

Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

# INVISIBLE REALITIES IN A LAND OF IMAGINARIES, CONFLICTS, AND PROMISES: A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE AMAZON

with

**EDUARDO BRONDIZIO**

Friday, November 1, 5pm in GA 2134



Latin American

Research Forum

In 1979, renowned Amazonian ethnobotanist Richard E. Schultes wrote, “Those who understand and love the Amazon forest call it the Green Heaven. Those who misunderstand and despise it know it by the name of the Green Hell. A recent political figure termed the Amazon a desert of trees, which must be destroyed. Unfortunately, this latter point of view seems now to be in ascendancy...”



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As fresh as most of Schultes’ statement feels, it touches on the long-standing dissonance of imaginaries about Amazonia and its people. Such dissonance is widely reflected in current conversations and policies about the region. Behind the smoke and the outcry over Amazonian deforestation and fires lies a diverse, contradictory, and complex region, largely invisible in the social imaginaries that hold it as a “green heaven,” a “green hell,” or anything in between.

This talk will focus on the invisible realities that are left behind the media hypes, the public outcry, the political and policy debates about the region. The goal is not to present a coherent explanation, but to introduce few brief narratives of issues that are shaping the region today and going forward, and that reflect conflicting views and imaginaries of the Amazon. These include the persisting invisibility of local initiatives and local problems, the urban predicaments of the region, and the struggles of indigenous peoples in edge of deforestation frontiers.