education of professionals in general, there is no good administrative training for those in charge with the newsroom management ...”. According to him, journalists need to understand the collective nature of team work in the newsroom. The modern stratification of tasks and the hierarchy damage what once was an informal work environment, he concludes.

Operational problems of other natures also affect coverage. A widespread practice among newspapers is the use of press releases. Editions grow in size especially on Sundays, but also on Wednesdays, and there is a need for more news stories to counter balance the increase in
number of advertisements. Sources know about this demand and try, to the maximum, to
benefit from it. Journalists, though recognising the importance of sending information in
press releases, demand a greater professionalisation reflected in the quality of the material.
“If the material is of bad quality, it will not generate interest and will end up in the bin,”
Vítor says. He, who earlier expressed concern at the ability of institutions to respond to
journalistic demand for information, says that “... institutional organisation plays a major
role.” Vítor suggests that “INPA, Embrapa, and NGOs should send us all sorts of
materials including the institution’s telephone directory and other available publications.” At
one end institutions make efforts to communicate and connect with the universe of the press.
At another, some media professionals do not do their share of the work, going the extra mile
journalists need to in order to obtain information. Vítor insists that the institutional role is of
major weight in the outcome of news. “The newspaper does not have qualified reporters to
cover specialised issues ..., but if the research institution gets organised and is ready to force
information on to the press, then it gives incentive to the media ...”, Vítor argues.

Limitations imposed by the physical dimension of the region are yet other relevant factors in
the coverage of the Amazon. As Nelson explains it: “No newspaper has adequate infra­
structure for correspondents in the interior [Pará State]. There is one in Santarém [Mid
Amazon basin], another in Macapá [capital of Amapá State] and in Southern Pará [a most
conflict-affected micro-region in the State, where land problems are concentrated because of
logging and mineral exploitation locally carried out], there is nobody qualified to cover this
boiling news scenario.”

Similar to an argument made earlier by Roberto, Theodora, too, points professionalisation of
journalism as a constraining factor to the outcome of news: “The fact that, by law,
journalists work only five hours, that they are not obliged to cover anything but what they
have been assigned on the day, are factors that impede better quality in the news.” The more
traditional approach to journalistic practices as a “gift” some people have, the myths
involving the life of journalists and even the romanticism of dedication have been crushed
by the market and the need to design labour laws to free professionals from abuse. Some

48 National Institute for Research in the Amazon (INPA).
49 Brazilian National Enterprise for Agricultural Research (Embrapa).
long for the old times, some stick to the law and others fight be respected as competent professionals, but are also ready to defend their rights. This is a trend that neither journalists nor businesses are quite ready to confront.50

Low salaries are also a major constraint, according to Theodora: “If only the journalists were better paid, maybe they would be more interested ... the companies offer no work conditions ...” Nelson adds to the criticism: “…What material about the environment do the newspapers have in their databases? They have nothing.” This was even worse in the past, Nelson testifies: “We had no library or data banks... A lot of the work was based in intuition and personal effort.” As discussed by Joana and Vítor, this has not changed much. She says that the most of the work done is achieved by individual initiative and Vítor still demands more organisation from institutions.

Journalistic practices

Among many professional characteristics, journalists are usually arrogant and vain. Some of the journalists interviewed such as Bernardo, Pedro, Vítor and Ísis, among others, argue that the role of the press of questioning and investigating issues in society is harmed by lack of time, lack of good training on the journalists’ part, only worsened by an arrogant attitude of the press as the owner of truth.” Bernardo exercises a mea culpa: “We, journalists are very arrogant. We want to be the owners of the truth ... We are not humble enough to acknowledge our faults. The newspapers have a hard time acknowledging their mistakes and, we, journalists, because of a thirst for sensationalism, we do barbaric things: we are at the same time police commissioner, attorney, judge and jury...”. In many ways the regional practice differs very little from the press elsewhere. The press establishes its own truth and imposes that as the only truth.

50 In 1987, the great majority of O Liberal newsroom personnel as well as a that of the other two newspapers in Belém, A Província do Pará and Diário do Pará, went on strike for almost a week. The newspapers continued to run thanks to a small group of staff and lots of news agency material. As an outcome of the movement, a series of benefits were gained from salary increase to health and family aid. But some of the older and more experienced journalists were sacked as a result and in disrespect of the terms of settlement of the dispute.

51 Omniscient.
In respect to the selection of sources, there is a considerable level of irresponsible journalistic practice. Pedro says that the very selection of sources reveals the nature of the coverage. Throughout the years, a few sources have been prominent in the reporting of regional issues. According to Pedro who for a long time was a reporter, journalists in the daily press tend to go for the easy source, who is always available and always has an opinion about everything. “It seems that the press considers that these are more credible sources, when there are many scientists better prepared and accredited around. The problem is, though, how scientists see the press ...” This argument introduced by Pedro is most pervasive in the regional scenario.

Another journalist questions such criticism. Orpheus' argument is that “People complain about those who are less prepared and are always in the press. That is because the person, as a source to the press, was always ready to respond at the time the press looked for her.” The person is always available, always has news, information ... In the daily routine of the press, one cannot wait.” The demand for news seems to overrule any attempt of quality control. The bottom line is that something published, no matter the quality, is better than nothing. “The reporter will always bring some sort of news. Though it might not be good enough, it will occupy the space allotted at that particular moment.” Orpheus concludes.

Selection of sources: who qualifies as Amazonian sources

Issues relating to carrying capacity, source strategies and competition for space in the media surface in the journalists' testimonies as they present a variety of views on the of selection of sources. From criticism on the continuing use of specific sources to criticism on the inability of locals to constitute media sources, professionals present a broad perspective on criteria for their selection of sources.

In a clear connection with what Orpheus has said about finding a source willing to speak to the press, Pedro mentions a source who reporters always rely upon in times when nobody else is ready to talk about environmental issues. “He lacks scientific foundation in his statements. He is only able to denounce. But it is on this type of source that the press in

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52 Person is a feminine word in Portuguese (a pessoa), that is why the pronoun her applies.
Amazônia relies. Because such sources contribute to what the newspapers do around here: sensationalist reporting.” Oscar agrees with Pedro’s concerns. A reporter with a Belém newspaper, Oscar says that the selection of sources is very subjective. “We have to look for those who have credibility, but, not necessarily, those who are always in the newspapers ... Sometimes, it is the source that never appears who has privileged information ... who is qualified and has the knowledge.” He goes further to reinforce the impression that those who are more willing to talk to the press, only want to be in the public eye. At the other extreme are “trustworthy sources who give relevant information, but do not like to appear... this is a very important type of source, because she is concerned with the fact, the understanding of it.”

A statement by Joana shows an emphasis on the value attributed to the quality of information provided to the media: “The improved organisation of society and the building of a more critical sense has provided the conditions to hold sources responsible for the information they give ... Because it was not always like this, administrators now are more concerned with the veracity of information passed on to the media.” Issues of accountability are yet to become routine in daily news reporting in the region. Sources are, though, more aware that untruthful testimonies will not necessarily remain unpunished.

Impunity has always been a great problem in Brazil: “There is a need for a more efficient Justice System able to punish those responsible. Until this happens, impunity will be part of our democracy,” Orpheus says. The problem, in reality, is that no matter what some sources say, the press actually publishes without much further checking, a practice that allows for more infamous and libellous information to be published in a system where impunity is already rife.

Orpheus battling over the myth of objectivity agrees with Oscar as to the subjectivity that applies as journalists select sources: “Any person, any journalist, has always a natural preference due to her education, her work environment. I was always very keen to listen to several sources... But there are always those who we have more consideration for...” Along the same lines, Serafim sees the process of choosing sources as one that “...varies, but is

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53 Person is a feminine word in Portuguese (a pessoa), reason for the use of the feminine pronoun, her/dela.
obedient, consciously or unconsciously, to some ideology, related to the interests of the journalist and those of the source as well".

**Differences in professional cultures**

Some journalists have revealed a more academic approach to the selection of sources. They have acquired criteria exclusive to the scientific community itself. "The source has to have at least an M.Sc. or M.A.,” says Ruby who has worked at a research institution in Belém for over ten years. It might be that the work environment has influenced the definition of such criteria. As Laura acknowledges, "It has been the professional association with a research institution dedicated to the analysis of regional issues, the environment, development, that has slowly provided me with some familiarity with specific terms and concepts". The work environment provides elements to establish professional values as well as understanding of novelty. In a way, journalists are following criteria and standards peculiar to academia. It is inevitable that they will face the same criticisms academics face as to the discrimination academics face when they do not have a Ph.D. The fact of the matter is that standards are automatically imposed by the research world, and journalists covering it have learned to play under similar rules. As much as there is a scientific culture, there is a professional journalistic culture. The encounter between these two cultures can strike major conflicts.

Journalists have argued about the need for a better structure within the press, but it also appears that sources in general require better organisation and local sources, more reliability. A comment made by João reveals how local sources still remain discredited. He says that those who can talk about the Amazônica are not in the region. “People here are not sources, they are puppets who repeat the main branch’s discourse, especially in regard to matters of State ...” In the case of the scientific community, João believes there is much to be consolidated before local scientists overcome their own limitations. The “provincial intellectual mentality” is one of the constraints.

Lucas overall ignores any scientific sources in the region. “I have more connection with the scientific community outside the region ... Every time we go to the scientific community in

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54 Reference to national and international corporations operating in the region, mostly in Manaus free trade zone.
Amazônia, the answers are scarce and non-satisfactory.” According to Lucas, an example of this is the crisis of the Tucurú dam. Scientists did not provide the responses demanded by journalists: “... they did not know ... They did not want to talk, they did not want to compromise.” In the end, Lucas guarantees that the journalistic material produced was far more extensive than that originated in scientific circles. During seven months, he wrote every day: “My production alone is bigger than all the others added up ... the academic production is mine. They [scientists] do not want to take risks. This fear of risk-taking is a sign of insecurity. For me, this disqualified the academic community ...” In Lucas' opinion, local scientists lost a historic opportunity to give their testimony. He denies prejudice against local academics. Lucas would like to see researchers doing what the North Americans scientists do: “The American scientists take on an expedition for a week and immediately report on what they have found.” For Lucas, journalists have to research and “... end up taking the place of scientists.”

Professional cultures as much as regional cultural differences affect the outcome of news. A variety of values and attitudes interfere in the quality of the relationship between journalists and scientists. Changes introduced by the increased coverage of science and the environment have forced two very different communities to come closer in their daily routines. Scientific uncertainty is said to play a crucial role in the communication of risk issues (Nelkin, 1984). Perhaps it is the lack of understanding of this fundamental scientific characteristic that makes journalists clash with scientists. Lucas' testimony is an example of this.

A difference in rhythm is what Pedro attributes as one of the most serious problems faced when journalism confronts science. “The time in which we [journalists] process information is incompatible with the time scientists process discovery.” Pedro has worked at a university press office for more than ten years. His concerns stand as other journalists demand from scientists the rhythm of the journalistic profession.

In regard to the sources’ organisation, David says that “... apart from all the difficulties between journalists and scientists, there is an underlying prejudice on the institutional side... First, the press does not understand scientific concepts, second it does not want to understand them, third, is unable to deal with this difficulty...” Rafael points to
developments: “Some ten years ago, scientists... did not have the dimension of the impact of communicating results through the press. But they have opened their eyes ... and ... they have changed their attitude to a more positive approach of the press performance.”

The gap between journalists and those who hold specialised information such as scientists is of a very wide nature. Prejudice is at work on both the journalistic and the scientific communities. Carlos feels that there is prejudice against journalists and the division between those who hold the knowledge (the scientists) and those who do not (the journalists) is always made quite obvious. Once barriers are in place, no one is willing to overcome them. Carlos like Rafael has noticed improvement and “there are scientists who have learned to relate to the press and acknowledged that the press can be very useful.” Nelson also sees scientists’ prejudice against journalists, but in line with Carlos and Rafael, finds positive signs of change: “More and more, sources are discovering the importance of not staying between four walls, of the need to take risks [in providing journalists with information], even if they might bring damage...”

Despite the difficulties pointed out in the relationship between journalists and sources, Sergei, similar to Laura, Nelson, Carlos and Rafael, also argues that there has been some improvement. “Some sectors, holding relevant information, have learned how to relate to the press. They know what the press is capable of doing, they know how the newspaper ... can develop themes...” But he also acknowledges the existence of sources who find it difficult to relate to the press, mainly, according to Sergei, because “they do not know how to express themselves, allowing the journalists free interpretation, which creates a lot of misunderstanding”.

Cláudia sees that scientists perceive “…journalists as intruders of their world... there are many difficulties, exactly because the source does not want to open up, in providing information.” Theodora argues that “What the institutions need to learn is to pass on knowledge not administrative information. There is space for everything in the Manaus press.” Unlike scientists, research management had learned the importance of making the institution’s work public. According to Theodora, administrators who most of the time were
themselves researchers "had no problem providing stories. In truth, they all wanted to give information to the press."

But the institutional organisation is fragile and unable to respond. Proof of this, according to David, is that "After the Eco 92, the coverage went down the drain. The NGOs also lost space in the press because of lack or loss of credibility." This piece of testimony is particularly relevant in the overall attempt to analyse environmental and development issues in the Amazon. Professional observation supports the content analysis' findings that coverage of environmental and development issues declined after the Rio 92 Conference.

While some are concerned with building sources' confidence in the press, Bernardo worries about being able to identify sources that are trustworthy. He is so disillusioned with the practice of journalism in Brazil, that he thinks there is no such thing as building source confidence. "Sources are not always trustworthy. Journalists must be able to discern, otherwise they might risk being manipulated towards defending the interests of the source."

Training of journalists and the inability of institutions to respond to the media are pointed out as major problems in source/journalist relationships. Although journalists recommend professional training to improve coverage about the region, a considerable dose of prejudice against formal education also stems from some views. For Roberto, source/journalist relationships have a long way to go before reaching maturity. "This is due to a series of factors: whether the journalist has a University background or whether education was acquired in the newsroom ... The problem is also that the business does not invest in professional further education. It should. After all the professional is the producer of what the business survives on: news, information." David agrees: "Society, business and professionals could only benefit from a better quality press."

But Roberto also blames the scientific institutions in the region for being closed. The ills of the relationship between scientists and journalists are, according to him, due to the "...lack of education of journalists in the region to de-code scientific information...they [scientists] research problems but this does not put them any closer to the community ... they [scientists]
describe social and economic problems, but reduce them to M.A. thesis and articles in scientific periodicals ...”

Joana concedes that institutions are not prepared to respond to the press and compares the handling of media situation by official institutions and NGOs: “Comparatively, although one may discuss the quality of the information provided, NGOs are better prepared to respond to the press ... They have a different view: It is in the press sphere that they will be able to consolidate their work. The institutions have no structure for communication and a great number of the researchers are not prepared [to face the press]. But they are still better prepared than a decade ago.”

As Paulo says “Some institutions provide information and some only create problems.” Nelson adds by saying that government organisations do not generate information through press officers which would very much aid journalists to reflect upon issues and produce better quality journalistic material”. This is an argument which could, in principle, contradict Laura’s assertion that the creation of press offices within research institutions themselves is a positive trend. My own professional experience in the region, the recognition of the need for press liaisons per se as positive. As any other activity, it has been a long decade since the first moves were made by key research institutions to open their doors to society. It is a trend made possible by a generation that sees journalists' role in such environments going beyond public relations and one that has been successful in introducing the idea among researchers and administrators. Journalists are no longer seen as mere liaison agents between research institutions and the media. A more political role has been acquired in processes of planning and decision-making within and outside institutions and the media. Journalists have become directly involved in such processes.

Some would partially disagree that the institutions are now better prepared to deal with the press. But as Paulo argues “… INPA, the Goeldi Museum, the federal universities, State Secretariats and NGOs involved in the policy-making of the environment and development in Amazônia have a different attitude from before.” This trend would not have been possible if relations between sources and journalists had not improved.
Despite all criticism of the overwhelming press reliance on official sources, Laura is very open in setting priorities and reveals the hierarchy she sees applying as criteria in the selection of sources. She acknowledges that as sources “First come the research institutions which have produced data on the process of occupation and development of the region, then the government organisations and, then, those representative of civil society.” In Brazil, as in many other countries, the majority of research institutions are government organisations. That partially explains why the press has to rely on official sources. This is far from saying that alternative sources, as those recommended by João, Serafim and Ísis, should be overlooked.

Most problems arise from a distortion of the aims of communicating science. As Joana points out, communication, at times, is misunderstood as purely public relations work: “Some believe that communicating research results means solely the promotion of research and of researchers. The objective is much more comprehensive than the mere promotion of individuals.”

**Regional voices: sustainable development, the public and language**

It is the pressure for information and the use of expert language in the exclusive circles of science production that make journalistic practice even more challenging. Serafim thinks that part of the problem of meaning-construction starts at the inability of science to express itself. “It has been very negative to science and for the development of science that we have not yet found a language coherent with the level of public understanding...”

For Nelson and Pedro, responsibility to make concepts understandable lies with journalists. “Although the concept [sustainable development] was consolidated in the daily news after Eco 92, there is not a clear interpretation of its meaning among the majority of journalists ... And I do not think the press has been able to explain to the public what sustainable development is,” Nelson says. For him, this is especially true “if we consider that the level of education of those who buy the papers is low ... People read sport and crime news and that is all they read.”

\(^{55}\) Serafim is also a researcher.
Pedro holds regional journalism directly responsible: "Sustainable development and other specialised terminology have to be explained as everybody needs to understand what it means, but the press has not explained it ... Journalism in the Amazon today simply speaks the language of scientists. This is a big mistake." Anita and Roberto offer an explanation as to why this is the case. For them, journalists do not explain the concept because they simply do not themselves understand the meaning. "Some journalists might know what sustainable development is, but this is not explained in the newspapers", Anita says and Roberto adds: "Journalists write about sustainable development without knowing what it is. It is a mere reproduction of a word which they appropriate without any notion of its meaning and significance."

Throughout the time frame and sample observed in this analysis, A Crítica and O Liberal reported on the concept of sustainable development by introducing three distinct approaches: one mostly based on the discourses of public officials, another based on the private sector perspective, and yet another based on scientific discourse. Both newspapers, though, seem to conform to their sources' interpretation of the concept. While O Liberal presented a bigger diversity of sources, A Crítica mostly revealed the concept as it had been appropriated by public officials, especially the Amazonas State Governor in an expression of his own version of development of Amazônia. O Liberal tended to present meaning attributed to sustainable development from an official point of view, but it also introduced the private sector's perspective as well as the scientific point of view.

Contradicting what journalists have said, the meaning of sustainable development was introduced in the coverage. In the early 1990s, O Liberal voicing a federal government official printed news about "a sustainable development policy through which economic activity is carried out based on the environmental conservation and ecological balance". By 1991, thanks to emphasis given by the private sector, development concerns were to "present proposals for regional socio-economic development that inflicted no harm on the preservation of the environment". Private sector’s set of priorities to implement sustainable

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56 "Seminar to present proposals to boost tourism", O Liberal, 20/11/90
57 "Passarinho and Rezek in the Eco Amazônia in Belém", O Liberal, 10/9/91.
development was based "on social sustainability by which poverty can be overcome; on economic sustainability which accepts environmental loss up to a certain limit; on ecological sustainability assuring the permanence of natural resources to present and future generations; and on space sustainability dedicated to contain population growth and disorder in urban centres."\(^5\)

In the earlier years of the decade, *A Crítica* published news on federal government announcement of the arrival of international funding "For the recuperation of degraded areas in Amazônia, through projects of forest sustainable development".\(^5\)

The following year, the announcement of an Amazonas State plan was made as a means to achieve sustainable development. At the time there was a clear spelling of the goals of such a plan, but not of its strategies.\(^6\)

Later in that same year during the announcement of a political alliance between Colombia and Amazonas State, the Colombian Ambassador stated “We want sustainable development, but under the condition that all natural riches can be exploited to our own benefit, that of Amazônia”\(^6\) On yet another occasion, Mestrinho appeared in May 1992, as the actor who had defended development in benefit of the “man of Amazônia”. According to *A Crítica*, the Governor’s ideas for regional development based on sustainable principles had “gained national and international projection”.\(^6\)

From a different perspective of that of the private sector, news about a research initiative by the Federal University of Pará, published in *O Liberal*, introduced a view of sustainable development. Such an interpretation of the concept had as target poor populations. The goal was one of “improving quality of life of hinterland populations in matters of health, sanitation and education; processing of natural produce and the appropriate use of land through the reforestation of degraded areas.”\(^6\)

On another occasion, in the beginning of 1992, a clear definition of the concept appears in *O Liberal* as it printed news on a document by the Amazon Co-operation Treaty (ACT) signed in 1978 by the eight Amazonian countries: \(^6\) “promotion of harmonic development of countries and their respective

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58 “Combat against poverty, goal in the Amazon”, *O Liberal*, 10/10/91.
59 “Amazônia receives first instalment of German aid”, *A Crítica*, 21/9/90.
60 “Governor of Rondônia hands document to Gilberto Mestrinho”, *A Crítica*, 20/7/91
63 “UFPA develops sanitation project for the hinterland”, *O Liberal*, 20/10/91.
64 Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru Suriname and Venezuela.
Amazonian territories as actions should produce mutual positive results as well as assurance of environmental preservation and conservation and rational use of natural resources in such territories”. From this moment onwards, *O Liberal* no longer stated definitions of sustainable development. It simply mentioned the “search for the way to sustainable development”; “the need to centre debate on mankind, the agent who most counts .... if there should or should not be sustainable development”; “The pilot programme [for the protection of tropical forests in Brazil, funded by G-7] has as objective to implement a model of sustainable development...”

The relationship between science and the press in regard to the construction of meaning around new concepts such as sustainable development is expressed more clearly by Laura: “The press has given distinct treatment to concepts such as sustainable development, biodiversity, but this change reflects a process lived by scientists as well. Concepts take shape over time. The problem is that the press does not discuss concepts in depth.” Paulo agrees: “Concepts used in reference to the environment have themselves been revised by scientists. The differences between ecology, environment, biodiversity and all of the nuances of development, have all gone through changes. Science as life has its own dynamics.” Paulo goes further to say that “We, today, see that sustainable development is possible. When one talks about ecologic-economic zoning, one implies a political and methodological attitude toward the environment.” For Carlos, it is the specialised press that is preoccupied in providing further explanation to new concepts: “Only the specialised publications worry about explaining what sustainable development is, what ecology is. This does not happen in the daily press.”

While some are concerned with the ability of the public to interpret new concepts, others are mostly concerned with safeguarding the public against ill information. Having had previous experience working for research institutions, Laura and Carlos have in common the fact that they both know research environment from inside. Paulo’s concerns stem more from the specialised nature of his reporting dedicated to environmental news. Among those concerned

65 “SUDAM and Embrapa will take care of the environment”, *O Liberal*, 20/1/92.
66 “Debate brings together region scientists”, *O Liberal*, 30/1/92.
67 “Manatee in detriment of man”, *O Liberal*, 20/4/92.
68 “Goldenberg announces plan to protect forests”, *O Liberal*, 10/6/92.
with the quality of information delivered to audiences, Bernardo believes that “There must be efficacious mechanisms to protect the reader and also to protect those charged, judged and condemned in the pages of the newspapers.” It is possible to sense a paternalistic approach to matters regarding readership. One could interpret such worries as legitimate and resulting from experience with news media, as Vítor said earlier, that are not democratic.

Cláudia acknowledges some attempts to use an understandable language, but only in the Southeast press “... where intellectuals write in a very clear manner. But it is necessary that a greater number of scientists writes. How much harm has it done to science and its development not finding a common language for communicating with society?” Suzana and Anita endorse Cláudia’s opinion in that the South-eastern press does a better job covering the Amazon. According to them, it is because they are better structured and able to deliver information more quickly. “Journalism has to be quick,” Suzana concludes.

Joana establishes a difference between the local and the national coverage on the basis of the language used in the news items. “The emphasis is on adjectives: grand, spectacular, sensational, everything that reinforces pride of the Amazonian territory is what the local coverage has always pointed out”. Although found, the language Joana refers to is not the prevalent terminology observed in the sample. It is more common to see such a language as a result of coverage of the beautiful scenery of the region and its mysteries and secrets as it is usually portrayed in the national press. Thus, it is not pervasive in regional coverage. From the regional newspapers, it is possible to argue that there is not enough in-depth coverage, but there is not enough evidence to argue for a local strong tendency to reinforce myths about the Amazon. Besides the nationalist perspective prevailing in A Crítica, the regional coverage does not use a language that focuses on the exotic nature of the Amazon. On the contrary, the tendency is to reinforce a pragmatism and a materialistic view that points that the natural resources should be used in favour of the human populations. Though there are hidden interests behind such an argument, it is far from reinforcing the exotism and beauty of the region per se.

The contemporary regional press discourse revealed in this study has similarities with what Gondim (1994) discusses as the attempt to give familiar meaning to the unknown as a means
to dominate it, "... to reinforce and document the stability of the old" (p. 38)." By casually reporting on sustainable development, assuming its meaning and by doing so forcing audiences to accept it as such, the press overcomes its ignorance and reinforces the old as it is mostly expressing hegemonic interests in society, those of State and Capital. Even a progressive theme such as that of the environment allows for the expression of such interests as key actors in these sectors embraced the new wave and profited on it. It has been science, as hegemonic as it is, that, at least in Amazônia has given the tone of a debate that might identify endogenous solutions.

Overall, the journalistic practice has focused on facts and reported upon them as they appear to the journalist and on the basis of what the sources say. Though, this practice does not allow much space for provision of context, there have been exceptions presenting context as well as analysis and discussion from different points of view. Nevertheless, Joana’s observation is appropriate: “Coverage is superficial, there is no discussion of the fact and its implications ... there is no investigation of possible social, biological or economic consequences.”

The relationship between coverage and journalistic training

Overall complaints about the lack of appropriate and competent coverage of the region relate both to the regional as well as to the South-eastern press. Some journalists outraged by the bad coverage by local journalists, find the causes in bad training provided by universities in Amazônia. But this is also a point of controversy among the journalists interviewed. Those whoever have a wider academic background defends universities despite their weaknesses and, those who do not, tend to crucify the institution as the worst of demons.

Theodora disbelieves that business is interested in better training for the professionals in the area. At the same time, she says "... the University does not do its job." This opinion regarding the University is shared by Roberto who has no formal academic training in the field. João, who, apart from being a journalist with formal academic training is also a professor at one of the universities in the region, does not accept this blame.

69 My translation.
Roberto gives his personal account and perspective on the matter: "I am a newsroom journalist. My experience is outside the academic environment. But I have worked with a lot of people who came from the academic world straight into the market. ... and there is a great deficiency in the humanistic education, lack of general culture. ..." In Roberto’s opinion the experience comes with the hands-on training opportunity. He sees that “The newspaper is the biggest source of education. It is only there that professionals learn their craft.” But low pay is also an issue and he acknowledges that “a low paid journalist cannot build culture, when one has not got enough money to buy books, go to the cinema...” Between the news business and the university lies the responsibility for the poor quality of the workforce. Nelson agrees that the regional press lacks the professional qualification to cover the complexity of Amazonian affairs.

Universities themselves have difficulties in correcting the deficiencies students bring from previous levels in the Brazilian educational system. João, who is both a journalist and university professor, testifies how difficult it is to train future journalists to simply report, write news. He belongs in the school where one “must leave aside judgemental values, opinion, personal considerations, subjectivity, to simply report on the fact.” In a region where fact and myth co-exist, this is a rather daunting task. To this, Grace adds that the university is only an information provider. Higher education provides future professionals with no critical ability. According to her, this was not always the case. There have been times when theory and practice were present at University education. She testifies: “When I was student we both had the reading and the practice. It was a time when one was more aware of reality and difficulties, resulting in better overall education.”

Rafael acknowledges the difficulties. He, however, complains that he lacks even the alleged theoretical approach provided at universities. For him, the issue concerns structural changes to the educational system as a whole: “We are getting to a turning point in Amazônia, we either change the essence of education or the press will keep providing superficial news.”

70 She is referring to the 1970s, when the military regime restrictions, made university a mostly politicised environment, a heaven, though not a safe one, for political debate.
Recommendations to improve coverage

"Journalists need to be better educated," Joana argues. According to her, "Journalists have to immerse themselves in knowledge, first on the matters related to communication as an area of scientific knowledge, then on issues of journalism practices, structure and organisation in order to understand the outcome of their work and what routes to take".

Although saying that she does not count on well-defined strategies to practice journalism, Isis lists "thorough data collection and information prior to contacting sources as a must to avoid improvisation." Joana agrees: "Journalists need to be more rigorous in investigating information." Carlos also agrees but adds criticism as, for him, there is yet not enough professionalism in journalists' handling of source relationships: "Journalists should collect information prior to seeing a researcher ... Within the local scenario, this does not happen." The lack of specialised journalists overall damages the reputation of the journalistic profession. Orpheus thinks it restricts the journalist who "... does not extract from the source all information relevant to the community."

The journalists interviewed agree on the need for better education and training for better practice in the profession. What they do not agree upon is on the strategies to accomplish that. While some opt for a more general approach, others, such as Cláudia, believe there should be specific courses at the University level to cover matters regarding science and the environment.

Problems in the news production can be attributed to a lack of systematisation and elaboration of issues that journalistic routines do not permit. Constraints posed by deadlines, the compromise to deliver news items in the end of the day, prevent journalists from developing sharper critical ability. Reading into information as it may reveal one or another ideology is out of the question for those immersed in the routine. Although these abilities can be developed, it takes untrained journalists more time than those who have spent time learning to read into codes and language. Academic opportunities provide the time and environment for the development of such abilities.
Despite the recommendations for more education and training, some journalists such as Roberto and Lídia believe there is only one way of learning how to report on science and the environment or anything else for that matter and, that is, by actually reporting about such issues. Another option presented by Nelson, is one of a graduate programme in science journalism. According to him, “The coverage of environmental issues would gain a new profile if there would be a graduate programme in science journalism totally dedicated to Amazonian issues.” Taken individually, suggestions have a reductionism tendency as they are presented as a panacea. There is no single solution, but a whole set of actions that might lead into better training of journalists report on Amazonian issues. And as pointed out by interviewees in different occasions, several of these actions have been and are being taken.

It is Vítor who gives the tone to what daily journalism should be in a region such as Amazônia. “The daily newspaper, the newspaper we make everyday, this newspaper that arrives at the working class district .... it has a political function. For you to reach the mind and the heart, you have to inform well. Isn’t it that what, in the end, we gain as more individuals are able to decide by their own minds and not by somebody else’s?”

Conclusion

The appearance of new actors throughout the process of redemocratisation in Brazil gave rise to numerous representations of public interests. Academia, left wing politicians, along with NGOs and ethnic and labour leadership became more visible in the public debate of regional problems as demonstrated in the content analysis. Before the environmental frame became pervasive in the news, regional issues were framed from a variety of perspectives such as that of social (in)justice, welfare, poverty, economic potential of natural resources and the importance of Amazonian territory for national security. In many ways this is still the case, but some developments have been observed in the first half of the 1990s. In the 1990s, all of these issues continue to be discussed in media arenas and more thoroughly in the press. Coverage has pointed towards some trends. Among such development are: 1. the increased political articulation of regional actors; 2. the emphasis and framing of themes under an environmental rationale; 3. more ample discussion of public policy directed toward the region; 4. news has become a panel of the diversity of opinions about regional matters,
regardless of the conservative face of regional press and its political and economic compromise with local oligarchy.

Journalists in the region acknowledge the media as public arenas of debate but emphasise constraints resulting from corporation interests closely linked with local, national and international political and economic groups. In many ways journalists in the Amazon are no different from professionals elsewhere. They are faced with pressures characteristic of consolidated democratic societies. The fact that the Amazon is in the process of achieving democratic status marks the difference for regional journalists. As a means to balance such interests spread throughout media organisations, professionals call for democratisation of the media. Particular interests controlling political decisions influence the outcome of news. Small groups detain the control of media in the region. It is these groups interests and those of other regional elites that influence how regional problems are constructed.

Problems stemming from lack of professionalisation are yet another source of constraint in the production of quality coverage. The structural and organisational aspects of the press in the region still lack competent management. Though overall characteristics of journalistic production processes apply, planning is not in place. Deadlines and strict assignments are not always observed affecting the material published by the daily press.

Journalistic practices and constraints revealed throughout the process of news production are seen as originating at different levels. They result from corporation interests and also from poor journalistic training and lack of professionalism. The journalistic practice needs to be understood as one of investigation, of research which has its own overall aims, objectives, methods applied in the reporting of the search for answers to problems in society. Differences in scientists' and journalists' professional cultures are not as far from each other. If on one hand, researchers observe the constraints of theories, methods and peer review practices, on another, journalists are faced with deadlines, inflexible routines, difficulty in accessing information and in approaching sources. Thus, operational problems and conflicts of recognition and accountability apply to both specialised sources and journalists.
To make specialised information accessible to general audiences implies handling of expert language and practices not altogether unknown to journalists but far from mastered by regional journalists. As journalists emphasise the peculiarities of regional issues, the majority agrees that applying models, language and codes used elsewhere will not necessarily improve the situation. For them, it is possible that by re-inventing ways to understand reality from within and in all of its complexity and contradictions could provide some improvement. This attempt is based on development of professional understanding of both structural and cultural matters. At one level, a better education is perceived as one way to overcome problems imposed by reporting limitations. Well educated professionals will also be able to continuously evaluate their role in the public debate of regional affairs.

Professionals in the region, especially those working there in the past ten years have not tried to find a final answer, rather they have tried to benefit from existing knowledge. Local communities have been able to influence the building of meaning around regional phenomena as they become increasingly active in the region. If they ever were, they are no longer waiting to be told what happens but have made themselves participant actors in the debate about the region. The detachment observed in many forms of journalistic operations elsewhere is not part of the professional culture in the region. While more professionalisation is necessary, journalists do not see that the inflexibility of managerial practices can benefit the quality of news. There is little doubt, though, that poor management and lack of work conditions affect the local press and reflect in the coverage. A tendency to continue to manage business with a perspective of housekeeping is not helping in solving organisational and structural problems. From the journalists’ point of view, much is to be done to overcome the lack of skills and poor training provided by both universities and businesses. A more conscious and knowledgeable approach to regional issues is also indicated by journalists as a means to improve the quality of coverage. Improved organisation and structure will not per se improve the quality of news reporting and coverage.

In trying to understand the processes of public debate in the media as arenas for solution of social problems such as the environment, it is necessary to hear scientists who have been working in the region for decades and have designed strategy with which to guarantee the
protection of the Amazon. In matters of policy, it is also essential to hear officials who negotiate the future of the region's ecosystems searching for international funds to help build local capacity to deal with problems that affect everybody but mostly those who live in Amazônia. But as policy-making has acquired more diverse contours, sources such as those originated in NGO, be they environmentalists, clergy, ethnic and labour leadership, must also be heard to give reporting the overall scenario and necessary context. The press coverage has demonstrated itself to be receptive of such trends and has provided a more diverse spectrum of sources. This would not have been possible had journalists not understood changes. To undo myths about the region, journalists have had to expand their network of sources. Professionals have themselves come to value regional sources.

Journalists interviewed for this study agree to the need to make regional views more pervasive. It is in the hands of the regional media and mostly in the hands of those who produce news to undo myths. This is only possible if the regional views are better articulated and expressed within regional arenas. To achieve this, journalists will have to improve their own knowledge of regional problems. Professionals will also have to consolidate relationships with sources and be prepared to do more research for their reports. This is a process already in place and tends to develop as levels of understanding about regional affairs increase.

It is precisely in the diversity of local identities that a new discourse about Amazônia is starting to shape and, as such, is revealed in the public arenas of debate that media comprise. Still subtle, not all certain of any influence and far from the essential levels of articulation, this discourse is though certain of its concerns and priorities. Through voices more or less articulate, regional leadership emerges and tries to negotiate the regional future from within. Political changes provided the scenario for the building and shaping of meaning of social problems. Journalists have played a fundamental role as they, more or less intensely, have opened channels to voice the diversity of interests at stake in Amazônia. The construction of the environment and development as social problems has assumed a singular character in the region regardless of hegemonic interests. The building of problems pushed by social movements utilising the arenas of the media has created space for discussion. In the debate that is more widely held in media arenas, new forms of discourse take shape as society
participates in contemporary policy-making. Journalists recognise their role in a scenario that demands more participation of civil society.

As representatives of what can be considered in the given scenario of the Amazon, an intellectual elite, journalists interviewed for this study are those who inside and outside the newsroom are shaping news about the environment and development. Their political preference, cultural background and professional practices influence the outcome of regional news. This is evident in the fact that apart from the pervasive use of government sources, other actors such as Indian leadership, Union representatives and NGO officials also appear in the coverage. In the conjugation of factors that influence the news agenda such as the debate of social problems, the action of social groups and the establishment of public policy, along with the political economy of the media, it is inevitable, that despite their political preferences and associations, journalists cover social actors outside the scope of the officiality.

The perspectives of regional journalists, collected through structured interviews, address issues in overall political, social and cultural relations. The revelation of elements underlying journalistic practices and professional relationships has been instrumental in supporting news content analysis and the elaboration of language and discourse analyses.
Chapter VII
Symbolic Representation of Amazônia: Language and Discourse Analysis

Introduction

In order to analyse the construction of meaning around sustainable development in Amazônia, this study has chosen three different tools. Findings resulting from two of these methodological instruments have been discussed in the previous chapters where the analysis of newspaper coverage and the analysis of interviews with journalists were presented. A third and final tool is used to reveal forms of meaning-building of issues concerned with sustainable development as they appear in the regional press. This instrument of analysis is the combination of language and discourse analyses presented in this chapter.

In this chapter, I discuss in further detail the theoretical framework which supports the language and discourse analyses. This discussion is followed by the language analysis based on a number of words selected from the coverage given their importance in the scope of the study of sustainable development issues. A series of examples extracted from the coverage provides the necessary context within which these words acquire meaning in the debate of regional problems. A discussion on the nature of the concept of sustainable development follows and introduces the analysis of regional discourses identified in the coverage.

Given the crucial importance of meaning for this study, I attempt to assess how people construct their reality. I have, obviously, taken into consideration that meaning assumes different forms in different contexts. Such differences have already been demonstrated through the identification of news frames, of various interpretations of social problems and of ideologies underlying the coverage. In these elements lies the significance of those who provide issues with meaning. How issues are defined and via whom they acquire definition is revealing of the main discourses elaborated through the analysis of regional news coverage.
In media content, meaning takes shape and has the potential to influence social change. By using fundamental elements in the expression of value and attribution of meaning in the press - language and visual items - language and discourse methodological tools work as a support in the contextualisation of the news (Fairclough, 1995). It is by using language and discourse analysis that researchers make inferences and identify patterns that appear as a result of content analysis of media content.

**Identifying models of analysis**

The analysis of the dynamics of forces expressed in media arenas is an integral part of any discourse built around issues such as those comprised by the concept of sustainable development in Amazônia. In the “multidirectional dialogue” opened by the media (Reyes Matta, 1980, p. 49), this has extensive implications given a time in which “... the language of ‘sustainability’ (however ill-defined) becomes endemic, appearing with as much frequency in World Bank publications as in the rhetoric of grass roots movements.” (Peet & Watts, 1993, p. 227)

Among the issues that arise from the analysis are those related as to how the world is represented, what identities are set up for those involved in the news, and what relationships arise in the given scenario. In this study, analysis focuses on the attribution of meaning to development and the environment in the Amazon by journalists and news sources. It also focuses on the identities of sources and on the relationship between them and journalists.

Discourses constitute particular ways of giving meaning to reality. Fairclough (1995) argues that discourses appearing in the media are revealing of the complexity of social relations, the contradictions implicit to those relations and the ideologies which mark said relations. As analysis will demonstrate, the contradictory and ideological nature of discourses are fully exposed in the regional press coverage of the environment and development issues. Tuchman (1991) reminds us that the use of discourse analysis “... emphasises how the ideological significance of news is part and parcel of the methods used to produce news” (p.
83). The observation of such an element is crucial in establishing the construction of sustainable development and the environment from a regional perspective.

**Information provision and discourse construction**

It is my argument that the Amazon has constituted a target for a developmentalist discourse. This is a phenomenon affecting the whole of Latin America (Escobar, 1992). Thus, matters of development have become most important political issues within the region in Brazil as it has happened in the rest of the World (Becker, 1994). Many views of development have been explored as a means to draw the basic theoretical argument for the study of the Amazon. In many ways development has defined the ways of living in Third World “... mediating in a profound sense the knowledge they seek about themselves and their peoples, mapping their social landscape, sculpting their economies, transforming their cultures” (Escobar, 1992, p.412). In this context, it is necessary to add that this local, regional dimension is far more relevant than it is usually acknowledged. As suggested by Peet & Watts (1993):

> ... it is striking how little is said in the environment-as-social-movement literature about the conditions under which local movements transcend their locality (and hence contribute to the building of a robust civil society) ... (p. 247).

Through the analysis of the perspectives of regional actors or those represented in the regional press, this study’s observations clarify some aspects of such dynamics as they comprise discourses underlying policy decision-making. Fairclough (1995) argues that media content is fundamental in identifying “… particular ways of representing the world ..., particular constructions of social identities ..., and particular constructions of social relations ...” (p. 12).

The relevance of uncovering language and discourse built in print news lies on the argument that “... news is a practice: a discourse which, far from neutrally reflecting social reality and empirical facts, intervenes in ... ‘the social construction of reality’” (Fowler, 1991, p. 2). While the media can be mirrors of reality, there must be symbols to confer meaning to the images reflected in said mirrors (Manoff & Schudson, 1987). According to Fowler (1991),
"A discourse ... organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about ..." (p.42).

Through the instrumental support of the social constructionist theory, it is possible to observe "several influences [that] may be present in the collective definition process" (Leiber et al., 1993, p. 319). Because "social problems are not the actual conditions but merely the claims made about certain condition", the authors argue that "what claim makers say about a social problem is an essential factor in the construction of an issue" (Ibid., p. 319). This is not to say that social problems appear in the media in their whole and most comprehensive aspects, because as Davis (1985) argues, "... there is a significant discrepancy between claims and the reality of news discourse" (p. 58). In this resides the relevance of Dahlgren's (1985) observation on "... how we speak and use language in different ways depending on the situation." (p. 9). As Calderón et al. (1992) put it: "What we face ... is the behaviour of a multiplicity of social actors around a multiplicity of 'social movements' that differ in their capacity to cope with existing social conditions" (p. 34).

Messages found in the media are, according to Burgess (1990), "complex ideological discourses composed of verbal and visual signs with meanings encoded into them through the operation of pre-given communicative codes or rules" (p. 143). It is the members of the community, involved in the process of building messages expressed through the media, who by using codes, "create and articulate meanings, connecting linguistic forms to social structures and processes" (Ibid., p. 143). In this context, "... social action is realised in the very medium of speech itself ..." (Harré, 1983, p. 141).

In accordance to the approach proposed by Fairclough (1995), this study blends two distinct views of discourse analysis. One view is that embraced by Harré (1983) who ascribes to discourse the dimension of social action. Another perspective, that of post-structuralist social theory, sees discourse as "a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" (Fairclough, 1985, p. 18).

Environmental meaning is formed from a variety of resources while social identities "emerge as a response to socio-environmental conflicts - caused by the prevailing style of
development ..." (García, 1992, p. 162). Thus, "Reality is constructed through shared, culturally-specific, symbolic systems of verbal and visual communications" (Burgess, 1990, p. 143). In this approach, "mediated messages are not viewed ... as stimuli causing responses," but rather "as environmental objects, requiring interpretation" (Ibid., p. 143). For Renckstorf & McQuail (1996), both media and mediated messages constitute:

... part of the sense-making symbolic environment of modern post-industrial man, and that the relative importance of media and mediated messages is determined by social circumstances ... (p. 15).

In this sense-making process, discourse is seen as social action. Hence, the ability to produce action involves the expression of "social syntax and social semantics of a culture" (Harré, 1983, p. 140). But as the author reminds us "... a great many human activities are constructed so as not to have a precise and univocal reading." (Ibid., p. 140). The ambiguity of the language applied in sustainable development news in Amazônia is a prolific territory to analyse the variety of meanings which appear interchangeably in positive and negative perspectives.

Similar to what happened in the United Kingdom when "environmental concerns voiced about development in the countryside began to be taken up ... within a pro-development discourse" (Whatmore & Boucher, 1993, p. 166), this study demonstrates that the newly introduced sustainable development concept is appropriated by a variety of actors in the Amazon as they participate in planning and policy-making policies for the region.

In Britain, a striking dichotomy appears as "planning discourse has been dominated by an environmental narrative centred on a tension between 'Development' and 'Conservation'" (Whatmore & Boucher, 1993, p. 169). In the Amazon, though this dichotomy is also observed, the nuances discourse assume in the region, if not more varied, create distinct forms of narratives as a pragmatic approach1 to the solution of problems seems to be more pervasive than those described in Whatmore & Boucher's (1993) model (p. 173).

1 "Amazônia - A new profile of development", O Liberal, 30/10/91, discusses improved conditions of transportation in the region as a means of development. Other news introduce ideas of solutions to the problems in a more practical manner: "Settlement based on agriculture is the solution", O Liberal, 10/4/90; "Extractive reserve is alternative for the region", O Liberal, 30/9/90; "Common Market way out of economic crisis in the Amazon", A Crítica, 10/5/91; "Solutions for the
As will be demonstrated in detail, Amazonian regional discourses reproduce narratives described by Whatmore & Boucher. Regional discourses will also be analysed in that they are more diverse encompassing a wide variety of actors. Actors in the Amazon apply strategies of bargaining to achieve goals of sustainability and zoning cutting across the authors’ model. In Whatmore & Boucher’s model, these strategies and goals appear in separate narratives: bargaining is placed under a commodity narrative while sustainability is exclusive to the ecology narrative, and zoning, is classified within the categories of the conservation narrative.

In such a manner, actors attempt to harmonise historically irreconcilable issues. The conflict is yet to be thoroughly exposed as many factors essential for the resolution of environment and development issues are still to be confronted. As Ribeiro (1991) points out, the main factor that remains awaiting open debate is: "... the unbalanced distribution of political and economic power among classes, segments and populations players in the developmentalist drama" (p. 77). In Ribeiro’s opinion, to hope for natural harmonisation is to be blinded by the fear of conflict.

Another model on which I base the discourse analysis, is that of Escobar’s (1992). The author suggests that there are three main development discourses. Similar to Harré’s (1983) interpretation of discourse as social action, Escobar sees discourse as expressions of struggle (Ibid.). In his definition of the three main discourses, the author, firstly postulates “the discourse of fulfilment of democratic imaginary”. Originating “in the egalitarian discourses of the West ... [this discourse] offers the possibility for material and institutional gains and the radicalisation of democracy towards more pluralist societies” (Ibid., p. 48). As utopian as it sounds, this approach is close to some of the perspectives identified in the sample of news. It is, in fact, a blend of two of Whatmore & Boucher’s (1993) frames of discourse bringing...

A second major discourse elaborated by Escobar (Ibid.) is one of difference. This form "... originates in a variety of sources: anti-imperialist struggles, those of ethnic groups and women, the challenge to European ethnocentrism ...". This discourse configures a possibility of "... strategic release and furthering of some of these struggles" (Ibid., p.48). In this form, Escobar (1992) gives more prominence to matters of class struggles than Whatmore & Boucher (1993). These latter did not consider the matter as they studied the British context. Because Whatmore & Boucher posed the model of discourse on the axis of the environment, other more obvious natures of the discourses - their political face, for instance, is not as openly exposed as in Escobar's elaboration. As Ribeiro (1991) argues: "The history of the expansion of the capitalist political-economic system ... is synonymous with disrespect of the social, economic, political, and cultural relations of native populations." (p. 78).

Thirdly and finally, Escobar (Ibid.) argues for the existence of "Anti-development discourses ... which originate in the current crisis of development and the work of grassroots groups". In these forms, the author sees potential "... for more radical transformations of the modern capitalist order and the search for alternative ways of organising societies and economies, of satisfying needs, of healing and living" (p. 48). In this, he appears to deny any possibility of change in the previous two discourses.

Another supporting theoretical frame for this analysis is Schuurman's (1993) definition of the dynamics of social mobilisation and fragmentation of forces and discourses. Schuurman (1993) emphasises that movements such as the peace, ecology and women's movements have developed "a growing heterogeneity" (p. 199) and within such movements it is possible

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5 Though, the struggles pointed out by Escobar (1992) are not exclusive to settings other than those in the so-called West, this form of discourse emphasises the distinctiveness of cultural characteristics in geographical areas other than most regions in Europe and North America. It is important to remember that many exceptions can be found of European and North American ethnic and minority groups who fall under this category.

6 My translation.
to identify different typologies based on Tironi's (1987) matrix. In this matrix, four different discourses are constructed as a result of interviews with members of social movements in Chile.

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exploitation
   1   3
participation ______ break
   2   4
   exclusion
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The first quadrant brings "actors who feel exploited by the system yet look for increased participation" (Schuurman, 1993, p. 199). In the second quadrant are the people who feel "excluded, neglected by the state, and as such want recognition as citizens". (Ibid., p. 199). The third quadrant brings the revolutionary, "actors who feel exploited on all fronts (politically, economically and culturally) ... do not adhere ... and engage in armed battle". (Ibid., p. 200). The final and fourth quadrant consists of actors who "not only feel excluded, but deeply mistrust the state and political parties ... these actors have increasingly engaged in defensive, subsistence-oriented collective activities" (Ibid., p. 200).

Though acknowledging the usefulness of Tironi's model, Schuurman contends that it allows actors no flexibility or movement between quadrants. According to the criticism, "... analysis of the discourse of ... social movements, can still have multiple subject positions with the accompanying array of discourses ..." In this analysis the dynamics of social mobilisation contemplates the fragmentation of forces and discourses as part of the whole of the continuing process.

So far, I have introduced three main models of development discourse on which I base the analysis of narratives appearing in Amazonian news between 1990 and 1994. I have outlined points of convergence among the three models and highlighted differences which will be reflected in the analysis of findings. A number of discourses emerge from the analysis of the regional context. Amazônia has proved again to be a contradictory and complex environment from which one is able to draw only preliminary conclusions. The region's
dynamic and the speed with which some changes take place and the force with which
tradition is kept in place is rather challenging. What follows is an analysis of language and
discourses identified in the regional coverage of sustainable development issues in the
Amazon between 1990 and 1994. The basic aim of the analysis is to identify various types of
discourses. I also aim at discussing the frames within which these discourses are presented
and by whom they are articulated.

**Language analysis**

As a means of performing language and discourse analysis, I took the aid of a text retrieval
program, SONAR Professional. The study has proceeded to a qualitative analysis of terms as
the tool was employed mainly to facilitate location of words and their contexts.

Some main concepts have guided the analysis of language that is pervasive in the content of
news about sustainable development. It is on these constructs that the study builds its
analysis of discourse. Constructs guiding the language and discourse analysis were identified
in the theoretical framework chosen for the study and observed in the coverage as I read and
coded the news. The terms listed below represent the axis of the research in that they form
the context of the study’s object.

It is in the identification of the discoursive structures under which the Amazon in its
development and environmental affairs is talked about that resides the importance of this
research. The portrayal of Amazonian problems as they are discussed in the regional press
and analysed in this study demonstrates many sources of contradictions. The diversity of
actors and the various ways in which they base negotiation of social dilemma give rise to the
also multiple forms of symbolic representation and meanings revealed in the analysis of
news in Amazônia in the first half of the 1990s.

The press coverage reveals many of the various perspectives about Amazonian affairs. Such
multiplicity is expressed in the newspapers headlines. They give voice to an array of
interests active in the region: “Entrepreneurs fear lack of support”, “PT (Workers Party)

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7See diagram in chapter IV.
8 A Critica, 10/11/90.
debates Amazonian issues"; "Forest Peoples meet at Union’s version of Eco"; "Debate gathers regional scientists"; "Farmers want more funding from FNO" Urgente.

It is García’s (Ibid.) argument that in the process of constructing new meaning, media “operate as the unifying element”. They potentially support “... new social practices that attempt to open up spaces for cultural innovation and the creation of new ecological understandings” (Ibid., p. 162). Though the media are potential unifiers in the debate of social problems, because of the diversity of views they presents, it is important to observe how the press introduces fragments of various discourse through scattered voices inside and outside Amazonian society. Ranging from far left wing political actors to those in the more conservative ranks, regional issues are debated throughout the coverage. Views are introduced in the coverage from the most various directions: “PT (Workers Party) debates Amazonian issues”, and “Preservation hides international interest”. The first argues against the “xenophobia of the local oligarchies”. The latter intends to confirm a view attributed to the Party as former Congressman Bernardo Cabral (PMDB - Amazonas), himself member of the local elite, was invited to the same Workers Party sponsored meeting and spoke of “interests behind” the preservation of the Amazon. Other perspectives are introduced in news such as: “CUT takes the Amazon to a national debate”, “Forest Peoples meet at union’s version of Eco”, and “Debate gathers regional scientists”.

The diversity of actors influencing the construction of meaning around the Amazon and sustainable development issues is responsible for the various forms of discourse appearing in the news between 1990 and 1994. In this study, various social segments have been identified as major actors in the process of attribution of meaning to regional issues as they become news.

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9 A Critica, 20/9/91.
10 A Critica, 30/9/91.
11 O Liberal, 30/1/92.
12 A government investment fund dedicated to the country’s Northern region.
13 O Liberal, 20/11/93.
14 A Critica, 20/9/91.
15 A Critica, 10/10/91.
16 PMDB (Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro) - Brazilian Democratic Movement Party.
17 A Critica, 21/2/91. CUT is a Unions' Central Organisation which congregates all unions aligning with the Workers Party (PT) policies.
18 A Critica, 30/9/91.
19 O Liberal, 30/1/92.
20 For detailed discussion of actors and competing themes in the news, see chapters V and VI.
The destruction of Amazonian ecosystems in the midst of an economic crisis in combination with a redemocratisation period created conditions for the voicing of renewed social demands in the region. The economic factor became a common place in the news: "Economic order must also be taken into consideration",21 "Common Market way out of economic crisis in the Amazon",22 "Gulf crisis makes Petrobrás reviews its investment in the Amazon".23 Poverty, lack of sanitation, poor education, poor provision of health services and land conflict have worsened in the region. The continuous and irrational exploitation of natural resources has assumed a new dimension where legal aspects and rights of endogenous population are openly acknowledged: "Legal action prevents devastation",24 "Deaths said to have no connection with demarcation",25 "Loggers of Benjamin Constant threaten Tikunas".26 Thus, the collective action efforts to address these problems also takes a new dimension. This perspective attempts to provide solutions based on sound environmental tenets. Headlines present a language demonstrative of efforts aiming at sustainability: "Macro-zoning to protect the environment",27 "Government starts ecological zoning".28

As discussed earlier, the democratic cause in Brazil and in the Amazon has gained the support of a variety of groups from neighbourhood associations and rural workers movements to environmental organisations: "Rural communities want INCRA’s intervention",29 "CUT takes the Amazon to a national debate".30 It is the rise of these new actors that has contributed to a more diversified set of discourses in the region. These groups represent a "submerged network ... (that) underlies the more visible forms of collective action ... and ... include ... innovation, with new practices and new meanings" (García, 1992, p. 162).

21O Liberal, 30/10/90.
22A Crítica, 10/5/91.
23A Crítica, 10/10/90.
24 A Crítica, 30/10/91.
25A Crítica, 20/12/91.
26A Crítica, 30/1/92.
27O Liberal, 10/8/90.
28 A Crítica, 10/7/94.
29 A Crítica, 20/1/90.
30A Crítica, 21/2/91.
The Amazon is again an example of political struggles and conflicts. The analysis of news between 1990 and 1994 has signalled the worsening of conflicts in crucial fields such as land ownership, Indian territory demarcation, mining and logging activities. Coverage in years ahead of this study’s sample (1995, 1996 and 1997) indicate an increase in the reporting of tensions between the State and social movements fighting for the recognition of their rights and their citizenship. The Landless Workers Movement (MST) is the most recent example of this type of conflict. As discussed in the content analysis chapter, the actions of this group were present in the news at the time targeted by this research and continued to increase in the years outside the sample.

It is my argument that the debate revealed in the Amazonian press by the diversity of discourses leads to an approach described by Irwin (1995) as one of citizen science. In this view, the experience of the people is taken in as evidence to support various demands to solve social problems. Locally-produced knowledge has the potential to contribute to achieving development. Some news such as those appearing under the headlines “Amazônia: participatory environmental development”, and “Communitarian mobilisation”, present notions of integration between environmental, political, economic and social systems. The emphasis in these pieces is on planning strategies that allow participation decision-making stages.

The dichotomic, controversial and ambiguous nature of Amazonian problems has led actors to attempt overcoming the constraints of formal, inflexible models of development and planning to achieve sustainability. The article “The agro-environmental option”, for example, suggests a practical approach to sustainability via the use of endogenous knowledge in combination with advanced technology, that, nevertheless, respects values inherent to regional populations. According to Ribeiro (1991), what has been ignored, perhaps for the sake of convenience, is the underlying political economy in the discussion of sustainability, leaving to discussion only the ideal aspects of the matter.

31 O Liberal, 20/8/91.
32 O Liberal, 30/1/92.
33 O Liberal, 20/9/94.
Another dimension of this problem is the continuing discussion on mal distribution of financial support to science and technology in Brazil with damaging consequences to the region: "Science and technology face mal-distribution of funding". In 1997, Christovam Wanderley Picanço Diniz, at the time pro-rector for research and postgraduate studies of the Federal University of Pará argues that "The various governments’ attempts to solve regional imbalance have not been co-ordinated with human resources policies ... The regional imbalance has a direct impact in development imbalance." 

The practices portrayed in the newspapers such as those of people in the hinterland, in the laboratories at research institutions, of those in the arenas of seminars and conferences, partially reveals the diversity of interests involved in regional affairs. Actors in the wide spectrum of regional life appear mobilised reaching out to the community: "UFPA implements project for basic sanitation in the hinterland;" or promoting peer discussion: "Debate gathers regional scientists." Similar to the academia, popular movements and local endogenous leadership open arenas for the discussion of social problems: "CUT takes the Amazon to a national debate" and "Forest Peoples meet at Union’s version of ECO".

Indians or caboclos appear frequently in the coverage. The images are of various natures but mostly relate to their fight for a piece of land: "Landless people of Parauapebas tortured", "Rio Maria and Rio de Janeiro, symbols of violence of the whole of Brazil", "Deaths in Redenção and Itaituba", "The mark of everyday violence". Those making their case to continue logging in the forest also appear in the coverage: "Combat against poverty is goal of Amazônia". The combination of these elements reveals that a discourses in continuous elaboration is based on tenets of citizenship, through a more collaborative decision-making,

34 O Liberal, 10/1/91.
35 The equivalent to a vice-chancellor. Diniz became chancellor in 1997.
36 A document entitled For a sustainable and balanced development reveals that a total of US$ 359 millions were invested in scholarships by CNPq - the National Council for the Scientific and Technological Development) in 1994. Only US$ 5,4 millions went to the Northern region. (Jornal da Ciência, 21/2/97).
37 See chapter V for details of analysis of visuals.
38 O Liberal, 20/10/91.
39 O Liberal, 30/1/92.
40 A Crítica, 21/2/91.
41 A Crítica, 30/9/91.
42 O Liberal, 30/8/91.
43 O Liberal, 28/4/91.
44 O Liberal, 30/1/92.
45 O Liberal, 20/11/94.
46 O Liberal, 10/10/91.
more informed and participatory decision-making. This process, nevertheless, is yet to expose more openly the contradictions resulting from the power struggles among different political and economic interests.

Departing from the comprehensive concept of sustainable development, I have so far identified how major themes are presented in the press. I have produced an overview of how actors assess policy regarding development and environment issues. Aspects of economy, politics, and government action have been pointed out from the coverage through the voices of opposing social forces. Through this exercise, it is possible to demonstrate the relevance of the organisation of civil society in an environment experiencing re-democratisation. Concepts of growth and preservation, dialogue and democracy arise in the coverage of regional affairs.

In continuing the analysis of language used to debate social issues, I have identified four major types of portrayals of Amazonian problems in the press. Part of the dynamic process, these forms of representation display recent developments in the way Amazônia is portrayed locally. The press reports of regional problems are marked by views which reinforce the clash between myth and reality. Coverage also indicates signs of discourses leaning towards the victimisation of the region by stronger political and economic powers. There is also a further view that surfaces in more recent times, one of conspiracy of the political and economic forces against regional interests. It has also been possible to identify a line of discourse which attempts to introduce the newly arrived perspective of sustainable development. In the next four sections, I demonstrate how these views develop in the coverage. Through this demonstration, I build the argument, based on the coverage, about the ambiguity of the concept of sustainable development. I discuss later in this chapter how the ambiguous nature of the concept has served the purposes of the most discrepant interests. The language analysis aids in the identification of major discourses articulated in the regional press. They reveal a host of ways in which regional actors attribute meaning to the Amazon.

1. Myth and reality
The Amazon is a region where myth and reality meet, mix, and confound one another. Many Amazonians have tried to express this complexity. From the confrontation between humankind and nature - given that their separation is a most recent approach, comes a tendency to make mystery into a permanent condition attributed to the region (Gondim, 1994, p. 139). Despite any attempt to undo mythical views, the Amazon is still seen by many as the “world’s breadbasket”, “green hell”, “red desert”. If on one hand, these have been many of the interpretations made about the Amazon, on another the very encounter with the forest impedes a more realistic view of the region.

The imaginary construction of the Amazon emphasises the exotic, the beautiful landscape as a means to control nature. It works as a substitute given that people have been mostly incompetent in dealing with the environment. Once more this reinforces the dichotomy nature/society.

The analysis of the press coverage on sustainable development issues has revealed language that reinforces myths. Words used in news reports still emphasise natural riches and mythical aspects of the region. The use of certain terms implies their potential in the solution of Amazon’s problems: “Governor wants human populations benefiting from regional riches”.

News of funds released by the government and originated in royalties from exploitation of mineral resources were welcome: “Pará State has received Cr$ 12 billion from Union in June”. The evidence found in the use of specific words translates into the cultivation of myth and exoticism: “Anavilhanas II considered the biggest archipelago in the World”. This language points out natural qualities as means to solve problems: “Amapá wants higher taxes for china clay exploitation”. In many ways it reinforces earlier ideas of grandeur and paradise: “Amazonian fantasy”.

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47 A Crítica, 10/9/90.
48 O Liberal, 30/7/91.
49 A Crítica, 30/5/93.
50 O Liberal, 10/5/92.
51 O Liberal, 10/3/93.
The search for remedies and cures is also regarded in the news headlines: "Agriculture: a remedy to hunger", "In the forest, cure for diseases", "How to achieve sustainability without forest damage."

In an evident exercise of self-pride and nationalism following the footsteps of the military ideology pervasive in the 1960s, 1970s and part of the 1980s, in the 1990s, the language appearing in the news has acquired a connotation of conciliation and optimism. When terms such as the ones mentioned above are employed in the discussion of regional matters it becomes clear that they are consistent with the interests of economic and political elites inside and outside the region. As discussed earlier, the construction of the Amazon as a myth has had a purpose since Colonial times and continues to find resonance within specific social segments. At the point where this study reaches the analysis of regional discourse, such aspects will become even more obvious.

2. Victimisation

In this second form of approach, language acknowledges the economic importance of natural riches attempting to demonstrate: "... the raw strength of a young developing nation, not yet prey to the decadence of Western civilisation" (King, 1990, p. 21). If this were applicable in the beginning of this Century, when there are hardly any "... records of the growing working-class ..." (Ibid., p.21), the depiction of the Amazon would have acquired a different nature. As the content of news published by the press in the region reveals, there has been considerable change in the political relations established within the region and in those of the region with the outside world. This process of change is classified by Becker (1994) as an "extremely positive movement for the transformation of the Authoritarian State in which we live" (p. 109).

The combination of these arguments with that of development has forced the introduction of a language that targets solutions, the cure of all maladies, including those of poverty and

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52 O Liberal, 10/6/92.
53 O Liberal, 30/11/92.
54 O Liberal, 20/8/93.
miseries expressed in language found in the news. The meaning of poverty translates in many different ways in the news. Mostly discussed within a context of cause-effect relationship, poverty is regarded as a major problem for which it is necessary to find an answer: "Poverty is not responsible for armed conflict in the hemisphere","Poverty is number one cause of mortality".

The use of the term misery is connected with the inappropriate health conditions: "Cholera and social misery,""The misery of malaria". Under the headline "Indians and crabs", news discusses poverty as the "crab cycle" that makes poor people eat crab which lives in mangroves and feeds on mud. Misery is also related to the usual source of conflict that of land ownership. A news story titled "Southern Pará" reports on the many difficulties faced in that region where situations of land conflict have become its most pervasive characteristic.

The optimism and conciliatory language introduced by the use of terms that reinforce a mythical representation of the Amazon clash with the crude reality of disease, poverty and explicit imbalance in life conditions among different social groups. The evidence of poverty, misery and violent conditions lived by the whole of the Amazon differentiates itself from a discourse articulated by nationalists that camouflages private interests in a message of struggle in favour of regional interests.

A whole vocabulary has been identified in the news comprising language that represents the whole of the difficulties of the region. In many ways, though, such a language is used as part of an articulation of paranoia by certain regional actors. The paranoia reveals an attempt to divert attention from the inability and lack of interest on the part of these actors to promote change.

55 O Liberal, 10/7/91. Armed conflict in this context refers to guerrilla action in countries such as Peru and Colombia concentrate on nearby areas of the Amazon forest: "Shining Path and FARC united in the Amazon", A Crítica, 10/11/93. FARC stands for Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), a guerrilla group active in the Colombian Amazonia.
56 A Crítica, 30/1/94.
57 A Crítica, 20/4/91.
58 O Liberal, 30/4/90.
59 O Liberal, 31/3/93.
60 O Liberal, 29/9/91.
Though the neglect of the region by Brazilian authorities, namely the central government, is a fact, the observation of news leads to the conclusion that coverage reaches levels of over dramatization. Reports are published under headlines such as “The Amazonian as a victim of brutal spoliation”, “A victim of Colonialism” and “Our slavery goes on”. Despite the possibility of discussing reality, the treatment of issues in the headlines, makes the victimisation of the region look banal. Used to emphasise the problems, such a language appearing in the coverage can as well translate in the inability of many of its articulators' to improve conditions in the region. In this scenario, two extremes are revealed: Gilberto Mestrinho’s approach when assessing the ills of the region emphasises paranoia; and Lúcio Flávio Pinto’s emphasis on the failure of any action as he disregards any initiatives that have been attempted with a potential for change (Pinto, 1994).

The region is revealed in its many faces of tragedy and hunger: “Unsheltered suffering in Marabá”, “Brazil may repeat mercury tragedy”, “North: champion of hunger and lack of attention”, “FAO’s director says hunger worries more than ecology”. In this latter, the ideas of Gilberto Mestrinho find resonance in international agencies, as one unnamed FAO officer defended the exploitation of natural resources: “Are we going to allow the caboclo to die of hunger so alligators do not get killed?”. But the blame for hunger is to be placed on somebody’s shoulder: “Hunger makes middle-man richer”. And once again remedies are sought: “Agriculture: a remedy for hunger”.

Abandonment, disorder and penalisation are also part of the language in the tendency to underline regional victimisation. Editorials protest the poor conditions in the region such as in “Do not let the North cry”, “Shouting for help.” Other reports blame the State:

61 A Crítica, 20/7/90.
62 A Crítica, 20/5/92.
63 A Crítica, 10/7/91.
64 O Liberal, 20/3/94. Unsheltered here refers to seasonal flood victims on the Tocantins river that crosses the city of Marabá.
65 O Liberal, 30/11/91.
66 O Liberal, 10/7/91.
67 O Liberal, 10/6/92.
68 O Liberal, 20/6/93.
69 O Liberal, 10/6/92.
70 O Liberal, 20/7/92.
71 O Liberal, 30/6/90.
“Amazonia continues to be penalised”; and politicians: “Collor accused of abandoning Amazonas State”, “Belém in the list of abandoned cities”, “What takes the region into ecological disorder”. But according to the headlines abandonment may also come from nature: “Waters abandon their favourite sons”.

At the same time, Amazonia is seen as a potential guinea pig at the service of external interests: “Amazonia should not serve as guinea pig, German professor says”.

Loss is another word much employed in the news about regional affairs. It is applied in matters regarding tax contribution from the exploitation of natural resources. Where planning organisms, such as SUDAM, and mining companies such as CVRD, attempt to justify exploration of regional assets: “SUDAM and CVRD. Pará’s gains and losses”. Loss is also a factor in primary economy activities: “Fibre producers register loss equivalent to Cr$ 100 billion”, “Flood causes loss of 30 percent in cattle raising”.

Regional reality is expressed in a variety of ways in the routine of a misery-stricken society. Peace seems long waited: “Tired of conflict, Indians want peace”. Battles are fought on many fronts:

- **Against diseases**: “Fight against malaria starts due to morbidity”, *A Crítica*, 10/3/92; “Pará prepares to fight cholera”, *O Liberal*, 20/8/91; “Belém will debate combat of malaria”, *O Liberal*, 20/4/92; “Chagas disease without efficient combat”, *O Liberal*, 30/7/92; “Combat against cholera inside boats”, *O Liberal*, 30/10/92; “Malaria proliferates and scares”, *O Liberal*, 31/3/93;

- **Against lack of funding**: “Research fights waste of resources”, *A Crítica*, 20/3/93; and


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72 *A Crítica*, 20/6/91.
73 *O Liberal*, 10/8/94.
74 *O Liberal*, 20/10/90.
75 *O Liberal*, 30/11/94.
76 *O Liberal*, 20/11/91.
77 *O Liberal*, 10/10/92.
78 *A Crítica*, 30/5/93.
79 *A Crítica*, 30/5/93.
80 *O Liberal*, 20/6/93.
81 Morbidity refers to the relative incidence of disease.
Death mostly affects the unprotected populations from animals to human beings: “30,000 turtle chicks dead. Pollution might be responsible”, O Liberal, 21/1/90; “Cholera might have caused death of two fishermen”, O Liberal, 20/12/91; “Malaria and pneumonia kill Yanomami”, O Liberal, 10/2/90; “Tuberculosis continues to kill in Brazil”, O Liberal, 10/7/90; and “Cholera kills in Careiro”, A Crítica, 28/2/92.

A region that is rich is yet the poorest and still most neglected in Brazil. The discourses which reveal vested interests need to be distanced from the facts of reality. By using a language of victimisation and war, further discussed in this chapter, there is an attempt to express struggle in defence of the region. In this resides the danger as those pointing out these problems only turn (and have turned) to them as arguments necessary to support indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources. Neither the empty discourse of victimisation nor the over dramatised warrior-like narrative is representative of the Amazonian reality. In the portrayal of these perspectives, the media colludes in reinforcing vested political and economic interests against the resolution of social problems as most solutions will necessarily contradict the permanence of regional elites.

In the continuing contradictory nature of Amazônia, riches are said to bring slavery, when appropriate measures and controls are not applied, especially in the case of genetic resources. There is plenty of drama in the Amazon in its most conflictive reality that provides enough material for media coverage. Imposed decisions over regional affairs lead to the publication of news that mark dependency on other centres of decision: “Our slavery goes on”. While some over-dramatise, others are concerned with the fact that for lack of novelty some issues may remain hidden. Slave work is one among many of these issues and represents a source of major concern among human rights organisations active in the region. The press has responded but is yet to treat the matter with its deserved importance. Headlines such as “Slave work in two ranches in Xinguara”; “Slave work increases in rural

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82 “Genetic bank: when riches bring slavery”, O Liberal, 10/3/91; “Our slavery goes on”, O Liberal, 10/7/91.
83 O Liberal, 10/7/91.
84 See journalists’ perspectives on the matter in chapter VI.
85 O Liberal, 10/10/91.
areas”, and “Slaves of the Third Millennium” are far from being representative of this problem.

As Bernardo, one of the journalists interviewed, said death has become such a recurrent theme in land ownership conflicts, that unless a dozen die, the one found dead, represents the odd event and, under editorials standards currently in place, will hardly receive coverage. The value of life is continuously diminished and the news voices some of human rights concerns: “Organisations demand guarantees for union leader’s life”. Major interests are threatened when issues related to labour conditions in rural areas come to public knowledge. The interests of land proprietors that are challenged. In addition, where editorial standards are concerned, events must be of an extreme nature in quantitative terms in order to receive coverage. Thus, sensationalism is based on numbers which constitute novelty, deserving a place in the news (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988; and Manoff & Schudson, 1987). Although on other occasions the regional press in the region has been proved not to follow established patterns in media theory and professional practices, this time the Amazon is no exception to journalistic standards.

3. Conspiracy

In retrospect, it was in the 1960s the developmentalist discourse assumed a conspiracy character. At the time, it sounded the alert about the international threat to the region. Among regional leaders endorsing the nationalist line of discourse are Arthur César Ferreira Reis and Jarbas Passarinho. Their endorsement came in support aimed of the then military regime in its policy of regional occupation for alleged reasons of national security.

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6 Uberal, 30/1/94.
7 Uberal, 30/12/94.
8 Uberal, 10/1/92.
99 Arthur César Ferreira Reis appointed Governor to Amazonas State by the military regime at the same time as Jarbas Passarinho was appointed to govern Pará.
90 Jarbas Passarinho despite having lost the election for Governor of Pará State in 1994 is still part of the regional political scenario but far from being influential as until his days as minister to the late impeached President Collor.
91 According to Oliveira (1991), a number of policies were implemented by the military and some had the Amazon as target: “The introduction of a national satellite system was decided upon by the military government in 1981 ... Embratel had been leasing transponders from Intelsat ... in order to extend the telecommunications capabilities northward to the vast Amazon region”. (p. 205). Oliveira goes on to say that such “capabilities would guarantee Brazil’s cultural presence up to its scarcely populated western borders”. (Ibid., p. 206).
This national security discourse of the military is repeated in the 1990s. Only now it is re-enacted by people such as Gilberto Mestrinho, in Manaus, and Camillo Vianna, in Belém. This line of narrative reinforces the use of a language of war: In A Crítica: “Belém defends free Amazônia”, 10/7/90; and, in O Liberal, “What takes the region into ecological disorder”, 20/10/90.

As discussed in previous chapters, Mestrinho’s line of discourse is based on nationalism and on paranoia. He appears in the headlines in positions of defence of regional interests: “Governor wants human populations benefiting from regional riches”.92 A paranoid tone appeared in May 1991: “Mestrinho alerts against possible convulsion in Amazônia”.93 By the end of that year, the governor was charged by CIMI (the Missionary Council of the Indigenous People, a Catholic Church organism which has worked as representative of the Indians) with “instigating hate between Indians and white people”.”

Both O Liberal and A Crítica applied a language of war when reporting regional matters. It is clear from the use of the word war and other related terms such as the verbs to defend, to protect, to rescue and the employment of nouns such as siege, combat, forces, fight, ceasefire and pacification that the press resonates the conspiracy theory and paranoid discourse of many actors in the region. In O Liberal, news was published with headlines that read: “The war and the defence of Amazônia”, 20/1/91, “Protection of the Amazon thought over since 1990”, 30/8/93, “Combating poverty, goal of the Amazon”, 10/10/91. And in A Crítica news announced: “At mining site, ‘war operation’ was pacific”, 20/1/90; “State representative Lupércio suggests union to defend the Amazon”, 20/4/91; “Amazon, Eco fight”, 30/5/91; “Siege to malaria and more than 100 cases”, 30/1/92; “Ecological cease-fire”, 10/2/92; “Rezek: Government rescues Amazônia”, A Crítica, 20/6/90.

The language of war is used in many different contexts. It is directly linked to military manoeuvres such as “Navy increases forces in the region”; “CMA applies strict measures to

92 A Crítica, 10/9/90.
93 A Crítica, 30/5/91.
95 A Crítica, 30/4/94.
patrol the region” and “Border is strategic area for guerrilla and drug traffic”.

But such a terminology is also found in connection with health issues: “Total besiege against cholera”, “Amapá armed in the war against cholera and malaria”.

Not all language reveals offensive action, it also reveals defensive strategy. Of the two newspapers, A Crítica seems to be more prone to use such a language. Most news applying terms related to defence appears in the Manaus paper: “Belém defends free Amazônia”, “State representative Lupércio suggests union to defend the Amazon”, “Institutions must unite in the defence of the Amazon”, “Colombia supports Amazonas State. Amazonas in defence of the Amazon”, “Mestrinho intensifies the defence of the Amazon”, “Mestrinho increases action for the defence of the Amazon”, “Marluce defends Calha Norte”, “Youngsters in the struggle in defence of Amazônia”. In O Liberal, only one news piece mentions defence and, in this case, implying action to guarantee funds: “Priante defends resources for the Amazon”.

Pacification is also sought and, at least, momentarily, found: “Pacification starts with devolution of runway”. The news argues that the devolution of runways located in Indian territory to free-lance prospectors is the solution to a conflict that claims many lives of Indians, prospectors, soldiers in Brazil and Venezuela.

The conspiracy tone also appeared more openly in language with paranoid connotation: “Manaus Duty Free Zone: boycott or destruction of a model”. Expressions such as cover up, hide, fear, conspiracy and interference are pervasive in the coverage. Headlines point towards hidden interests and potential conspiracy: “Preservation hides international
interest”,¹⁰ “ECO 92 covers up plan to dominate the Amazon”,¹¹ “Difficulties allow access to foreigners”,¹² and “Amazon, conspiracy and nonsense”.¹³ News also reveals the ups and downs of policy negotiations: “Entrepreneurs fear lack of support”,¹⁴ “Environmentalist fears set back in policy to defend the Amazon”.¹⁵ A more usual type of fear is triggered by health hazards and natural phenomena and is not related to the overall tone of conspiracy and paranoia. It is based on facts of the regional life: “FUNAI fears cholera reaching tribes”,¹⁶ “Great flood causes fear”.¹⁷

The appearance of such terms confirms Anderson’s (1983) argument that “Print-language is what invents nationalism, not a particular language per se”.¹⁸ The author’s emphasis lies in the power of communicating specialised type of language and, thus, in being able to construct a selected meaning. In this regard the press is a pervasive means of appropriation, dissemination and reinforcement of discourses. The nationalist discourse exercised by the local oligarchy reproduces “the idea that the evil is outside the nation” (Rowe & Schelling, 1991, p. 165).¹⁹

The real nature of concerns voiced by officials such as Gilberto Mestrinho, the then Amazonas State governor, became quite obvious in a presentation made to a military audience in July 1992. At the time, Mestrinho said that it was “unacceptable” to donate territory to the Yanomami. The area in question houses most of the mineral resources in Amazonas and Roraima States.²⁰ By saying this to an audience of military officials, the governor was in search of support. Alliances had to be made to, once more, to guarantee elitist interests.

¹⁰ A Crítica, 10/10/91.
¹¹ A Crítica, 10/7/91.
¹² A Crítica, 30/8/91.
¹³ A Crítica, 29/8/93.
¹⁴ A Crítica, 10/11/90.
¹⁵ A Crítica, 10/12/90.
¹⁶ A Crítica, 20/12/91.
¹⁷ A Crítica, 10/12/93.
¹⁹ This is a recurrent theme in Brazilian populism since its origins with Getúlio Vargas in the 1930s. Fox (1988) confirms this when she states that “The populist regimes of the 1940s and 1950s, like those of Perón in Argentina, Vargas in Brazil and Rojas Pinilla in Colombia, many times took an active interest in the growing mass media.” (p.14). She confirms the media role in nationalist contexts: “Newspapers and radios frequently played an important role in their nationalist rhetoric and political strategies with the masses.” (Ibid., p. 14).
²⁰ “Mestrinho shows the Amazon to military officials”, A Crítica, 10/7/92.
Other views supporting those of Gilberto Mestrinho were also reported in the regional press. Key national figures had their opinions voiced. Regional press reports demonstrated regional as well as national alliances. Echoing Mestrinhos’s view was José Sarney, former Brazilian President and now Senator (PMDB-Amapá). He elaborated on the implications of a possible foreign intervention in regional affairs: “... the danger is that we exercise limited sovereignty, and as a result end up with the region subjected to external control in regard to ecological matters, development policy and the protection of ethnic minorities.”

For other public figures such as Celso Brant, president of an obscure National Mobilisation Party (PMN), also appear in the regional press. He said: “Eco-92 is a disguise of an international plan to dominate not only the Amazon but all of the Third World because it is here where the greatest natural riches are and represent a threat, the possibility of imposing the failure of hegemony of the First World. We have in Brazil the raw materials badly needed by the United States and this is why they want to intensify a policy of domination’’.

Along similar lines, Senator Aluísio Bezerra (PMDB - Acre) said during a Governors’ meeting held in Manaus, in July 1991, that “The United States is using ecology to the benefit of the economic strategies of their private sector’’.

In these contexts, language reveals paranoia about the needs of the region to defend itself from the interference of others, confirming the assumption that the evil is outside. Speaking of neglect, local elites were revealing their fears of losing privilege, but, simultaneously, disguising themselves as defenders of the region. They were not willing to miss an opportunity to better voice their demands. Since the regional problems have, partially, resulted from these very elites’ actions, it was not their interest to debate the Amazon in the totality of its conflicts. As earlier demonstrated, the unmasking of social problems has been left, once again, to social movements and actors with minimum access to the circles where policy is made. But even these movements seem to have partially lost their momentum after the articulations observed before the 1992 Rio Conference (Almeida, 1994).

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121 “Protection of the Amazon thought over since 1990”, *O Liberal*, 30/8/93.
122 “ECO 92 covers up plan to dominate the Amazon”, *A Crítica*, 10/7/91.
123 *A Crítica*, 20/7/91.
The publicisation of regional matters through the press was instrumental in making these views known to a wider audience. By publishing news reports on perspectives of key regional figures, the press brought into the open, opinions and perceptions on crucial pressing matters. Otherwise, these perceptions might have been left within the restricted circles of decision-making. On another level, the absence of regional politicians as well as their lack of prestige at the decision-making level became more evident. Had it not been for press coverage of these issues, much of this dynamics would remain out of public reach. As politicians align with the local elites, they are, in general, more interested in defending these interests which in many ways are theirs too. In an editorial, *O Liberal*, for example, charges the government of its "lack of will to solve the problem of housing" and "inability to tackle problems such as security, food production and supply, transportation, health and education."\(^\text{124}\)

In the political scenario, yet another component must be taken into consideration and that about the nature of the political system - Presidentialism. Without the exchange of favours and patronage characteristic to Congress circles, the elites lose power in the articulation of their interests. There have been efforts to improve articulation of the regional block in Congress but these initiatives are still to prove sufficient to impact on decisions concerning the Amazon. Some initiatives by the Brazilian government attempted to strengthen regional forces through co-operation. An example is the attempt to form an "Amazonian block".\(^\text{125}\) As attention increased in international spheres, a sudden turn was made towards gathering forces with other Amazonian Nation-States. The headlines pointed towards efforts to establish regional co-operation: "Amazonas State and Venezuela: co-operation"\(^\text{126}\) and "Regional co-operation".\(^\text{127}\) In this regard Federal representative, José Dutra, (PMDB-Amazonas), declared in Congress: "We have the Manaus Duty Free Zone ... there, Western Amazonians, with their faith and hard work, have proved to the rest of the country that they are ready to implement a strong process of development. With Merconort, I am sure that the path to development would be open starting a new development era in the region".\(^\text{128}\)

\(^{124}\) "New approach to housing problem", *O Liberal*, 30/11/91.  
\(^{125}\) "Amazonian block", *A Crítica*, 10/12/94.  
\(^{126}\) *A Crítica*, 20/11/91.  
\(^{127}\) *A Crítica*, 10/2/92.  
\(^{128}\) "Common market is the economic solution for Amazônia", *A Crítica*, 10/5/91.
Though reporting on initiatives to strengthen regional links, the press was also aware of the magnitude of the regional problems. Newspapers picked up on the international attention paid to the Amazon. The regional question had assumed greater proportions for the international dimension that concerns with the Amazon had acquired. Headlines acknowledge much of the foreign attention paid to the region in different moments in the early 1990s: “Brazil and England will analyse the Amazon”,129 “American ecologist sees region’s reality”,130 “The eyes of the world turn to Xapuri”,131 “German foundation invests to preserve reserves in Amapá”,132 “GTZ discusses priorities for Latin America”, 133 and “Amnesty investigates violence in Amazonas”.134

_A Crítica_ expressed the international mobilisation and called on “... all nationals, Brazilian and Amazonian, to pledge faith in the future of the region ... we shall not kneel down immobilised, indifferent ... to let the tentacles of foreign dominance prevail in Amazônia ... and end up expelled ... as it happened to Adam in the (Book of) Genesis”.135 The newspaper evokes biblical imagery, one of current use in matters regarding the Amazon, to build up drama in what is identified as imminent threat of “all nations which should also take care of their territories and practice reforestation of areas destroyed by them in the name of pseudo-development and progress.”

By using religious language, the press embraces development as a creed. In many ways, the press resonated the paranoid perspectives of many regional actors. The press's persuasive powers were geared in that direction which does not necessarily open space for public debate. Canons and dogmas are not to be discussed but followed, believed in. In this resides the force of nationalist arguments which preach solutions and have the potential to blind communities in their abilities to see contradiction and hidden interests.

129 _A Crítica_, 27/2/90.
130 _A Crítica_, 10/4/90.
131 _A Crítica_, 10/12/90.
132 _O Liberal_, 29/9/91.
133 _A Crítica_, 20/3/92 (GTZ is a German agency which finances several research projects in countries, among others, Brazil and Venezuela).
134 _A Crítica_, 29/8/93.
135 “Shouting for help”, _A Crítica_, 30/6/90.
4. Sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development was introduced world-wide by official means. A major part of its articulation stems from official discourse, here understood, according to Dahlgren (1985) as "... various ways of talking about the world which are appropriate in the news media, in contacts with governmental authorities, in bureaucratic situations ..." (p. 10).

There are many manifestations of the official discourse appearing in the news. A unison is observed in the statements of government officials:

- "In the recuperation of degraded areas in Amazônia, we will put into practice projects and we will promote programmes for the sustainable development of the native forest". Tânia Munhoz, president of the Brazilian Institute for the Environment, at the time, *A Crítica*, 21/9/90.

- "It is necessary to reconcile development and environmental protection ... This is the starting point for the implementation of a sustainable development policy for the region where economic activity proves rational via environmental conservation and ecological balance". Egberto Baptista, Secretary of Regional Development, in Fernando Collor de Mello's Government, *O Liberal*, 20/11/90.

- "The recent attack on Army troops carried out by Colombian guerrilla or free lance prospectors, and the cholera epidemic threat originated in Peru ... have prompted Senator Oziel Carneiro (PDS-Pará) propose the immediate restart of the Calha Norte Project as a means of guaranteeing greater protection of the national border and, at the same time, create conditions for integration of Amazônia". *O Liberal*, 10/3/91.

- "Developed countries have had to destroy their environment to develop. We, by contrast, conserve our forest and its invaluable riches, so far untouched ... Now, though it is time to use our brains and follow the right pathways aiming at an economic development, healthy and socially equitable. This is what we want to prepare for the future guaranteed via a socially equitable development, compatible with our environment". José Belfort, Science, Technology and Environment Secretary for Amazonas State at the time, *A Crítica*, 30/5/91.

- "The sustainable development of the state will stop the process of environmental degradation as a result of mineral resources exploitation and deforestation ... We want the organisation of economic activities transforming them in the conservationist practices ... Rondônia's experience shows that development can
be conducted to guarantee socio-economic-ecological sustainability in the region". Osvaldo Piana, then Governor of Rondonia State, *A Crítica*, 20/7/91.

"The territorial extension of the Amazon region and its low population density are the major obstacles for regional development ... The solution to improve life conditions for the Amazonian is to develop as long as it is environmentally sound". Alcyr Meira, Superintendent, Agency for the Development of the Amazon (SUDAM), *O Liberal*, 30/8/91.

According to the findings produced in the content analysis stage of this study, the Brazilian government discourse favours sustainable development:

- "We want the Amazon not against the whole of humanity but in defence of it, especially in defence of the man of Amazônia". Francisco Garcia, Deputy Governor of Amazonas State, *A Crítica*, 10/9/91.

- "We want sustainable development under the condition that all natural riches are exploited in the benefit of those of the Amazon". Guillermo González, Colombia Ambassador in Brazil, *A Crítica*, 10/9/91.

- "The pilot programme (Pilot Programme for the Protection of Brazilian Tropical Forests - PP-G7) aims to implement a model of sustainable development ... Resources (financial) will be partially used to combat deforestation in Amazônia ... Nothing will affect our sovereignty" (when asked of any pre-conditions attached to international moneys provided for the programme). José Goldemberg, Environment Minister, *O Liberal*, 10/6/92. Resources were also expected from other sources such as the EC: "Agreement with EC may bring US$ 15 million to the Amazon", *O Liberal*, 30/6/92. It is necessary to clarify that in official circles it was (is) known that until the Brazilian government meets the required conditions established by the G-7 countries and their consultants, no money was (is) to be donated.

- "The Amazonian Nations are united in the same challenge to achieve sustainable development for the region ... and Brazil is open to international co-operation. Despite all interest shown toward Amazônia, this co-operation has not been made available at desirable levels of quantity and quality". Itamar Franco, Brazilian President, *A Crítica*, 11/5/93.

- "Amazônia does not need a Ministry ... but an effective development that is achieved in practice". Robério Braga, Manaus City councillor, on the occasion of the creation of the Ministry for the Amazon by the then President Itamar Franco, following the massacre of Yanomami Indians on the border Brazil/Venezuela, *A Crítica*, 29/8/93.
"Amazônia cannot be seen only in its dimension of challenges and problems. It must be able to benefit from the advantages of sustainable development". Rubens Ricupero, Minister of the Amazon, *A Crítica*, 21/9/93.

The identification of four types of portrayals of the Amazon in the local press has provided an overview of news representation of the region. The above analysis introduced main forms of regional depiction in the news. Presented in an evolutionary format, the analysis brings us to the point where the introduction of the concept of sustainable development demands further scrutiny. In the following section, I will explore how the ambiguous nature of the concept appears in the news. I will also demonstrate how the coverage makes it clear that sustainable development is used by a variety of actors serving even more diverse interests. The section below is based on the analysis of language. It provides further argument for the later discourse analysis.

**Ambiguity and purpose in the use of a concept**

News is instrumental in the study of the complex and controversial representations of Amazônia. As will be demonstrated, the diversity of meanings expressed in the news does not contemplate the multiplicity of claims about regional development issues in that the fragmented nature of the coverage provokes a juxtaposition of opinions that ultimately gives an ambiguous character to the meanings. The variety of actors and the language interchangeably applied by them all is one of the main factors for the ambiguity observed in the debate of sustainable development issues.

Competing views unearth conflict in the definition of concepts around social problems. In the case of Amazônia, in many occasions, the ambiguous and interchangeable nature in the use of constructs has given way to imprecision and unwillingness to compromise for the solution of regional problems. As demonstrated in the content analysis chapter, the ambiguity and imprecision in the use of language has allowed for issues such as the environment and development to become more prominent than the underlying problems such as land ownership and deforestation. This practice is part of a world-wide trend to
attribute importance to the environment that foresees solution based on sustainable development principles.

Even though the press in the Amazon may fall under the claims of reproducing “dominant political assumptions” (Dalby, 1996, p. 594), it has been forced in recent years to open the way to a number of actors who were not as visible before. As multiple meanings of sustainable development are constructed and made sense of by a plethora of social segments, a variety of actors have become more visible from the late 1980s onwards.

The variety of voices in the regional press reveals imprecision in language use and ambiguity. These characteristics have allowed for the most diverse forms of interpretation and meaning-making. So far as diversity is a welcome development in democratic societies, it also creates the potential for confusion and, thus, is not as effective in influencing policy-making. The character of confusion as to what myth is and what reality represents is well expressed in the use of language that can be applied in both positive and negative frames. Though conflict is revealed in its depths, language signifying action is employed from either positive or negative perspectives, according to the users, revealing an unwillingness to compromise with the very problems that they try to express and propose debate about. This is where the diversity of points of view though contributing to democratic exercise of citizenship, benefits, via the intrinsic ambiguous nature of language use, interest groups that influence decision-making power. Competition among new actors is also a component essential in identifying aspects of this dynamic.

In the attempts to change Brazil’s image in the eyes of the world, several voices mix. While the government fought to prove it was changing policy and, thus, receive international funding for environmental action (namely, at the time, demarcation of Indian areas and establishment of conservation units), the private sector wanted to prove they practised sustainability. It was essential for entrepreneurs to demonstrate their politically correct attitude towards the environment and development issues:

- “Entrepreneurs defend approval of proposals to guarantee the socio-economic development of the region without damage to the preservation of the environment.” In O Liberal, 20/9/91. In this, alleged
preservation initiatives of private nature mix with initiatives in the public sphere expressed in earlier government decision: “Pará will have preservation units”, *O Liberal*, 10/8/90.

- “There already exists awareness as to the need to use the natural resources of the Amazon avoiding environmental degradation and human degradation caused by misery and poverty as they have reached unbearable levels”. Danilo Remor, deputy president of Pará State Industries Federation (FIEPA). *O Liberal*, 10/10/91.

- “It is indispensable that in this process (of sustainable development), we defend and reject theses expressed by pseudo-ecologists who believe themselves responsible for voicing the regional reality. It has been in this process that we have witnessed the most audacious tampering with national sovereignty in the name of nature ... What is at stake is not only the environment”. José Roberto Tadros, President of the Amazonas State Federation of Commerce (Feceam), *A Crítica*, 10/2/92.

- “The analysis of the industrial sector’s activities is more of emotional approach than of a rational one ... The logging sector employs today 300,000 people and on the pretext of ecological preservation, all that is being created is difficulties for the survival of man in Amazônia ... in obstacles created by preservationist organisations who oppose the presence of man in the region, what is being put into practice is an anti-ecology ... We demand that tax revenue be re-invested in the region for reforestation”. Danilo Remor, president of Pará State Industries Federation (FIEPA), *O Liberal*, 20/5/94.

The government felt it was successful: “Brazil was praised in the Genebra meeting”, Eduardo Martins, then and now, president of the Brazilian Institute for the Environment (IBAMA), said after a meeting with representatives of the G-7 countries.136 As for the private sector, by 1993, it was still faithful to its endeavour to prove to be beyond any suspicion of environmental damage. This was plainly done for purposes of justifying its acts to the outside world. No sense of accountability to the region itself was expressed: “We want to show the international community what the Amazon is and how the rational exploitation of timber is being carried out using selective principles”.137 This should eliminate the wrong idea that we carry out indiscriminate slash and burn of the forest,”138 the president of the Association of Timber Exporters (Aimex), Danilo Remor139 said.

136 "Brazil to receive funding to protect Amazon forest", *A Crítica*, 10/12/91.
137 This argument goes against scientific advice regarding forest management practices: “Selective exploitation threatens forest”, *O Liberal*, 10/10/90.
138 "Timber companies fight to change their image", *O Liberal*, 10/11/93.
139 Remor is also the president of the Pará State Industries Federation (FIEPA).
The variety of actors discussing regional problems gives rise to political alliances that to a
certain extent are surprising. Even one faction in the unions' movements provided support to
nationalist views and paranoid approaches. Francisco Braga, a union leader from *Força Sindical* in Amazonas State, said that "To divide forces is to strengthen the enemy who for
many years have prevented the Amazon from developing ... My pledge to the people and
workers of Amazonas State is that we unite forces around all actions which defend
development and national sovereignty".\(^{141}\)

The fragmented nature of interpretations of reality in the Amazon challenges any attempt to
identify uniform messages in the regional press. Consistent with the content analysis
findings, patterns arise of groups who apply language, concepts and ideas in accordance with
their own interests. In an atmosphere where participation is emphasised, the diversity of
actors reinforces fragility in the expression of their claims. This is especially true when
regional actors are confronted with the turning point of policy decision-making. The
multiplicity of channels has a potential to homogenise and blur the distinct messages
expressed by those active in the arenas of debate. Thus, the ambiguity of discourses,
blending the variety of interests at stake, represents a threat, and can lead to ambiguous.

It has become evident from the content analysis that the action of Indian and overall NGO
organisations has been voiced on a much larger scale than might have been expected given
the elitist character of media as a whole and the regional press in particular. Although there
is a risk that sustainable development could be simply a more politically correct name for
*old development*, the overall political scenario associated with a sharper non-governmental
organisational structure has shaken power structures to the extent that the private sector has
felt isolated.\(^{142}\) Thus, representatives from the private sector started to use language which,
until then, had been exclusive to other actors. Entrepreneurs, feeling the pressure,
appropriated concepts never before used and established strategies to face criticism and the
impact of the now more visible actors from non-official, non-private spheres.

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\(^{140}\) Another Unions' Central Organisation which opposes CUT and the Workers Party (PT).

\(^{141}\) "Union leader defends Amazonian Code", *A Crítica*, 20/8/91.

\(^{142}\) "Entrepreneurs fear lack of support", *A Crítica*, 10/11/90.
News in *O Liberal* demonstrate the emphasis on a “green perspective” to suit the new environmental demands: “Amazonian plants, good business”, 29/9/91; “Medicinal plants cultivated in Amapá”, 10/7/92; “Chemical importance of the Amazon”, 30/10/92; “The importance of ethnobotany”, 30/11/92. *A Crítica* also took this course of coverage: “‘Green stamp’ for environmental quality products”, 10/10/90. But the coverage also reveals divisions among NGOs: “IMA criticises lack of union among environmental organisations”.4

By drawing on these contributions, two different language clusters have been identified within the news under analysis. Not surprisingly, words were employed to imply completely different meanings on different occasions and contexts and by a variety of actors. Two clusters of such words are presented, one taking a positive perspective another taking a negative one. Positive and negative are analysed here on the basis of the meaning they take in the context of the news.

A third language cluster was devised from within the positive and negative set of terms. This third cluster reveals potential ambiguity of language. In this cluster, I gather terms that are used both in the positive and negative perspectives. The analysis outlines the interchangeable character of language. It points out how one term can take one meaning or another according to the actors applying them. It is the extensive use of language’s interchangeable ability that has ultimately produced a rather ambiguous discourse which permeates the news on environment and development in Amazônia.

**Positive action language**

Positive action language in this analysis is defined by the use of language that articulates problems and identifies potential solution. Terms such as *denounce* and *protest* appear in the coverage of crime and violence, Indian affairs, media and policy issues: “Wife of murdered

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4 *A Crítica*, 20/11/93.
pilot denounces"144 and "Indians denounce terrorist policy",145 "Governor protests against IBAMA'S fines",146 "Redenção protests",147 "CIMI Norte I protests invasion by Federal Police",148 "Protest against coverage",149 "CIMI protests absence of regional population representatives in meeting".150

Given the many difficulties affecting populations, survival constitutes an important element in regional affairs. Both the noun and the verb are applied in matters related to human populations: In O Liberal: "Submissive, Indian asks for licence to survive", 20/7/90; "Ecology, survival of all", 29/9/91. In A Crítica: "To the caboclo, freedom of survival", 20/1/90.

In the ongoing debate about environmental problems many terms become pervasive. Coverage introduces elements of negotiation such as dialogue, debate and discussion: "CUT takes the Amazon to a national debate", A Crítica, 21/2/91; "Forest Peoples meet at Union's version of Eco", A Crítica, 30/9/91; "PT (Workers Party) debates Amazonian issues", A Crítica, 20/9/91. Besides union and ethnic leadership, other actors such as scientists also contribute to the discussion of Amazonian affairs and, thus, appear in the press: In O Liberal, "Debate gathers regional scientists", 30/1/92; "Belém will debate combat of malaria", 20/4/92; In A Crítica, "Negro river under debate", 11/3/94. In the specific field of policy-making, the headlines in O Liberal read: "SUDAM debates training programme", 20/7/90; "Debate over highway on Amazonian border re-starts", 30/3/92; "Agriculture projects in debate", 28/2/93.

Other words reveal the continuing nature of the debate in search of alternative and solution. In O Liberal: "Indians search for self-sustained experience through extractive practice", 20/3/90; "Settlement based on agriculture is the solution", 10/4/90; "Macro-zoning to protect the environment", 10/8/90; "Extractive reserve is alternative for the region", 150

144 O Liberal, 30/5/93.
145 A Crítica, 20/3/94.
146 A Crítica, 10/10/90.
147 A Crítica, 20/5/92.
148 A Crítica, 20/5/92.
149 O Liberal, 10/6/92.
150 A Crítica, 20/8/93.
30/9/90; “Public awareness may be the solution”, 30/10/90; “How to achieve sustainability without forest damage”, 20/8/93; “The agro-environmental option”, 20/9/94. In A Crítica headlines were that “Common Market way out of economic crisis in the Amazon”, 10/5/91; “Solutions for the Amazon”, 30/5/92; “Government starts ecological zoning”, 10/7/94.

An emphasis on co-operation, integration and support is also identified in the coverage of regional affairs: In A Crítica: “Colombia supports Amazonas State. Amazonas in defence of the Amazon”, 10/9/91; “Amazonian countries need support”, 10/2/92; “Amazonas State and Venezuela: co-operation”, 20/11/91; “Regional co-operation”, 10/2/92; “Amazonian Block”, 10/12/94; and in O Liberal, “Campaign tries to obtain support for creation of Tapajós State”, 30/8/91.

Awareness, understanding, trust and compromise comprise language which points towards some developments in efforts to reach agreement around social problems: “Public awareness may be the solution”, 151 “Free lance prospectors ask for more understanding”, 152 “Popular medicine gains trust”, 153 and “Ecologists’ ethical compromise”. 154

In the specific area of environmental matters, evaluation is a key term. News about environmental impact, mining activities and land ownership reveal a more proactive approach: “Project to evaluate environmental impact”, 155 “Mining in Negro river evaluated”, 156 “CCA wants to monitor situation”, 157 and “Mobilisation for agrarian reform”. 158

In an openly pro-active approach, demarcation of Indian land and autonomy of territories and rights to self-determination seem to be a favourite target of the coverage: In A Crítica: “Indian land demarcation, asks CIMI”, 10/2/90; “Demarcation suspended for lack of resources”, 10/7/90; “Demarcation could impede Indian extermination”, 20/9/91;

151 O Liberal, 30/10/90.
152 O Liberal, 30/10/90.
153 O Liberal, 30/7/93.
154 O Liberal, 10/6/92.
155 A Crítica, 10/9/92.
156 A Crítica, 11/1/94.
157 A Crítica, 11/1/94. CCA is the University of Amazonas Environmental Studies Centre which demonstrated interest in monitoring mining activity in the Negro river.
158 O Liberal, 20/8/93.
"Demarcation of Yanomami area postponed", 30/10/91; "Possuelo\textsuperscript{159} wants to maintain demarcation", 10/12/91. In \textit{O Liberal}: "Public law suit against demarcation of Yanomami reserve accepted", 30/01/92. "Indians want autonomous territory", 30/5/92; "Indigenous peoples defend self-determination laws", 10/6/92.

Another word that provides evidence of positive action by regional actors in searching for solutions is \textit{funding}. It appears frequently as the region seeks to expand sources of funds for research, agriculture and environmental management: In \textit{O Liberal}: "Science and technology face mal-distribution of funding", 10/1/91; "G-7 funding for Goeldi Museum", 20/5/93; "Farmers want more funding from FNO Urgente", 20/11/93 (FNO - Northern Constitutional Fund); "FNO re-starts financing of fishing activities", 20/11/94. In \textit{A Critica}: "IBAMA distributes Cr$ 80 million in Manaus", 10/7/91; "Funding promised by G-7 has not arrived to Manaus", 10/12/91; "Amazon receives American credit", 10/6/92; "Funding for forest out in August", 10/6/92.

\textbf{Negative action language}

The regional imaginary is filled with extremes from abundance to misery. Ideas of death, loss, devastation are not unknown to the Amazon. The negative perspective of life is a constant reminder of the difficulties in the region. While the positive perspective envisions solutions to regional problems through negotiation and co-operation, the negative perspective outlines despair, lack of hope, violence and in many instances an absence of a future.

\textit{Abandonment, victimisation, spoliation, destruction, omission} and \textit{failure} are common terms in the news about the Amazon both in the region and outside. From government officials to nature, all are blamed for the region’s neglect: "Collor accused of abandoning Amazonas State",\textsuperscript{160} "Waters abandon their favourite sons",\textsuperscript{161} and "Amazon citizen, victim of spoliation".\textsuperscript{162} The difficulties also afflict the private sector: "Manaus Free Duty Zone:

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{159} Sidney Possuelo was at the time president of FUNAI, the Brazilian government agency in charge with Indian affairs.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{160} \textit{A Critica}, 20/6/91.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{161} \textit{O Liberal}, 30/11/94.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{162} \textit{A Critica}, 20/7/90.}
\end{footnotes}
boycott or destruction of a model". Besides destruction, the sense of omission and failure are elements present in the reporting of regional news: "Yanomami criticises government omission", and "Land occupation project failed in Rondônia".

*Death* is a permanent threat to Amazonian life. There are multiple meanings to this word: "30,000 turtle chicks dead. Pollution might be responsible", "Cholera might have caused death of two fishermen", "Deaths said to have no connection with demarcation", "Deaths in Redenção and Itaituba", "Malaria and measles cause Indian deaths", and "Children mortality diminished by 30 percent".

Indians are faced with genocide and invasion of their territory: "Yanomami genocide", "Urueu-wau-wau Indian land invaded by free-lance prospectors", "Overnight invasion, tractors and saws in Cupixi", "CIMI Norte I protests invasion by Federal Police", "Kopenawa says militaries facilitate invasion of reserves", "Indians appeal against invasions".

But death can also take meaning and significance to private sector as when entrepreneurs from the rubber industry declare that because of policy "We have not the conditions to keep production flowing. Four million people depend on the sector which is on the edge of death", in "Producers discover ‘coup’ against Brazilian rubber production".

Responsible for the exploitation of natural resources in the region, the private sector is frequently on the headlines: "Eight companies will exploit timber submerged by Tucurú".
“Amapá wants higher taxes for china clay exploitation”, “Arthur preaches rational exploitation of the forest”, “Court denies licence for multinational company to exploit china clay”.

_Destruction_ assumes different faces. In respect to the environment, destruction reaches specific ecosystems: “Without advice, immigrants destroy Castanhais”. Animals and human populations are threatened with destruction and diseases: “Disease threatens cocoa plantation”, “Selective exploitation threatens forest”, “Cholera threatens all of America, says PAHO”, “Contamination threatens Tucuruí lake”, “Oil spill may threaten the Amazon”, “Wood loggers threaten Tikunas”, “Biogenetic databank threatened by fire”, “Brazil nut Polygon endangered”, “Endangered forest”, “Malaria and pneumonia kill Yanomami”, “Tuberculosis continues to kill in Brazil”.

News about the impact of _deforestation_ through the employment of slash and burn techniques is pervasive in the coverage. In _A Crítica_: “Burning sites all over the Amazon”, 10/10/90; “Burning sites increase in Marabá”, 30/8/91, “Legal action prevents devastation”, 30/10/91; “Biogenetic databank threatened by fire”, 10/6/92; “Rector alerts to the consequences of deforestation in the region”, 20/10/92, “IMA controls burning sites”, 20/11/92, “Deforestation needs understanding”, 10/12/92; “Deforestation generates protests”, 20/6/93. In _O Liberal_: “Helicopters and 60 men against burning”, 30/8/90; “Deforestation reaches 12% in Pará”, 10/9/91; “Zoning to reduce devastation”, 20/2/92;
“Amazon: burning continues to diminish”, 20/11/93; “Space shuttle astronaut overviews the Amazon burning”, 10/7/94.


**Positive/negative action language**

As it was the case with words that fell under positive and negative action clusters, a third cluster was identified where word use more obviously demonstrates the ambiguity applied to language. According to the perspectives of sources, of journalists and readers, the language used in the contexts presented below assumes an even wider variety of meanings. Such meanings can be constructed on the basis of each individual’s interest and background. Some examples of possible diverse interpretations are provided to demonstrate the accommodation of terms in accordance with interests involved in the issue.

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198 IBAMA is the Brazilian government Environmental Agency.
199 Urucu is an exploitation site located in Amazonas State and under the responsibility of Petrobrás, the Brazilian oil company.
What for some it may be negative that the BR-156 EIA will have to be re-assessed, need for re-assessment of the project *per se* is positive. While *O Liberal* acknowledges the need to re-design the project - "Environmental Impact Assessment on BR-156 road needs re-doing"*, 30/07/91 -, *A Crítica* prefers the more subtle term of evaluation: "Project to evaluate environmental impact", 10/10/92. The word *impact* in itself, when used in the context of environmental issues, implies disturbance, change that introduces disorder to a given ecosystem. Although this is the case with most *development* initiatives in the region, if impact is used in combination with evaluation and assessment, its negative face tends to fade. Exceptions are made, though, in situations where the country is condemned for its actions: "Brazil taken to Court: dam construction".**200** It is obvious, though, that different from *A Crítica*, *O Liberal* tends to be more balanced and, not infrequently, reports on the search for solutions to disorder: "What takes the region into ecological disorder".**201**

Another word that generates ambiguity is *defence*. It is mostly connected to military action and strategy employed in the region. Used to reinforce paranoid views of conspiracy against the region, defence takes a connotation that implies regional interests. Articulated by government officials and economic elites, defence of regional interests is hardly the main goal of the initiatives reported in the news. "State representative Lupércio suggests union to defend the Amazon",**202** and "IMA criticises lack of union among environmental organisations".**203**

*Strategy* appears in many forms in affairs involving the military in the region: "Military troops manoeuvre in border area",**204** "Military manoeuvre in the Amazon",**205** "Shining Path and FARC united in the Amazon",**206** "CMA**207** applies strict measures in patrolling of the region",**208** "Border is strategic area for guerilla and drug traffic",**209** "Navy increases forces in the region".**210** An accredited source in the CMA quoted in *A Crítica*, on 10/11/93, says: "The

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**200** *O Liberal*, 30/3/92.

**201** *O Liberal*, 20/10/90.

**202** *A Crítica*, 20/4/91.

**203** *A Crítica*, 20/11/93.

**204** *O Liberal*, 20/8/93.

**205** *O Liberal*, 30/9/93.

**206** *A Crítica*, 10/11/93.

**207** Military Command of the Amazon.

**208** *A Crítica*, 10/11/93.

**209** *A Crítica*, 10/11/93.

**210** *A Crítica*, 30/4/94.
guerrilla is a matter of internal affairs of Peru and Colombia, but we cannot remain impassive. After all the better strategy is attack by surprise”. Assessing regional affairs as a matter of national security has proved a flawed policy. The reporting of military presence in the region supports the paranoid perspective of nationalists. Simultaneously, the news about strategic matters exposes the damage caused to endogenous population vis-à-vis the oppressive element of such a presence nearby Indian territory.

The employment of the term defence in the coverage mixes the conservative and elitist interests dominant in the region. News also reveals that the term is applied by social movements and representatives of other interests in their struggle to free the region from oppression against political, economic and cultural forces: “Belém defends free Amazônia”,1 “Environmentalist fears set back in policy to defend the Amazon”,2 “The war and the defence of Amazônia”,3 “Institutions must unite in the defence of the Amazon”,4 “Colombia supports Amazonas State. Amazonas in defence of the Amazon”,5 “Mestrinho intensifies the defence of the Amazon”,6 “Mestrinho increases action for the defence of the Amazon”,7 “Indian peoples defend self-determination laws”,8 “Marluce defends Calha Norte”,9 “Youngsters in the struggle in defence of Amazônia”,10 “Priante defends resources for the Amazon”.11

Clearly another way of talking about defence is through the use of the term protection. Whilst this term appear in the coverage, it hardly makes reference to human populations: In A Crítica: “Brazil will have funding to protect Amazon forest”, 10/12/91; “Archipelago on Negro river to be protected”, 27/2/94. This is rather contradictory, as most of the newspaper coverage is dedicated to a discourse that is anthropocentric in its view of development affairs.

211A Crítica, 10/7/90.  
212A Crítica, 10/12/90.  
213O Liberal, 20/1/91.  
214A Crítica, 20/8/91.  
215A Crítica, 10/9/91.  
216A Crítica, 10/5/92.  
217A Crítica, 20/5/92.  
218A Crítica, 10/6/92.  
219A Crítica, 20/8/93.  
220A Crítica, 21/9/93.  
221A Crítica, 30/11/94.
Another term with the ambiguity of meaning is *participation*. While it is used to express what is seen as the good produced by military presence in the region, it is also employed to highlight the democratic view of social participation in public life. These views are expressed in headlines such as “VII Air Force Command participates in the progress of the Amazon”, and “Amazônia: participatory environmental development”. In connection with the latter view, science is accused of not contributing enough in improving sound decision-making: “Science contribution to the Amazon is still incipient”.

*Conflict* as a source of solution is not at all considered. When the word appears, it implies tragedy for those lacking political support and economic power: “Waimiri-Atroari in conflict”, “Poverty is not responsible for armed conflict in the Hemisphere”, “Tired of conflict, Indians want peace”.

*Planning* is seen by many as a solution to the region’s problems, the lack of participation of regional actors in such a process has impeded provision of alternatives to Amazonian difficulties. While planning agriculture in the region - “Agriculture plan for the Amazon” - is not, in principle, a mistake, it has to assess other issues as pointed out in “Unemployment threatens Marabá and São João do Araguaia. Research alerts to the risk of chaos in agriculture and extractive economies”.

In the midst of news about planning, when the issue of investment surfaces, it is in connection with initiatives that may persist in damaging the environment: In *A Crítica*: “Gulf Crisis makes Petrobrás review its investments in the Amazon”, 10/10/90; “Meira: infra-structure before investment”, 10/11/90; “Plan to invest US$ 3 billion in Amazonas”, 20/2/94.
In the enforcement of law, the environmental authorities appear in the coverage as nature's defenders. What is not clear is that these initiatives are in fact episodic rather than systematic: In *A Crítica*: “Inspectors confiscate 20 turtles”, 10/8/91; “IBAMA confiscates 350 wood poles”, 30/6/93; “Industrial fishing net confiscated by IBAMA”, 30/9/93; “Tin smuggling proved”, 30/1/90; “Wood cargo confiscated”, 30/6/93; “IBAMA seizes wild animals up for sale”, 30/10/93; “Fish smuggling denounced by COIAB”, 10/2/94; “IBAMA seizes wild animals”, 10/9/94. While these law enforcement acts constitute news, the critical assessment of such action is completely ignored in the coverage. In many ways it is restricted to the identification and denunciation such as in: “Predatory fishing on Pará's Coast”,231 “Predatory fishing denounced”.

Another issue that has disturbed the political scenario in recent times is that of *separatism*. The imbalance in the use of language is shown in news that supports separation. As discussed earlier when exposing issues of fragmentation, division can hardly be seen as good political strategy but for many there is no other option. While the whole of Pará state would have much to lose were it to have micro-regions taken away from its jurisdiction, for those affected by the lack of attention from the State government, to gain political independence is the only solution: “Campaign tries to obtain support for creation of Tapajós State”,232 and “Separatism as a result of poverty”.233

The numerous variations in the employment of certain words in the news about regional affairs are only consistent with the ambivalence of the concept of sustainable development. The difficulty in coming to terms with the operationalisation of this concept creates the conditions to the pervasive ambiguity of language used in the debate of social problems. In this context, many words are attributed as having opposing meanings. An added factor of confusion, this practice supports findings of diverse and opposing views accommodated within the discussion of Amazonian affairs.

**Amazonian discourse on sustainable development**

*O Liberal*, 12/1/93.
*O Liberal*, 30/8/91.
*O Liberal*, 10/12/91.
The building of (new) meaning implies the process of developing (new) forms of discourses. Language attributed to "specific objects and symbols is dependent on their relationship to an entire system of meanings" that ultimately comprise "narratives or structures of representation" (Whatmore & Boucher, 1993, p. 168). The construction of meaning around themes relevant to the contemporary Amazonian reality and that of the role of actors in the process is analysed on the basis of Whatmore & Boucher's (1993) model of environmental narratives identified as competing in planning discourse in the 1980s. Analysis also takes into consideration Escobar's (1992) discussion of modes of development discourse and Tironi's (1987) matrix.

As much as ambiguity in discourse serves special vested interests, there appears to be a direct and opposite equivalent situation to each and every assumed truth about the Amazon or element of reality introduced in the coverage of sustainable development in the regional press. As Burgess (1990) says, in its "complex system of signification", discourse, "produces the maximum possibilities for different interpretations" (p. 146).

In the process of negotiating possible solutions to old problems in the region, some concepts appear in dichotomic fashion in both language and visual resources. The regional news coverage reveals a clash between nature and people, between nature's beauty and human misery, between natural resources, the possibility of quality of life and the increased poverty.

In the definition of these contradictory issues, actors of more diverse backgrounds debate problems and negotiate alternatives. In public arenas, among which the media, conflict is an ongoing phenomenon as competing interests clash: namely initiatives of preservation and the defence of continuous exploitation of natural resources. Attempts to make policy decision-making a more participative process and the need to improve quality of life are the more apparent factors in Brazil's democratic scenario which is yet to be consolidated. The conflicting social forces appear in the press and are active in the process of definition of development policy affecting the Amazon.
The debate around development issues in regional arenas takes into consideration the conflicting nature of meanings attributed to Amazônia. The dichotomic characteristic when considering natural resources and human society is the starting point of such conflict. In the process of both discussion and action, two opposing forces are more obviously present. One force claims that rational use of natural resources is synonymous with the quality of life. Another focuses principally on miserable living conditions despite the possibility of rationally using natural resources to solve the regional problems.

In this debate, a variety of actors take part and many move towards putting discussion results and conclusions into practice. In both debate and action, conflict is a underlying factor. The axis of conflict lies in the diverse and competing nature of interests. It is also apparent in the opposing views of preservation and continuing use of resources. Conflict appears too in the demand for increased social participation in decision-making levels as well as in the ultimate goal of development and improvement of quality of life.

Some of these contradictory elements arise in a persistent dichotomy between nature and humankind seen as separate entities. In situations where sustainable development is at stake, human activities and the economic process of natural resources exploitation express more intensely the confrontational face of the relations between man and the physical environment. In an attempt to demonstrate such opposing views, I have designed a diagram to depict the process of expression of these confrontational forces. Two main perspectives appear as dominant in the coverage: one that aligns forces with nature and another that focuses on human populations. In each of these perspectives some characteristics rise and appear in opposite sides. In the on going debate where these views are expressed supported and rejected, actors involved are continuously negotiating and compromising with one or another side or even setting matters for a mediated solution. Participation, conflict, and competing interests are some of the elements in this debate which, at times, takes the approach based on the use of natural resources and on other occasions leans towards preservation. Both views, though, clearly make use of arguments based on improvement of quality of life. The result of this debate and clash of interests helps in the process of development policy elaboration.
## Process of Expression

### Regional Frames of Development Discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Beauty</td>
<td>Human Misery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential use of resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Actors Negotiating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Competing interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation initiatives</td>
<td>Social Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous use of resources</td>
<td>Improvement of quality of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development (Policy)

Approaches to sustainable development identified in the Amazonian press coverage of regional issues can be said to favour extreme perspectives which subdivide themselves in a number of other individual dimensions. A reductionist approach and a comprehensive approach can be drawn from the chart above. The concurrence of all elements results in dialogue that ultimately leads to policy-making in a process undeniably mediated by the press as demonstrated throughout this study. In this scenario, four major discourses have been identified as underlying the representation of Amazonian life appearing in the pages of two regional newspapers.

What has been found as a result of the analysis of news about sustainable development in two major regional newspapers is a blend of the two models proposed by Whatmore & Boucher (1993) and Escobar (1992). More than a blend, the results point toward the extension of these models observing the unique characteristics of the Amazonian context. In
these variations of meaning-interpretation and discourses, the use of language and the two main opposing views previously discussed come together. Moreover, regional news has unveiled a host of views expressed in four major discourses organised in the diagram below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Negotiator</td>
<td>Preservationist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimisation</td>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>Developmentalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Conservation/Ecology</td>
<td>Nationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Myth/Conspiracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the right end of the diagram, are the representatives of a discourse which sees exploitation of natural resources as the only possible alternative to the region’s problems. These fit a developmentalist frame and Whatmore & Boucher’s (1993) commodity narrative. In the Amazon, though, this discourse has acquired shades of nationalism whose goal is to guarantee the continuation of hegemonic structures controlled by regional elites. This discourse carries two distinct features: one of conspiracy and another of fuelling myths about the region. Borrowed from official rhetoric, these are characteristics which induce an understanding of overall interest on the Amazon as external attempts to take it over. Seen as a threat to Brazil sovereignty, international interest is reported to hide intentions against national autonomy.

Representatives of the developmentalist/nationalist discourse have attempted, as demonstrated throughout the analysis, to argue that their discourse comes in defence of regional and national interests and is based on sustainable development principles. Unwilling to embrace principles of sustainability, they fail to convince. For these actors, the alternative remains to conform in a discourse within which natural resources constitute a valuable commodity. More than attributing a purely economic face to natural resources, developmentalist nationalists base their argument on the reinforcement of regional myths of abundance. These actors’ testimonies observed in the coverage of regional issues constitute
an eulogy to the region’s natural riches. In protection to this argument, actors articulating this discourse dismiss any attempts to protect the environment from depredation as conspiracy against national interests.

This group, mostly represented by local oligarchy of political and economic nature, presents a discourse that is ambiguous. It blends Escobar’s (1992) discourse of the fulfilment of the democratic imaginary and Whatmore & Boucher’s (1993) commodity discourse. Representatives of the private sector alleging democratic principles preach plurality of practices and bargaining in the use of natural resources. The argument draws from the new ideology of sustainable development. In the ambiguous nature of the new concept, the elite appropriate principles in favour of their own particular causes. In that sustainable development constitutes “an effort of substitution of a Cartesian paradigm by a holistic, systemic and dynamic perspective” (Coelho, 1994, p. 386), it, nevertheless, has come in support of economic interests disguised in politically correct terms. This is a discourse that more strongly expresses appropriation of terms and distortion of principles to the benefit of vested interests. Analysis of coverage has made clear that the Developmentalist nationalists’ ultimate intention is to disguise the commoditisation of nature in a rhetoric based on language from sustainable development ideology.

In the middle range of the continuum elaborated from the analysis of news discourses are two groups. One is comprised of actors who defend the tenets of preservation. Another is composed of those I have named negotiators. The preservationists are not as prominent in regional news as developmentalist nationalists. Preservationists also lose in prominence to those active negotiators who are interested in operationalising sustainability tenets. These latter recognise the need to use natural resources and want that performed in a rational manner. It is clear from the news coverage that they, too, are unable to articulate more practical solutions.

The preservationist frame of discourse blends fulfilment of egalitarian principles (Escobar, 1992) and a loose ecology narrative (Whatmore & Boucher, 1993). This is shared by those of a more idealist nature who, though believing in the tenets of sustainability, are yet to demonstrate how it is possible to realise them. This discourse is more articulated by a
handful of visionaries, in a rather empty discourse that tends to be discredited as it is most critical but remains unable to put any proposal of action forward.

A second group in the middle ground represents the voices of those negotiating. Negotiation and bargaining exercised by various actors are not exclusive to the commodity narrative as suggested by Whatmore & Boucher’s model. As revealed in the news content analysis and in the interviews analysis chapters, the emergence of a new leadership of intellectual background in the Amazon, has allowed for more articulation and direct interference in policy-making. Thus, bargaining and negotiation in the context of the Amazon is also a characteristic of the ecology narrative. Actors have demonstrated through participation in planning decisions, to be willing to give way to conditions not accepted by more orthodox ecology groups. These actors leave aside the pure idealism of egalitarian societies. They avoid to be caught up in the midst of the debate that emphasises the clash between nature and human populations. By sitting at the negotiation table and facing the demands of developed countries, these actors exercise democratic rights by directly intervening in the definition of a future for the region. The news about negotiation for international funds clearly points in the direction of active participation of these negotiators.

The negotiators’ discourse blends egalitarian principles, conservation and ecology discourse. These actors also reveal the ability to bargain on the basis of a discourse of difference (Escobar, 1992). Actors articulating this discourse are involved in planning activities and zoning practices exclusive to the conservation narrative (Whatmore & Boucher, 1993). They tend to base their actions on democratic and pluralistic debates which emphasise the distinctive nature of the Amazon region. This discourse is shared by those who also base their projects and actions on sustainability principles. Actors in this frame of discourse appear better prepared to introduce alternatives and solutions to regional problems as well as to interfere in processes of decision-making. As previously discussed, narratives within this discourse are expressed through the press by both those in the official sphere and those in NGOs.

At the left end of the continuum of discourse narratives are those who challenge the State’s planning strategies and fit in a mix of the third and fourth quadrants in Tironi’s matrix
(Schuurman, 1993) and in a blend of Escobar's (1992) second and third lines of discourse. These actors “feel exploited on all fronts ... and do not adhere [to] ... and engage in armed battle” (Schuurman, 1993, p. 200). The struggle of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) reported in the press is a clear evidence of this discourse. Some, though feeling excluded, have found their own strategies and confront hegemonic structures in various fashions. The actions of rural workers and ethnic leadership reported in the regional press comprise a defence of collective interests of these social segments (Schuurman, 1993). The case of the Kayapó Indians whose practices consistent with sustainability have been acknowledged in the press is yet another example in this frame of discourse. They have exercised self-determination by deciding, among other things, to commercialise natural resources located within the boundaries of their territory. Much criticism has been raised, but given the inability of the government, in its tutorial role, to provide tribes with assistance, the Indians made the decision.

Some of these actors are more active at the level of conflict than at the level of negotiation. They abandon neither of these levels. From the analysis of the coverage, it is clear that active participation depends on the level of organisation certain segments have achieved. Rural and urban workers organised in unions have an institutionalised participation. Recognised in labour legislation they have acquired a distinct status in negotiation spheres in comparison to other forms of organisations. The analysis of visual materials has demonstrated that actors representing organisations stand a better chance of being acknowledged than those at the individual level. It is necessary to remark, though, that, depending on their party affiliation they face more or less difficulties in circulating in public spheres such as the press. Because they are not interested in official models of development, these actors are strictly defending long-denied rights to improved quality of life. Given their practices and their understanding of development, the excluded are in line with an anti-development discourse (Escobar, 1992). The nature of these social groups, revealed in many press reports in the time frame targeted in this study, has led them into radical solutions.

Of all actors within the identified discourses, the excluded remain the more mobile and dynamic. Their ability to accommodate shades of other discourses is clearly pointed out in the news coverage. They become more visible as they organise themselves and somehow
acquire official status necessary to gain media attention. Some social groups exercising the more radical discourse also blend elements of the ecology narrative within their actions. Though not compromising cultural identity, when successful in the combination of narratives, these groups exercise participation, sustainability and zoning, an element exclusive to Whatmore & Boucher's conservation narrative. Actors in these groups have, on occasions, crossed over to the negotiators' discourse when they engage in discussion within official structures.

One striking finding is that in the Amazon, there are no representatives of the conservation narrative proposed by Whatmore & Boucher (1993). It appears that the most extreme deep ecology discourse is not one that Amazonians portrayed in the press consider feasible. The social and economic pressures are of such a dimension in the region that they do not allow room for it to gain much popularity and representation in the public arenas. In exchange for such an exclusion from perspectives appearing in the coverage, elements of the conservation narrative (Whatmore & Boucher, 1993), are introduced by two of the perspectives: those of the negotiators and those of the excluded.

The press by voicing the perspectives of these four major discourses about regional affairs has set the tone for future decisions. Undoubtedly, decision-making will observe these views as the most pervasive and acceptable in the public arenas. News has shaped the context within which policy is being made.

**Social movements and policy-making in the press**

The process of democratisation and the repossession of citizenship has opened the way for more participation, negotiation and conflict that leads to decision-making at the level of State structures and in the form of policy affecting Latin America and more specifically Amazônia. One of the most important arenas of this public debate is the media. The press, in its traditional role of mediator of social concerns, has been responsible for much of the direction decisions have taken. Through the analysis of language use, it has been possible to identify an evolving relation between the State and civil society in the Amazon.
Due to the complexity of the regional scenario and the ambiguous use of the concept of sustainable development by the various actors, it has not been an easy task to separate and identify different discourses appearing in the news. Regardless of the inherent tangle of issues and interests present in Amazonía, it has been possible to draw a clearer picture of the debate about development and environmental issues in the region. News has allowed the observation of political developments crucial for the region. The analysis of selection of sources and themes by the press showed the emergence of new and more articulate actors whose rights had been denied in recent periods in Brazilian history. Taking the role of mediation, the press unveils the conflicts which underline decision being made about the region. The news also reveals that discourses rise in their full frames at turning points of the dynamics of survival in the Amazon.

By exposing conflict, the press highlights issues within the debate which lead into the solution of social problems. The clash between economic and environmental news frames, discussed in the content analysis chapter, exposes the nature of the concept of sustainable development. The contradictions appearing in the news about development and the environment in the Amazon are inherent in negotiation and conflict. The newspapers analysed in this study reveal some of the conflict in the interpretation given to the word progress. The news about representatives of different discourses points toward the conflicting views of social movements and authorities. One of the distortions in the use of the term progress is that it belongs to a positivist perspective on which the Brazilian Republic (1889) in its military origin was conceptualised. Due to the permanent presence of the armed forces in the Amazon, progress for the region is identified as one that necessarily counts on the military co-operation: "VII COMAR (Military Command of the Amazon) participates in the progress of Amazonía", A Crítica, 21/10/91. Others see the matter as pure intervention: "Kopenawa says the military facilitate invasion of reserve", A Crítica", 10/6/92; "Army wants to tighten control in Amazonian borders", A Crítica, 30/1/93.

While the contradictions are obvious, there is a line of discourse that bases its arguments on solutions that favours the economic primary sector. According to the findings presented in the content analysis chapter, O Liberal contains most of the items discussing these issues as
it frames news from the economic point of view more than *A Critica* does: "Unemployment threatens Marabá and São João do Araguaia. Research alerts to the risk of chaos in agriculture and extractive economies", 10/4/90; "Agriculture settlement, the solution", 10/4/90; "Eight companies will exploit timber submerged by Tucuruí" 30/6/90; "Profitability in the extractive activity in the Amazon", 10/1/91; "Industry does not affect non-industrial fishing", 10/4/94; "Trombetas' bauxite goes to Barcarena", 10/4/94; "120,000 tons of corn in Transamazônica", 10/8/94; "CPRM²⁴ catalogues gold of the Amazon", 30/9/94; "Gemmology: Map will help mining in Pará", 30/11/94.

What the news coverage has revealed in the exposure of various discourses is a continuous redefinition of priorities and strategies. Policy discussed in the press is the result of a process arising from opposing forces. Whether inflicted or negotiated, policy is put through a rather challenging system of evaluation as it involves a wide spectrum of actors each of which is lobbying decision-makers in favour of particular interests. The media constitutes one of the more able arenas for such an evaluation to take place. The regional news has revealed scepticism about environmental preservation in its most radical forms. As discussed before, though not as obvious in the coverage, forms applied in the use of natural resources as practised by endogenous populations have been, by principle, sustainable and preservationist. The press has also been instrumental in unveiling authoritarian policies,²³⁵ and how economic forces and market pressures²³⁶ have turned the scenario into what the Amazon is today.

The man and nature dichotomy revealed in the news is only one of the many with which matters of environment are faced in Amazônia. As it was possible to observe in the news, there is a risk of manipulation of themes such as the environment and sustainable development. The news failed to voice a wider range of perspectives in the articulation of this political aspect of the environmental problems. The debate was mostly dominated in the regional press by developmentalist nationalists who ignore the transnational nature of the issue. Amazônia is a unique system as its diversity crosses the borders of eight countries and

²³⁴ CPRM is the State-controlled Company for Mineral Resources Research.
²³⁵ "Cattle raising in Transamazônica", *O Liberal*, 30/7/92.
²³⁶ "Catfish shoal threatened", *O Liberal*, 29/9/91. Later on a different perspective is introduced that is contradictory to the pressure on fish stock: "Industry does not affect non-industrial fishing", *O Liberal*, 10/4/94.
ultimately, similar to other ecosystems throughout the world, may affect life on Earth. The press in the region misses out on the opportunity to approach the problem from a more comprehensive perspective. What other arena, besides the international organisations, would exercise more influence in these matters than the media? To expose the various interests and the possible solutions, the media is an encompassing arena. The legitimacy of various arguments can be put forward as actors negotiate decisions.

Regardless of the usual stereotypes, criticism, and reinforcement of myths about the region and its actors, the scenario is one that allows for more articulate interference in the spheres of power as:

- actors portrayed as being of a lesser category get coverage that reveals prejudice or sympathy, e.g. Indians, rural workers, these groups have demonstrated ability in establishing forms of organisation to negotiate their affairs. They have improved forms of access to media to expose their practices. Scientific circles are more and more recognising and sharing such endogenous knowledge.

- the private sector no longer alone dictates the rules of the game. Rather it has been forced to adjust to the new scenario and justify its own practices.

- politicians and policy-makers (with some chronic exceptions) acknowledge new actors as well as new approaches to the region’s problems.

- NGOs, clergy, and Indians have been consistently putting forward issues relevant for their struggle to be heard in the process of decision-making.

It is fair to argue that participation of various actors has become more common in the definition of policy for the Amazon. The press has exposed moves to open up public institutions to the public, to improve the coverage of science and technology and environment. The news is testimony of a more diverse spectrum of actors introduced in the discussion of regional issues which has grown in the past decade. In this role, the regional press reflects what the social constructionist model devises as public participation in the definition of environmental policy.
In practice, with or without the clear guidance of more sophisticated theoretical frameworks, numerous regional actors, in years of demanding the right to exercise citizenship to influence the definition of the future of the Amazon. As previously discussed, some have been successful and acquired space in the public arenas such as the press. Others lack convincing evidence to support their plight failing to be taken seriously and, thus, are left outside the debate.

Marked by the conflicting nature of the debate and emphasising the fragmentation of perspectives, the news expresses a host of opinions. Contrary to earlier planning attempts to involve all in a process of homogenisation, a more sharp approach to the region’s problems has been acknowledged as one that considers differences. The press is largely responsible for this phenomenon. Despite the usage of language known for its positivist alliance - progress -, it is undeniable that through the identification of demands in a given area, regional actors have been able to recognise needs and implement solutions to endogenous problems. The media’s portrayal of caboclos and Indians is equivocal as it underestimates their capability of organisation and does not value their knowledge in their dealings with the region’s ecosystems. The latter is better expressed in written language than in visual material which has consistently repeated stereotypes of laziness and inertia.237

Press coverage of Amazônia of the first half of the 1990s reveals a continuing struggle between elites and popular segments in society. What arises is the conflicting nature of the occupation of space where those holding the old space and those taking possession of the new space rebuild conflict. It is the possibility of articulating action that clarifies the relation between territory and region, whereby territory reflects the taking possession of the environment and region reflects the governing of the territory, of the resources available.

It is evident that the articulation of an environmental discourse238 has assumed in the region, though in a subtle manner and for that matter in a strategic fashion, its full political character. By introducing themes which complement as well as overlap each other, actors

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237 See chapter V for analysis of visuals.
are providing a wide spectrum of perspectives. The relevance of this finding lies in that it constitutes change. From a society under authoritarian rule to one that opens discussions of its problems, the Amazon has come a long way. The pronounced level of diversity of voices debating regional issues is significant. It reveals regional actors gaining space to express their views about their territory. While in the past, official sources dominated the news, now other actors appear more frequently in the newspapers reports. The regional coverage also uncovers the ability of those in the Amazon to articulate their opinions. While in the national press, regional actors hardly appear as news sources, in the regional press these actors take active part in the public debate.

Conclusion

The analysis has demonstrated that frames of discourse are far from static. As they are built by distinct lines of thinking, discourses express various actors’ interests and reveal the meanings attributed to development in a quite ambiguous form. Moving from one discourse to another, according to their interests, ideologies and historical circumstances, actors in the Amazon have consolidated the fragmented nature of social movements in the region. In some spheres of the State apparatus, it has been possible for regional actors to interfere in a more integrating fashion. As there are no uninterested actors, policy acquires colours matching these actors’ causes. In some spheres of social movements with special reference to Indians and rural workers, it has been possible to observe the articulation of a more extreme discourse to force the State into action. Though not always of a positive kind, State action in some cases results in tragic events for the Indians and the rural workers.

Language and discourse analyses have proved instrumental in revealing how narratives on social equity and participation in the formulation of policy are seen with a most sceptical eye by authorities still compromised with elitist interests. Different from the official approaches, citizen knowledge and popular expertise tend to perceive the environment as part of the context within which their identity is built. As shown throughout the analysis, since the start of the redemocratisation, social movements attempt to influence public policy at different levels of power.
In as a process of resignification, the discussion of certain themes aid articulation among different groups of actors. While some actors surrender to the egalitarian discourse, others demande more specific rights within the framework of democracy such as quality of life and autonomy to give some examples. This action is part of the re-building of identity in the aftermath of authoritarian rule. This represents continuous change as an outcome of the process of travelling from one discourse structure to another as enacted by Amazonians in the debate of region matters.

The analysis of media texts demonstrates both an increased social action in issues of development and the environment, and the ideological nature of underlying discourses. Each discourse unveiled in the coverage carries its own ideological principles and preferences. Further studies should be carried out to analyse the extent to which frames of discourse are articulated by social movements. It will be relevant to observe how social problems continue to be portrayed in the regional media and how far they can be stretched before exploding into more explicit confrontation. Such media portrayal of social action will allow for new insights into the building of regional discourses. The developments in the process of social forces clashing and negotiating in the regional arenas is of major importance in understanding the overall process of new democratic societies. An example of the media’s portrayal of social movements in Amazônia could be the analysis of coverage of the actions of the Landless Workers Movement after the road massacre of 19 rural workers\textsuperscript{29} by the Military Police, in April 1996, in South-east Pará.

The ideological nature of sustainable development becomes clear in the lines of discourse drawn from news published in the Amazonian press. Through the discussion of the environment and development, Amazonians have gone far more into participating in comprehensive arenas of debate. As they entered the discussion of the economic crisis and that of the revision in the use of national resources, regional actors have realised, the hard way, the emphasis on the transnationalisation of relations, the need to challenge the structure of Nation States, as well as the notion of sovereignty and borders. The level of articulation

\textsuperscript{29} Official statistics.
of more radical movements and the increased pervasive nature of their discourse have acquired even greater importance as they challenge the Establishment in its ability to meet civil society's demands.

At any attempt to classify and establish the frames of each discourse, I ran into the impossibility of square-fitting narratives which borrow from both environmentalism and developmentalism and try to combine their most altruistic principles. The Amazon is quite peculiar in that for altruism, utopia, an absolute need of survival and even naiveté, it is intrinsic in the nature of a variety of actors to try to combine what is contradictory and opposite by nature and principle. The very contradictions, dichotomies which are well perceived in the Amazon give way to a rhetoric that uses most discrepant elements in the pursuit of the good in life. Findings also contribute to reveal the commoditisation of regional news. The variety of functions influencing media performance as well as the diversity of elements influencing news production processes contribute to the contradictions revealed in the discourses underlying Amazonian news coverage.
Chapter VIII
Conclusion

This study was designed to identify how the regional press built meaning around development and environmental issues in Amazônia between 1990 and 1994. To achieve such a goal, a constructionist theoretical framework was employed. Content, language and discourse analyses were chosen as methodological means. Within the main principles under which the study is based is that of democracy. Its restoration in contemporary Latin American was fundamental to open debate about social problems. In this process the media and regional social movements have been instrumental in constructing Amazonian social problems. Communication structures and new actors have played a fundamental role in promoting public dialogue essential for social participation in policy-making.

As I explored the building of meaning of social problems in the media, the Amazonian scenario proved to be a prolific site just as the press demonstrated its potential for debate and dialogue. Concentrating on the analysis of regional news, it has been possible to observe that the media and other institutional settings are fora of dialogue in the search for solution to Amazonian problems. By analysing newspaper content, journalists' perspectives and scrutinising text in search of meaning and discourses built around regional issues, I have looked for the different ways of interpreting relevant problems in the Amazonian scenario. This has been achieved by looking into matters from the perspective of regional actors who are most directly affected in the process of policy decision-making concerning regional affairs.

The history of the occupation of Amazônia dating back to Colonial times and more recently from the 1960s onwards is central to understanding the political, social, economic and environmental processes affecting the region. The area has been the target of numerous policies and plenty of mistakes. Authoritarian decision-making has brought the region to a state of complete disorder. New problems of various types have arisen in the past decades and others have worsened. For twenty five years Brazil, as most Latin American countries, was faced with military dictatorship. As the roughest years marked by generalised persecution, censorship, imposed policies, and manipulated Congress had passed, developmentalism at its more refined positivist approach eased and redemocratisation
became the order of the day. Change was to be observed and social movements played a major role in the process of freeing the country from authoritarian hands. As social movements rose in the scenario of redemocratisation, they forced new themes on to the media agenda and, thus, expanded possibilities of public dialogue.

Through the observation of news coverage, it is possible to infer that development has remained a target of civilian central governments in Brazil. Amazônia, along with the Northeast and Central-Western regions, as the less well-off in the country, is seen as having the full potential to provide for overall economic growth and, thus, is talked about in regional newspapers. In a world-wide trend, political discourses regarding the environment have been adjusted to a more sound and acceptable concept, that of sustainable development. The Brazilian government constitutes no exception. As planning and administrative processes require information, dialogue, as a main element of democracy, has become a more frequent practice in recent years. In this comprehensive scenario, the country's media play a fundamental role as in any other democratic society as public arenas of debate of social problems. The plurality of themes and actors discussing regional issues of various kinds has become a routine character of news coverage.

In this study, almost 700 news items were identified within the overall theme of sustainable development issues in the Amazon between 1990 and 1994. The first five years of the decade are of great historical significance in that they include the preparation for and the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The event took place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. Overall the Rio 92 Conference marked a world effort to deal with environmental and development matters. For Brazil, though, as the Amazon had become of world-wide concern, the event had a more special meaning. The country and its policies were put to the test by the rich nations in their demands for more environmental commitment. Before any more financial aid would go into the hands of Brazilians, the government had to prove its ability to review past mistakes. As the financing of projects in the region largely relies on external support, this was an essential need.

Given that society acquires most information from the media, regional journalists have had a direct role in the definition of meaning through their selection of themes and actors. As media and public communication are at the heart of democratic processes, these
professionals are also instrumental in the revelation of organisational practices as well as ideologies framing the news. Carrying out interviews with active journalists in the region was central to comprehend the wider context in which news is produced. It was also essential in guiding the search for discourses constructed around Amazonian matters.

As society increasingly takes part in public debates within media arenas, it ensures social change. Much of social action is observed in the news frames. Of particular interest are those comprising a diversity of discourses. Such narratives introduce new constructs, the appropriation of meaning, and the expression of evolving perceptions. The articulation of regional themes from various perspectives is in itself demonstrative of increased social action that eventually takes shape in the establishment of policy. Amazônia has not escaped this logic.

News definition of sustainable development and the Amazon

By studying two distinct environments those of the cities of Belém and Manaus, many similarities were identified in the ways the press portrays the Amazon. It has also been possible to verify relevant signs of differences. Among the similar treatment of issues in the two newspapers analysed, is one of fundamental meaning: the newly introduced terminology of sustainable development is used in both dailies as if it had always belonged among the most prominent issues of regional interest. The analysis revealed efforts on the part of the regional press to make the concept ordinary. By introducing it in the news through the mouths of prominent actors, the new terminology became part of current language. By referring to sustainable development as if it were already known to its readers, the press set up the process of its banalisation and appropriation by both the media and society. Framing of a development attuned with economic as well as social and environmental reasoning was put forward by the press through actors in a wide social spectrum. Themes falling under the general idea of sustainable development were framed in political terms. In addition, and according to sources' interests, the representation of development also took on to economic and environmental framing.

Professional journalists played a major role in the publicising of the concept of sustainable development. Though not necessarily providing a straight forward definition of the concept
at the outset of news, journalists were instrumental in attributing meaning to sustainable
development. From the analysis of news, it is the overall context within which the news is
presented that makes it possible to construct a definition of sustainable development rather
than from a statement at the beginning of each piece. The journalists interviewed seemed
able to operationalise the concept but did not consistently do so in the news.

From the analysis of the news, it is clear that a pervasive form of presenting sustainable
development took an anthropocentric perspective. Journalists' treatment of matters in such a
manner reinforces one of the most important characteristic of the coverage: the division
between physical environment and human populations. A common trait in the coverage is
one that emphasises the divide between nature and humans. Such separation has supported
the appropriation of a discourse that places human beings and nature as enemies, ignoring
the holistic nature of the environment.

If the sustainability principles have become endemic, the merit resides in the resurgence of a
new framing and contextualisation of the Amazonian problem. In the discussion of findings,
a series of trends became clear especially the increased public involvement in the debate.
Findings also confirm a repetition of selected themes and actors which overrule or hide
others. In contrast to a media-centred approach to news analysis, a constructionist theoretical
framework has allowed for the bringing together of a range of factors interfering in the
building of meaning around regional affairs. Analysis regards the process of interpretation
and that of the formulation of meaning as a complex and dynamic affair. As such, the
construction of meaning around regional issues evolves continuously. In this process, many
variables come into consideration. One of the more obvious of these variables is comprised
by audiences, actors who may or may not be sources in the news, but, nevertheless, play
active roles in regional scenarios.

There is no other source besides daily conversation, but media content from which to extract
information relevant to life. Thus, news is a fundamental locus for studying society and
reality. This is the reason to consider media, the press, in this case, among the most
important sites of major construction of discourse. The media provide organised forms of
expression and representation of themes relevant to society. Because language is a key
component in social action, analysing the expression of meaning of regional affairs by
regional actors provides the opportunity to assess the extent of action taking place in Amazônia as society discusses its problems and seeks solution.

**Politics and news framing**

Some of the trends observed in the news coverage throughout the analysis of text have been supported by the testimony of journalists working in the region and interviewed for this study. Overall, they pointed to a variety of characteristics in contemporary coverage of Amazonian issues including the increased political articulation of actors in their access to media arenas. This is a finding that corroborates the politicisation of regional matters with the interference of a diversity of actors. This would not have been possible without redemocratisation and the articulation of social movements in the region. The pluralist direction of politics in Latin America has refocused policy under an environmental approach.

Though the media are at the heart of the democratic process, journalists in the Amazon, interviewed for this study, were keen to call attention to the need for more democratisation of media in Brazil and in the region. As long as the media are businesses dependent on elitist connections, including reliance on advertising originating from government, there is the potential of collusion and threats to those in the profession. There are many economic and political interests in the business of news and it can rarely be said they are as committed to causes such as the environment. As many of the journalists pointed out, the problems of economic nature in Brazil distract the attention from other matters including the environment.

To refer to yet another common characteristic in the news, that of its episodic nature, it is important to point out the cyclical aspect of themes in the news. In more recent times, in the late 1980s, Amazônia fitted in this analysis as it became the target of a wave of interest for a variety of reasons including environmental and development issues. Such a wave of interest can be analysed as yet another cycle that provides coverage of certain issues with an episodic characteristic.
The episodic nature of news is present in the coverage of regional affairs on many occasions. The 1991 cholera epidemic boosted health news, the conflicts in Yanomami territory and the involvement of Indians in violent events triggered the increase of reporting on political and border affairs as well as on Indian matters. The Rio 92 also imposed the environment into the news agenda. Added to the episodic nature of news in the case of border affairs, there was also the nationalist campaign by some political leadership which framed Indian struggle for land as a matter of national security. Under such a political frame, the nationalists argued that the Indian cause revealed threats to Brazil's territorial integrity and national interests. Another frame within which Amazonian problems were portrayed is that of an economic nature. Economic framing of environmental issues can also be attributed to the government's implementation of a new economic plan as a means to stabilise inflation, a continuing problem in Brazil for many years.

Despite the world interest and the worldly significance of the region, news took a reductionist perspective. Similar to coverage elsewhere, the treatment of news in a rather localised and narrow form reveals news that overall lacks context. At first, this does not seem a striking finding. But given the world significance of the region, this is relevant to note. Ignoring Amazônia's importance in the world-wide scenario, the press coverage analysed in this study has chosen to focus on the local scenario avoiding more complex analysis of world markets and universal implications. Perhaps the press reports in such a manner not so much for being blind to further implications of the preservation of regional ecological systems, but more for the urgent nature of Amazonian affairs. A parochial attitude is unquestionably at play in this reductionist approach to regional matters.

**Journalistic practices and political economic implications**

The journalists interviewed acknowledge that regional news lacks context, operationalisation of concepts, and analysis and critical perspectives. Most of the blame for problems identified in the coverage is attributed to bad journalistic training and the pressures inherent to news production processes. These last factors are attributed to the recent professionalisation of journalism in Brazil and the consolidation of the country's media as a business. The transformation of news into a commodity in Brazil, as it has happened elsewhere in the world, is also a factor reflected in national and regional coverage. With the
news production process assuming the character of an assembly line, it is inevitable that the routinisation of the journalistic practice impairs professional views and ultimately the news.

Regardless of the above reported features, at times, there are times when coverage attempts to establish links between local news and broader, national and world scenarios. *O Liberal*, for example, more clearly applies economic framing of the news. There is obviously a reason behind such a practice. The tendency has been forced upon the newspaper as it has failed to support winning candidates in local elections and, thus, has chosen to avoid open political framing. *A Crítica* introduced efforts to place local news within international political frames. Its attempts demonstrate a desire to make Amazonas state a major player in the region. Within this perspective, the region is understood from the point of view of Pan-Amazonian relations with neighbouring countries. The Manaus newspaper also introduces an economic face to its news as it tends to cover commerce and industry issues relevant to the city’s status as a free zone.

**Classification of news**

The newspapers had no specialist sections for the coverage of science, technology, health or the environment, following the more traditional sections such as politics, economy, sports among others. In terms of news format, the coverage concentrates on hard locally-produced news. It also presents 20 percent of features and ten percent of news agency material. Opinion comes mostly in the form of features rather than editorials. These latter would expose the newspapers’ position which is not always clear cut. Besides, any expression of compromise on the part of the media is not a strategic measure in either political or economic terms. Past experiences of political alliances for both *O Liberal* and *A Crítica* have proved damaging in the long run. Once their allies are no longer in power, newspapers are ostracised by the newly arrived political forces.

The press, for fear of aligning with the wrong side has, more recently, refrained from revealing preferences in the evolving political scenarios of redemocratisation scenarios. Taking sides is hardly a safe procedure. There are exceptions though. Mostly noticeable in *A Crítica*, such exceptions were feasible as the newspaper’s political allies were in power. At times, *O Liberal* spoke in favour of what it considered to be regional interests. On these
opportunities, the editorials regarded broad issues of development and environment discourses suitable in the given historic moment. But even doing so and different from A Crítica, O Liberal has remained outside more obvious political circles, given that their historical political allies have not remained continuously in power.

The building of a news agenda

As discussed throughout the analysis, the episodic nature of news meant that the coverage of environment and development-related issues increased around the time of the Rio Conference. This is a trend common to both newspapers. The build up to the event was heavily fuelled by press coverage: 30 percent of the total news on these themes was published in 1991 and 23 percent in 1992. Journalists working in the region acknowledge links between the episodic nature of the news agenda and the increase of environmental coverage in the first half of the 1990s. The wider context of Amazonian problems that allowed for the expression of international pressure is also acknowledged by journalists in the region. But they recognise that, regardless of the world interest expressed towards the region, the rate of environmental damage had escalated to the extent of a social problem. Rather than the direct result of actual environmental damage or international pressure, the regional news is the expression of a conjunction of factors. Such factors include the episodic nature of news, damage to regional ecosystems and international pressure. Thus, the regional news media constructed the Amazon from the perspectives of various segments of society both internal and external.

The relevance of this study lies in demonstrating how regional discourses are expressed in public arenas and articulated within the local media. The analysis explored how Amazonians take possession of their resources to govern themselves into the future. Marked by numerous contradictions, regional actors have revealed in the press, the recognition of their capacity to intervene in the history of their geographical territory. In this, regional players acknowledge endogenous knowledge as an essential factor for improving life conditions in Amazônia. By recognising such factors, regional society emphasises its need and ability to build a minimum consensus under which it stands a better chance of sustainability into the new millennium. These factors represent some of the underlying findings made possible through the use of content, language and discourse analysis tools.
The contradictions found in the news and in the various discourses built around Amazônia demonstrate the evolving nature of meaning and its expression as a non-static phenomenon. In the contradictions inherent to the region such as its poverty in the face of its natural riches, the poor and the rich confronted, resides the dynamics of the debate about regional matters. Latent controversy is the stage that public dialogue has reached in Amazônia. In the given context, different and opposing arguments are put forward in the definition of the region's future more frequently and in a more articulate manner than ever before. From another perspective, the nature of controversy in regional debate expresses the universal character of processes taking place in the region. Amazônia has become a compiled version of Brazil's national problems. Further, the regional question represents much of the complexity observed in world affairs.

It has also been possible to observe an increased complexity in the arenas of public debate involving issues of science, the environment, the development of the Amazon region. One of the most pressing issues regarding knowledge about Amazônia, for instance, is expressed in the coverage through the concerns of scientists as to the ability of Brazilians to carry out research in genetics and biotechnology.

Combination of themes, new actors and policy-making

The association of a number of themes as they are portrayed in the news is yet another characteristic of the coverage. As a means to stress efforts to improve environmental management, it became common that news would rely on a combination of information originating in scientific findings and research management. This combination of themes demonstrated planning initiatives and allowed for the rise of actors other than those from the government and the private sector, such as NGO representatives. The private sector no longer dictated the rules of the game. Rather it had been forced to adjust to the new scenario and justify its own practices. The rise of NGO representatives in the coverage became possible as entrepreneurs no longer appeared or were portrayed as the only ones responsible for environmental damage. The reporting of planning revealed policy changes in seeking international funding that would enable correction of past mistakes committed in the name
of development. As in any other context, though, there remains a considerable gap between policy change and its actual implementation.

Old and permanent sources in the news, politicians and policy-makers (with some chronic exceptions) acknowledge new actors as well as other forms of approach to the region's problems. The role of scientists in the process of lending legitimacy to planning and policy initiatives is one that has become increasingly recognised in the debate about sustainable development. Also the fact that most scientists appearing in the coverage came from the field of Earth and Exact Sciences reinforces the dichotomy between nature and humanity. The selection of these experts as sources stresses the framing of environmental issues as based on physical aspects. Added to the emphasis on economic-framing of environmental news, the coverage concentrates on the discussion of natural resources reserves (primary economy activities). Natural resources are considered in their economic potential to the detriment of the human factor in broad environmental relations. News also brings an anthropocentric view of the Amazonian affairs and treats nature as a threat in the most deterministic possible approach.

With the rise of new actors, other historic sources became less prominent in the news coverage of Amazônia. The new scenario allowed less exposure of military involvement in State affairs in the media. This is more of an illusion than a reality. Major policy changes in the Amazon have been traditionally linked to military strategy. Though the military appear less as sources, they are still behind much of the nationalist discourse articulated about the region. Only this time, the Armed Forces play down their role and the media refuse to acknowledge such sources. Perhaps this represents a reaction against the times when journalists had to cover the military who, at the time, governed the country. To ignore such sources is a strategic mistake given that most Amazonian issues are still considered as matters of national security and are ultimately dealt with under the influence of the military. Whatever the issues, infrastructure (especially the building of roads such as the Transfronteira), Indian territory matters, public health (major health operations in the region are based on military support), border affairs, military actors are present and active.

In the field of policy-making and change, journalists are mostly divided between the sceptical and the non-sceptical of the media potential to influence any political process. As
discussed in the analysis chapters, there are many examples of news about issues crucial in policy-making arenas. Some journalists supported the findings and provided historic examples of public debate influencing government decisions regarding the Amazon. Other professionals are not so sure about the extent of the influence of media coverage in the outcome of policy. Nevertheless, there is evidence of policy changes resulting from media campaigns, criticism publicised through the media and by pure reporting of specific issues. Though aware of this evidence, some professionals, still rely on conspiracy theories and see the media agenda as purely the outcome of packages manufactured by hidden interests. Thus, some journalists fail to acknowledge the potential of their professional role in the process.

**Continuous definition of the news agenda**

For many journalists, selected social problems are presented as the issue of the day not so much for their social relevance as for their potential to interest, entertain audiences and ensure consumption of newspapers and other media formats. As suggested earlier, the repetition of professional routines can prevent journalists from acknowledging the diversity of factors affecting the evolving nature of the news agenda. Resulting from complex social processes, news influences political decisions as well as it is influenced by them. The evolving nature of the news agenda is quite evident especially in the observation of news cycles such as the case of the environmental coverage. Overall political and economic developments influence social institutions such as the media and it is the work of journalists and the testimony of their sources which play a decisive role in the definition of the news agenda.

It is without question that social movements face difficulties in their ability to voice claims. Because the access of representatives of social movements to the media is limited, it is expected that their claims will be far from becoming the norm. Rather, they stand a better chance of being portrayed as odd events and interventions. They are not seen in their potential of becoming prominent forms of expression in the solution of social problems. The press in the Amazon may fall under the claims of reproducing dominant views, but it has been forced, in recent years, to open the way to a number of actors who have never been so visible. The multiple meanings allowed by the discussion of sustainable development result
from discussions by a wider spectrum of social actors. Such a diversity is more representative of the whole of the region's interests.

The reliance on official sources is seen as a necessary evil by journalist. Government officials remain holders of much of the information about sustainable development-related issues. The professionals interviewed for this study remind us that though this is the case, journalists' role remains instrumental in devising issues worth coverage. In the journalists' opinion, although the media may still set the news agenda, it is the diversity of interests represented in various social movements that triggers the discussion of regional problems on said agenda. The coverage reflects such dynamics. Public debate, though, is faced with the lack of continuing coverage of social problems and they rise and fall in the news. The carrying capacity of themes relates to a conjunction of factors including political and economic developments. Through society's re-elaboration of relevant problems, media review their treatment of news and the maintenance of themes on the agenda.

The dynamics of the carrying-capacity of issues was observed in the news about the Amazon. As discussed in depth in the analysis chapters, themes such as the environment and development, Indian matters, health, political and border affairs, natural resources management and scientific results were prominent in the news in the period studied. Given the newly developed interest in environmental issues and for that matter any issue with a more obvious environmental connection, other themes were played down and almost ignored in the coverage of regional affairs. Regardless of their social relevance, mining and deforestation for example received strikingly little coverage despite their increasing threat to the region's overall environmental conditions.1

The media's disregard of crucial themes comes as a result of many factors including the colluding power of the press and the elites to avoid the voicing of concerns in such dramatic issues. Given the historic elitist nature of the press in the Amazon, it is only to be expected that issues which have the potential to harm political and economic interests do not appear in the coverage. If the press were to report on mining, deforestation or land ownership, local elites would be harmed and the involvement of many actors who are part of these elites would be made obvious. The coverage would reveal the extent of the environmental and

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1 Between 1991 and 1993, the level of deforestation increased 30 percent. Gazeta Mercantil, 10/6/97.
social damage of their businesses. This was illustrative of a lack of journalistic critical perspective. It also represents a localised contribution in public relations efforts to improve Brazil’s image in the eyes of the outside world when the Rio Conference was about to take place.

All efforts performed by social movements in the region are put to the test as there is no good will to allow change to come about. First, the introduction of the new ideology of sustainable development as a result of international and regional articulation has created conditions for debate of regional affairs. Second, the accommodating nature of the concept, has also allowed for a debate based on more diversified voices. This, in its turn, has facilitated, according to the journalists, the construction of a new regional discourse which is yet to be fully recognised in public arenas such as the media.

In this scenario, the press has exercised its mediator role in the resolution of social problems. Social movements pushing issues into media arenas at a time of more democratised society allow for the acknowledgement of local demands in arenas where many elitist interests are at stake. The notion that the difference between them and us is of such a strong hold that even newspapers aligned with the Establishment sound indignant when faced yet once again with the idea of the “other” speaking and deciding what is perceived as “ours”. At the same time what is perceived as “ours” is not representative of the whole of society but of specific segments, most likely to be found within the local oligarchy and elite groups represented by the newspaper.

Conflict and debate

Overall, the press sums up the expression of conflict that takes place in the region. This is clear in situations of political nature when power struggles between the local oligarchy and the central government are revealed. This is also an obvious phenomenon when coverage reveals power struggles between the local oligarchy and the array of political actors demanding their rights to interfere in decision-making. Conflict is revealed in a variety of ways. It is present in the news through its economic nature, as the crisis and the destitution of many has made them move over national borderlines in search of what is seen as their property and their right. Conflict also presented its social face where the State is yet to
respond to needs, and citizens (although some still excluded from that category) have to somehow and by whatever means provide for themselves. In whatever manner the conflicts are framed, the press has undoubtedly portrayed the contradictions of a society said to have been re-democratised and which, nevertheless, is faced with antagonic forces and interests.

The journalists interviewed acknowledge changes observed in the coverage in demonstration of redemocratisation effects. The finding is based on the increased diversity of actors identified in the coverage. These professionals strongly regard changes as the responsibility of social movements in the region. Their observation is supported by the analysis of actors appearing in the coverage and discussed earlier. Nevertheless, they choose to be careful about the implication of organisational aspects for the outcome of the news. Media, though, recognised in their role of public arenas of debate by these journalists interviewed, are also acknowledged as sources of constraints in their production and operational demands. These factors ultimately, according to the professionals, emerge in the news in the form of a lack of in-depth reporting. They are also forced to acknowledge that coverage displays poor journalistic training. In yet another lucid analysis, journalists active in the region corroborate the view that news reveals the very conflicts experienced in the process of consolidation of democracy.

It is the contradiction between the notion of State and Nation that clashes when the Amazon is considered and threatened. When the Republican-presidentialist system and the federation emerged, in 1889, the notion of Nationhood was imposed into a State (built during the Empire\(^2\)) that had become fragile in the transition from monarchy to republic. In the midst of this conflict of values that ultimately exposes relationships with nature and the environment, rise a variety of discourses. These narratives identified within the coverage reveal the permanently evolving scenario of actors and themes which are prevalent in regional news coverage.

It has been confirmed from the observation of regional news coverage that the intricacy of the relationships of the various actors and the overlapping of issues in the media arenas are marked by the contradictions inherent in the concept of sustainable development. The finding reveals the hegemonic nature of the concept of sustainable development. Indigenous

\(^2\) Officially started in 1822, when D. Pedro I declares Brazil independent from Portugal.
populations long practising the tenets of sustainability who have been threatened in their survival as the economic relations' assume new forms and the political forces ally or fight for power. Hegemony is not only demonstrated in the use of imposed concepts, it is also noticeable in the use of official sources in the news. The great majority of actors quoted or referred to were government officials, mostly those in the executive branch. This finding is also revealing of the centralisation of power in Brazil's decision-making process.

Amazonian discourses

This study has identified four major discourses. At the right wing end of the discourse continuum is the nationalist-developmentalist narrative which preaches a commodity approach in the exploitation of natural resources. This line of discourse argues that it is the use of natural resources that ensures the country's sovereignty against external interests and threats. Actors constructing this discourse mix mythical aspects of the region, economic reasoning and arguments based on conspiracy and victimisation in their attempt to be convincing.

On the far left end of the continuum are the excluded and those mostly left voiceless. Exploited and unable to access the spheres of dialogue, these Amazonians have engaged in confrontation with the established order, through civil and non-civil disobedience. Their struggle is based on the argument that cultural differences must be acknowledged and respected by authorities. They value autonomy and self-determination as means of survival. In many ways, several journalists channel the counter-information that appears in the news. Though belonging to an elite, these professionals are at a different level part of this excluded sector of society and contribute with their own tools to open space for more comprehensive debate. Actors such as Indians and rural workers get coverage that classifies them as if inferior to other sources. In many cases they are not even named. This treatment reveals either prejudice or a patronising attitude in the media's inability to acknowledge them as citizens. Regardless of such a portrayal, these groups have demonstrated ability to establish forms of organisation to negotiate their affairs. They have improved forms of access to

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3 "Gold prospecting spins a fabulous amount of money in many currencies, of which great amount disappears via smuggling. It could well be directed toward serious and patriotic plan to benefit national interest". "Let us benefit from gold in our mining sites", _O Liberal_, 30/9/90. Apart from the naïveté expressed in the statement, it introduces shades of nationalism reinforcing some of the notions already exposed in this analysis.
media to expose their practices. With other actors such as those in the scientific circles, they have come to acknowledge knowledge built outside their sphere. Scientists have also recognised the importance of media arenas. Among NGO, clergy and Indian sources, there is a continuous activism to reinforce social struggles that need to be heard in the process of decision-making. On the occasions when Indians are themselves voicing their problems they address problems quite firmly. Among the issues argued is the ever present problem of territorial demarcation and compensation for the use of natural resources in their land. They have also started to enter politics by running for office in local elections.

The middle ground of the discourse typology presents a mixture of the preservationist rhetoric and the negotiators interested in finding means for sustainable development. These latter disagree with the preservationists on how to achieve it. Preservationists are not willing to yield much towards the use of natural resources as this is seen as a stage of destruction. More pragmatically, negotiators try to accommodate preservation and the use of natural resources as a means to improve life conditions as much as protect the ecosystems. For these actors, competitiveness, partnership and economic advantages are not all strange language. The latter fight their battles within power spheres while preservationists still concentrate on blowing the whistle. They use the media to put forward simple messages, identifying the enemy and keeping up their altruistic pretensions of good against evil rhetoric.

Though redemocratisation is far from being consolidated in Latin America and in the Amazon, conflicts portrayed in the regional press and analysed in this study, reveal the increased exercise of democratic rights. Actors debate issues and eventually point to solutions to social problems. Substantial evidence has been found throughout the analysis that policy is one of the major underlying themes in the coverage. This was observed through the analysis of debate held by local actors as they express different points of view about the potential of influencing decision-making spheres.

Even considering the contradictory nature of strategy expressed in the fragmentation of perspectives, diversity of views is emphasised in the Amazon. Contrary to earlier planning attempts to homogenise views and solutions, a sharper approach to the region’s problems has come to be one that considers differences. From the findings, it is possible to say that Amazonian actors are identifying ways to make change happen. This becomes even clearer
when the discussion turns to the issue of class. Conflict portrayed in the press demonstrates
the broken powers of traditional oligarchy and the rise of new leadership in Amazônia. The
clash of these forces proves the region ability to identify solutions from within.

The relevance of this study has been to contribute to demonstrating how regional discourses
are articulated in media arenas. Through the identification and analysis of various discourse
narratives, it has been possible to learn how Amazonians express their taking possession of
resources to govern themselves into the future. The recognition of endogenous knowledge as
an essential factor in improving life conditions in Amazônia and the need to build minimum
consensus around regional problems are some of the underlying findings made possible
through the use of content, language and discourse analysis tools. The analysis emphasises
the increased complexity in arenas of public debate involving issues of science, the
environment, and the development of the Amazon region. The regional perspective is
revealed in the challenge of survival and the establishment of strategies to achieve improved
conditions of living. Discourse and action intermingle as Amazonian actors become more
and more part of decision-making processes.

**Theoretical and methodological support**

The use of the methodological tools of content analysis, interviews, language and discourse
analysis have been overall helpful in handling the considerable amount of data collected.
The complementary nature of these approaches was a most helpful factor in the compilation
of findings and elaboration of discussion. Both the analysis of interviews and language
analysis provided the wider context within which the content of news fits. The usual
constraints imposed by coding schedules were overcome as the instrument was adjusted.
Limitations such as the artificiality of interview settings should also be acknowledged.
Based on the constructionist framework elected for the study, it has been possible to
acknowledge and provide evidence of the complexity of processes that take place in the
region. The theoretical framework facilitated analysis to draw on the variety of aspects
involved in the Amazonian question. Similar to what happens in the use of any method and
framework, not all aspects of the data are considered. In the case of Amazônia, there are
many peculiarities of its societies that are unknown or not extensively dealt with by the
Social Sciences tools. The contradictory nature of the region, the controversial vein of its
affairs and its ability to raise emotions high, makes the Amazon a unique and intricate object of study. The fact that much of the region is yet to be studied represents an extra burden. Given the magnitude and diversity of regional affairs, much multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research is needed. In this lies yet another challenge to science in the region.

In choosing a constructionist approach, analysis moved away from media-centredness. To do so is not only an effort to acknowledge the variety of factors involved in the definition of public debate, but it also represents the need to approach scientific research from an interdisciplinary perspective. At the risk of having analysis impaired by conspiracy theories and reductionist approaches, it is necessary to move away from single-minded paradigms. Amazônia seemed a complex and diverse enough scenario where a constructionist framework proved a better choice. Though not able to support the extent of the peculiar features of reality in the region, a pluralistic perspective is welcome in a setting where reductionism has brought crisis and destitution. Only a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary analysis can provide a comprehensive understanding of regional affairs. Media content analysis, assessment of themes and of actors represent a considerable part of this task. Given the broad scope of the media, the theoretical framework gave support to an in-depth analysis of Amazonian reality based on the understanding of media roles and journalistic professional performance. Constructionism allowed for the investigation of wider aspects of Amazonian problems as they are constructed in the media. Had the media not been the universe of the study, analysis would have been confined to a much narrower perspective. Simultaneously, it was possible to scrutinise the media via the journalists' views in the whole of its production, operational and political aspects against a social environment of great relevance in the world today.

It has become clear in the course of this research that, though quantitative data is fundamental to argue any findings about the region, it is just as fundamental to adopt qualitative approaches to explore aspects of the coverage. This became obvious when essential aspects of politics and history had to be discussed. It was also crucial to rely on more qualitative analysis to be able to understand certain professional procedures and decisions. The limitation of a news production approach or of a political economy
framework could not be simply transposed to a society which has far more comprehensive factors which need to be taken into account.

Had I taken a different theoretical framework than that of Constructionism, it would have forced a myopic analysis. To single out one or another aspect of Amazonian reality would have been to provide an impaired interpretation of its problems. Worse still, a reductionist approach of how Amazonians perceive and construct their affairs would have incurred in a historical mistake of which the region has been a victim ever since Colonisation. On many occasions, such as in the use of public officials as the most prominent sources, regional news fits the models already systematised within Social Sciences. In other situations and regardless of organisational pressures and ideological choices of the media business, journalists cross the line and take the risks of publishing what they perceive as crucial to public debate. In this context, the use of a constructionist approach to the analysis allowed me to draw from works centred on Latin American scenarios and on the rise of social movements in such settings. These have proved to be fundamental to the arguments made throughout the analysis.

Exploring further links between democracy, media and policy-making

The whole of the context of redemocratisation is yet another crucial factor taken into consideration in the analysis of how the press constructs the Amazon. Latin America, regardless of the recent wave of neo-liberalism across its territory, is quite different from other Western democratic societies. Though basic principles remain the same, priorities are different. This applies even more in Amazonian contexts, where democracy goes far beyond the exercise of citizenship through vote and representation. Democracy in the Amazon starts at the point where all are acknowledged as citizens in their rights to minimum conditions of living. While vote and representation are more obvious elements of democracy, it is the recognition of basic human rights that remains essential in the region. Among the minimum conditions of living for Amazonian citizens are the very themes which comprise the whole of sustainable development: land ownership, the environment, health, Indian affairs, research, use of natural resources etc.
Public debate of regional affairs is extending the pure democratic principles to the pragmatic means of life in the region. Social movements have in many ways at the subliminal level and in a guerrilla way fought their way through to media arenas. Professional journalists have played a central role in this. News businesses though sharing capitalist interests are not absolute sure how to avoid such practices. In a way this is not their aim. As an elite in the region, media owners are still seen as an underclass by national media elites. Thus, the local media elite also needs to rely on guerrilla tactics to survive their detractors in the South-east of the country. It is Amazônia's differences set against the national interests which ultimately define the perspective and strategies of regional actors at all levels including media owners. There are more battles to be fought than those fought between regional actors with diverse interests.

The latest environmental cycle observed in Brazil and in the Amazon lasted more or less until slightly after the Rio 92 Conference. After 1995, as the land problem became more obvious through the hands of a major social movement in Brazil, the Landless People Movement (MST), Brazil and the Amazon conquered the headlines inside and outside the country. In this study, the variety of discourses around the Amazon and its affairs has a common variable that of an acknowledged or hidden territory possession, land ownership and the establishment of power relations by the holding of land property in a region seen as scarcely occupied and ample in the resources it may provide. As portrayed in the press, environmental management actions are attributing a new configuration to the Amazonian territorial face, introducing new forms of occupation with special reference to reserves and conservation units created by governmental legislation. This is a new portrayal of the region and it is important to follow these developments. Such observation should take into account

"Government launches Amazonian Pact", Jornal da Ciência Hoje, 23/8/96;
"Forests for life", The Observer supplement in association with WWF UK, 29/9/96;
"Controversial concession", IstoÉ, n. 1426, 29/1/97;
"506 million hectares of forests in the Amazon", Gazeta Mercantil, 19/2/97;
"The war on land", The Sunday Times Magazine, 13/4/97;
"Brazil at the feet of landless", Público, 18/4/97;
"A universe of uncertainty in a sea of courtesy. Landless meet the Brazilian Government.", Público, 20/4/97;
"Government under siege", IstoÉ, n.1438, 23/4/97;
"Ecology & economy", O Liberal, 24/4/97;
"The long march home", The Guardian Weekend, 26/4/97;
"Usual cruelty", Público, 29/4/97;
"Ecology & technology", O Liberal, 8/5/97;
"Loggers won't turn over new leaf on mahogany. Endangered species conference", The Guardian, 14/6/97.
"The lost world", The Sunday Times, 15/6/97.
the role the media has played in the trend and how it might contribute to the evolving portrayal of the Amazon.

One of the main areas that deserves attention is that of the underlying source of conflict in the region: the land ownership issue. In the second half of the 1990s, a series of events involving rural workers, indigenous peoples, labour relations and land possession has triggered conflict of unprecedented proportion and significant means of movement organisation. It will be useful to analyse this period under the light of discourses that might evolve from those identified in this study. The analysis of language use and journalistic professional roles should reveal further aspects of the way the regional media construct the Amazon.

The possibility of continuing research in the field of policy-making, the environment and development in settings such as Amazônia represents the ability to improve the understanding of processes of social action and change. Given that the main purpose of this study has been to identify how the press constructs the Amazon, there are many elements to be considered in any future research agenda that is dedicated to such a field. The continuing observation of the ability of the media to influence decision-making is crucial to diversifying democratic practices. By assessing media coverage of regional issues, research will identify new journalistic strategies, professional and political alliances. Studying the relationships of media and policy provides insight into the combination of socio-economic and political forces at play in a given setting. This is of major relevance if the Amazon is to see democracy consolidated.

More exploration is necessary on how the concept of sustainable development and its implications are discussed in public arenas such as the media. The controversial nature of the concept and that of the themes by which sustainable development is comprised is a fertile terrain. The discussion of such issues in various media, regional or national, is fundamental for revealing political and cultural processes as well as the structural and organisational aspects of the media involved. To observe the processes of decision-making which influence the revision of concepts and simultaneously are influenced by the introduction of new constructs is a source of continuing scientific interest. As a result of this research, it has become clear that the observation of the media's construction of the concept
is the most evident route given their nature of public arenas of debate. Within the exploration of the media roles in democracy and policy-making, it will be possible to observe the dynamics of the Amazonian affairs as they enter the next millennium.

Another fundamental issue deserving attention is that of how the media facilitate and, to a certain extent, sponsor the appropriation of knowledge and discourses by various social groups. It will be interesting to follow up on the evolving nature of emergent leadership in the region. Special attention should be paid as to how the media will report and assess the articulation of Indian and rural workers' movements. Regardless of the attempts of NGOs to rise in the scenario, it is the historic organisation of Indians and peasants which has taken the regional debate. It is important to observe future developments through the regional media arenas.

It has become obvious that more analysis of professional roles and that of power relationships and organisations in settings such as Amazônia is necessary. This can prove instrumental in the role media play in society as it attempts to manage environmental crisis and narrow development gaps. To explain regional processes within media organisations and in journalistic professional spheres is essential to the future articulation of Amazonian voices in the local and national scenarios. Emphasis should be given to analysis of the mediating role of these organisations and professionals, exploring journalist/source relationships as well as assessing audience roles in the regional debate.

As mentioned previously, it will be important to explore other media such as radio and television. This is useful in establishing differences and similarities among regional media in the coverage of local affairs and their role to widen public debate. Another relevant and challenging source of research interest is the analysis dedicated to visuals as they appear in the press. Studies to explore the regional imagery constructed in the press can reveal aspects of meaning left out by language analysis.

It is by analysing a more comprehensive spectrum of concepts, themes and actors within the boundaries of democracy, that public dialogue can be expanded. Media research is instrumental in assessing such developments and pointing ways of strengthening democratic forms of decisions. By further exploring media roles and journalistic practice in the
Amazon, society will be able to identify imbalance of power. This should be fundamental in the construction of social problems and in the finding of solutions to such problems.
Appendix A

Content Analysis Coding Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>__ __ __ 1-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;O Liberal&quot; 2. &quot;A Crítica&quot; (code one)</td>
<td>__ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>__ __ 5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>__ __ 7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>__ __ 9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Classification (code one)</td>
<td>__ __ 11-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Economy
2. Politics
3. City/Local News
4. Environment
5. Science
6. Police
7. Opinion
8. Book Review
9. Tourism
10. Brazil/National
11. International/World
12. Eco 92
13. Arts
14. Amazônia
15. Violence
16. Finance
17. Variety
18. Last News
19. Special
20. First Page
21. General

Type of Item (code one)

1. Locally-produced story __ 13
2. Other branch-produced story/Correspondent
3. National News agency-generated story
4. International News agency-generated story
5. Feature
6. Editorial
7. Interview

Visuals
(code number of each type)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Photograph</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cartoon</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Others (map, table, graphic, drawing)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject of Item
(code one for Main and up to two for Subsidiary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main</th>
<th>Subsidiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01. Land-owning/occupation/tenure</td>
<td>02. Logging/deforestation/Slash &amp; burning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04. Water resources/pollution</td>
<td>05. Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06. Indian matters</td>
<td>07. Preservation/conservation of ecosystems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08. Research funding/Funding</td>
<td>09. Research/Scientific results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Health</td>
<td>11. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Political/Border matters/National security/Guerrilla</td>
<td>15. Industry and commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Climate</td>
<td>17. Fiscal incentives/subsidies/Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Geology</td>
<td>19. Cattle raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Drug traffic</td>
<td>23. Urban matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Tourism</td>
<td>27. Resource use/Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Rehabilitation/Recuperation of degraded areas</td>
<td>29. Culture/Arts/Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Wild animals</td>
<td>31. Crime/Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Labour matters/(Un)Employment</td>
<td>33. Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Housing/Architecture</td>
<td>35. Chemistry/Plants for medicine use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Air pollution</td>
<td>37. Natural disaster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Actors (code the first four cited)

01. President, Governor, Mayor
02. Minister
03. Policy-maker/Politician
04. Justice/Attorney/Lawyer
05. Head of federal agency
06. Head of State agency
07. Head of local agency
08. Federal agency/Official/Diplomat
09. State agency/Official
10. Local agency/Official
11. Natural Sciences expert
12. Earth/Exact Sciences expert
13. Social Sciences expert
14. Health/Life Sciences expert
15. Private sector/business representative
16. Non-governmental organisations representative
17. Union/professional association representative
18. Ethnic leadership/Indian
19. International figure/Authority
20 International agency/Official
21. Military official
22. Religious official
23. Journalist
24. Artist/Writer
25. Member of the public
26. Worker (miners, rural workers, fishermen)
27. Drug dealer

Photo caption
__________________________________________________________________________

Cartoon
description/comment__________________________________________________________________________

Headline
__________________________________________________________________________

Main constructs identified
__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Interview Schedule

Date

Institution/Organisation

Name

Position/Speciality

Age

Sex

Level of Education

How long have you worked in your current job?

Where did you work before and for how long?

How long have you had an interest on science and environmental issues?

From the 1980s, a number of regional issues surfaced in the press as a result of social movement in the Amazon. Most of them had mainly economic and social impact. Can you recall some of these issues and relate them as they fit in the regional context?

When thinking about such issues can you identify a more general framework in which they fit in? Could you, please, relate them regionally and globally?

1. From the late 1980s, sustainable development has surfaced as a buzz word, namely a solution to economic and environmental problems. How would you define sustainable development?

2. When thinking of sustainable development, what kinds of issues would you include among those related to this concept?

3. When covering topics related to sustainable development, what criteria do you apply to choose your sources?

4. Please, if possible, provide a more detailed profile of your sources.

5. Considering the past decade as a timeframe, how do you find the local and national press’ coverage of such issues? How do they differ?

6. The concept of sustainable development itself has undergone revision. Have you noticed any trends in regional themes covered by the press over the past decade as related to sustainable development? Could you provide more detailed examples?
7. What role, if any, do you think the news media can play in impacting regional development policy decision-making process?

8. Can you provide some examples of coverage which you think impacted such process?

9. How prepared do you think specialist sources are to deal with the press?
10. Have you noticed any trends in sources' attitude over the past years in regard to dealing with the press? What are they?

11. To what factors do you attribute these changes for?

12. How do you assess your relationship with the scientific/environmental community? What kinds of strategies do you use in dealing with its members?

13. How prepared do you consider yourself to be in dealing with specialised sources? Do you read and prepare before?

14. Assuming the natural constraints of journalistic reporting, how do you think they affect your work? Please, specify the types of constraints that mostly affect your professional practice?

15. How do you translate scientific information into accessible language to the readers? How do you narrow the gap between specialised language and the news language?

16. It has been argued that the language used to address readers comprises the 'newspaper's own version of the language of the public to whom it is principally addressed . . . a public idiom of the media' (Hall, 1978, pp. 60-61). In your experience, does it stand? What is this alleged common language shared with the general public?
Reference List


Communication, 44(4), 26-38.


Pluto Press.


Galvão, G., Miranda, H. R., Beltrão, J. F., Alencar, J. M. Q., Carneiro, M. D. S.,


