



**Work Through Public Policy:
The Case of a Rubber Factory Engaged in the Manufacture of Male Condoms in
Xapuri / AC**

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Introduction: Since the 1990s, the state of Acre has strongly supported adopting public policies with a bias towards sustainable development. From this, various initiatives have arisen in both private and public enterprises which have been forms of appropriation of nature through commercialization and new schemes of work. This is the case of the male condom factory in Xapuri (Natex) as a public policy of aggregating value from forest products, implemented by the state government with a view to the industrialization of latex extracted in the region of Alto Acre. In this general overview, we propose to analyze the intentions of public policy in Acre during this period directed towards sustainable development and to identify the repercussions for those involved in these actions, the tappers, who provided the latex for the male condom factory in Xapuri. We therefore discuss the affirmations and/or changes within the organization of the rubber tappers resulting from these policies with regard to their method of work and their relationship with nature. **Development:** The project has been developed on the basis of qualitative research, considering staff activities, taking bibliographic evidence from agencies and institutions in the Amazon region to facilitate an underlying theoretical discussion; also field research through interviews, observations, and participation in daily research, collecting anecdotes, experiences, opinions and different views on the topic at the end of each day. To this end, we carried out interviews with the tappers involved, union leaders and the directors of Natex, as well as politicians responsible for putting public policy together. **Final thoughts:** By these means, it was possible to identify changes to the tappers' original way of life and work, as well as intensification, exploitation and additional risk in their work. So, there has been an intensification in the work routine with greater demand for the extraction of latex in a new way of handling the product for the manufacture of condoms, which entails working on extraction for some twelve hours each day. This increase in working hours is not reflected in their pay as the price paid per kilo has not changed significantly in relation to their work routine. It also prevents the tapper from engaging in other activities necessary for its production, reflected in a re-structuring of family work to ensure that other tasks are carried out. In addition, there have been new procedures in relation to weighing, concerning latex delivered in liquid or solid form. Finally, the introduction of a new chemical product, ammonia, in the worker's day-to-day routine has caused poisoning with possible consequences to the health of people involved with the supply of latex to the factory.

Key words: Rubber tapper; work; public policy; sustainable development; capital.