



The Center for Iberian & Latin American Studies, UCSD

Rainforest Cowboys: Ranching, Deforestation and Cattle Culture in the Brazilian Amazon

Thursday, December 10, 2015

**3 PM, Deutz Room, Copley Building,
Institute of the Americas Complex, UCSD**

The opening of the Brazilian Amazon to colonization in the 1970s brought cattle, land conflict, and widespread deforestation. In the remote state of Acre, Brazil, rubber tappers fought against migrant ranchers to preserve the forest they relied on, and in the process, these “forest guardians” showed the world that it was possible to unite forest livelihoods and environmental preservation. Nowadays, many rubber tappers and their children are turning away from the forest-based lifestyle they once sought to protect and are becoming *caubois* (cowboys). As the leading driver of Amazonian deforestation, cattle raising has received significant academic and popular attention, with most analyses focusing on economic and institutional drivers. In this presentation, I draw on a legacy of anthropological research on cattle as cultural objects to argue for an expanded view of Amazonian cattle raising that includes “cattle culture.” I discuss three interlinked features of cattle culture: human-cattle relationships, perceptions of forest and pasture, and the cultural meanings of beef.



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