The Political Ecology of Amazonian Deforestation - Independence Struggles of Rubber Tappers
Madagascar: Deforested by 80%

Medicinal discoveries perceived as Success story
Conservation for Cultural Survival

Rainforest-dependent culture groups:

(1) Indigenous
(2) Peasants
(3) Caboclos
Examining the Political Economic Causes of Deforestation

(1) Rapid Population Growth...(Neo-Malthusian argument)
(2) Commercial logging and the global demand for hardwoods and pulp (paper)
Example:

• Tropical Timbers and the Home Depot Controversy

• Certified Forest Products Council
(3) Brazilian government’s colonization schemes
(4) Rainforest clearing for agriculture
Deforestation, siltation
Mouth of Amazon River
(5) Rainforest clearing for cattle ranching

Cattle herd to graze in Rondonia, Western Amazon.
Jungleburgers?
Rainforests, Ranches, and the Hamburger Connection
(6) Commercial Logging and Related Road Building
Rhondonia Brazil (1975)
Rhondonia, Brazil (1986)
Rhondonia, Brazil (1992)
(7) Perception of Brazilian rainforest as savage and wild - parallels to American frontier
Local Response to Large Scale Deforestation/Ranching

Extractive reserves
- led by Chico Mendez
- organized empates
• Extraction of Brazil nuts
• $30 million in exports
Extraction of Rubber (photo: rubber tapper settlements)
Rubber tappers in Acre scoring and flagging rubber trees
Latex balls sold to market after being smoked
Rubber tappers engage in what is called “Income diversification” – or multiple jobs...
Objectives of Rubber tappers:

-(1) protect forest

-(2) secure land
1986 - road project proposed that would endanger rubber tapper settlements
U.S. - rubber tapper alliances were formed to protect forest and livelihoods.
Consequently, U.S. congress pressures IDB (International Development Bank) to halt paving
Protests against ranching and development continue; Chico Mendez dies
Map of “Extractive” reserves as of 1999:
“Protected forest areas to be managed by local communities”