

Receiving the mantle: perspectives from third generation researchers in Gurupá Recebendo o manto: perspectivas da terceira geração de pesquisadores em Gurupá

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Abstract: Ever since Charles Wagley's initial public health work in Gurupá in the 1940s, followed by his and Eduardo Galvão's pioneering ethnographic studies, there has been a steady stream of anthropologists conducting research in the community. As a result of this activity, to date there are books, dissertations, theses, articles, and reports from at least 17 different authors/organizations (mostly anthropologists) and approximately 15 years of collective on-site research. In this article we examine how our current research as the third generation following in Wagley's footsteps builds upon and expands his original research in areas ranging from public health, child labor, the influence of media, and the potential impact of the Belo Monte Dam.

Keywords: Longitudinal Studies. Charles Wagley. Gurupá. Amazon.

Resumo: Desde o trabalho inicial em saúde pública de Charles Wagley em Gurupá, na década de 1940, seguido dos estudos etnográficos pioneiros que desenvolveu com Eduardo Galvão, há uma linha regular de antropólogos conduzindo pesquisas nessa comunidade. Como resultado desta atividade, existem atualmente livros, dissertações, teses, artigos e relatórios de pelo menos 17 autores/organizações diferentes (a maioria antropólogos), e aproximadamente 15 anos de pesquisa coletiva em campo. Neste artigo, examinamos como nossa pesquisa atual, como terceira geração seguindo os passos de Wagley, começou com a base e ampliou sua pesquisa original em diversas áreas, como saúde pública, trabalho infantil, a influência da mídia e o impacto potencial da barragem de Belo Monte.

Palavras-chave: Estudos longitudinais. Charles Wagley. Gurupá. Amazônia.

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INTRODUCTION

While all the contributors to this Special Edition of the *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Ciências Humanas* are able to write about their personal experiences with Charles Wagley – as friends, colleagues, or former students – our generation never had the pleasure of meeting him. Yet, with our time spent in Gurupá, reading his various works, and hearing so many personal accounts of his life, we have come to know him in our own way. For our contribution to Wagley’s centennial commemoration, we describe what it is like to follow in his footsteps as a third generation of researchers in Gurupá. We discuss the benefits of being part of a 60-year legacy of research that each of us shares and how this shapes our graduate fieldwork.

As Emilio Moran points out in this volume, Wagley taught him that one of the greatest legacies one can leave behind is to “inspire young people to pursue important questions addressing social and environmental wrongs”. It is fitting that both Moran and Wagley inspired our mentor, Richard Pace (Moran was an undergraduate mentor and Wagley was a graduate mentor), who has in turn inspired us. Through Pace’s ethnographic field schools held between 2003 and 2011 in Gurupá, we were introduced to critical social and environmental issues confronting Amazonia, all within the historical backdrop of Wagley’s and Galvão’s pioneering research. Each of us has built upon this initial undergraduate experience and developed graduate research agendas to continue work in Gurupá on topics ranging from child labor in açai extraction, to the public health and socioeconomic challenges created by the construction of the Belo Monte Dam, to the use of media to support and contest the potentially massive socio-environmental impacts of the dam. Each of these projects builds upon Wagley’s research findings and in many ways continues his moral and ethical concerns for the poor and at risk populations. Each is briefly described below.

There is, of course, a second generation of researchers providing valuable information on the community. Some of the second generation researchers

were students of Wagley’s while he worked at the University of Florida. Others, who came from diverse academic backgrounds and diverse nationalities, held in common an attraction to the community spawned through the reading of “Amazon Town” (Wagley, 1976 [1953]) and Galvão’s (1955) “Santos e visagens”. Table 1 lists the major researchers and some of their principal works on Gurupá.

THIRD GENERATION RESEARCH

Monte Talley (a PhD candidate in Anthropology) conducted her first study on the changing notions of childhood and the use of child labor in Gurupá in 2003. The historical framework provided by Wagley (1976 [1953]) and his two students – Miller (1976 new chapter addition in “Amazon Town”) and Pace (1998) – were integral in understanding changes in the health, education, and work of *Gurupaense* children over the course of 50 years. Talley continued this work in 2005 and completed a master’s thesis, entitled “Childhood in the Brazilian Amazon: an ethnographic approach”, which analyzed folk concepts of childhood and child labor while situating them within the local social and economic history of Gurupá. Currently she is working on her dissertation based on fieldwork conducted in Gurupá and nearby Curralinho (2012-2013), focusing on the moral economy of the global açai boom and how it affects the lives of children in communities such as Gurupá. Since açai is marketed as an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible rainforest product enhancing the livelihoods of the rural poor, an understanding of the cultural politics of childhood and child labor at the production end of the açai commodity chain is critical in the context of ensuring social justice.

Cindy Pace, MPH and Anthropology doctoral student, and daughter of Richard Pace, continues Wagley’s dedication to public health through her research on the health needs and negative health impacts associated with the Belo Monte dam, which is being constructed upstream from Gurupá on the Xingu River. In the 2005 field school, C. Pace began her research with a nutritional assessment



Table 1. Gurupá researchers and principal works.

1953	Charles Wagley. Amazon Town. New York, Macmillan
1955	Eduardo Galvão. Santos e visagens. São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional
1957	Charles Wagley. Uma comunidade amazônica. São Paulo, Brasilianna
1964	Charles Wagley. Revisit (1961) and new preface to Amazon Town. New York, Oxford University Press
1974	Darrell Miller. Amazon Town in 1974. MA Thesis. Gainesville, University of Florida
1976	Charles Wagley. Amazon Town. Second edition with chapter by Darrell Miller, "Itá in 1974". New York, Oxford University Press
1984	Arlene Kelly. Family, Church, and Crown: a social and demographic history of the lower Xingu River Valley and the municipality of Gurupá. PhD Dissertation. Gainesville, University of Florida
1986	Penny Magee. Plants, medicine, and health care in Amazonia: a case study of Itá. MA Thesis. Gainesville, University of Florida
1987	Richard Pace. Economic and political changes in the Amazonian community of Itá. PhD Dissertation. Gainesville, University of Florida
1991	Paulo Henrique Borges de Oliveira Junior. Ribeirinhos e roçeiros: gênese, subordinação e resistência camponesa em Gurupá, Pará. MA Thesis. São Paulo, Universidade de São Paulo
1997-2002	FASE. Boletim Projeto FASE Gurupá. Belém, FASE
1998	Richard Pace. The struggle for Amazon Town: Gurupá revisited. Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers
1999	Fabio Poelhekke and Paulo Henrique Borges de Oliveira Junior. Projeto Gurupá: sustainable tropical forest exploitation through community ownership, a Brazilian initiative. Development, v. 42, n. 2, p. 53-56
2001	Girolamo Domenico Treccani. Violência e grilagem: instrumentos de aquisição da propriedade no Pará. Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará/Instituto de Terras do Pará
2002	FASE. Projeto Gurupá. Internet site (www.fase.org.br)
2003	Jean-Marie Royer. Logiques sociales et extractivisme. Étude anthropologique d'une collectivité de la forêt amazonienne, État du Pará, Brésil. PhD Dissertation. Paris, Université Paris III, Institut des Hautes Études d'Amérique Latine
2004	Neila Soares da Silva. Like a Mururé: social change in a <i>terra-firme</i> community on the Amazon estuary. MA Thesis. Gainesville, University of Florida
2006	Monte Talley. Child labor in the Brazilian Amazon: an ethnographic approach. MA Thesis. Murfreesboro, Middle Tennessee State University
2006	Mônica Barroso. Waves in the Forest. PhD Dissertation. London, London School of Economics
2006	Girolamo Domenico Treccani. Regularizar a terra: um desafio para as populações tradicionais de Gurupá. PhD Dissertation. Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos
2008	Émina Márcia Nery dos Santos. A construção de espaços públicos na política educacional em Gurupá. PhD Dissertation. Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos
2009	Richard Pace. Television's interpellation: heeding, missing, ignoring, and resisting the call for Pan-National identity in the Brazilian Amazon. American Anthropologist, v. 111, n. 4, p. 407-419
2009	Benedita Alcidema Coelho dos Santos Magalhães. Educação do campo, poder e políticas públicas: a Casa Familiar Rural de Gurupá-PA: uma construção permanente. MA Thesis. Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação
2013	Richard Pace and Brian Hinote. Amazon Town TV: an audience ethnography in Gurupá. Austin, University of Texas Press
2014	Charles Wagley with Foreword by Conrad Kottak and Preface, footnotes, and final chapter by Richard Pace. Amazon Town Anniversary Edition. New York, Oxford University Press



of *Gurupaense* children as part of a team of field school participants and local hospital employees. Together they gathered anthropometric measurements from children, ages 5-17, attending schools in the town. She compared these data to a previous study conducted in 1984. The results indicated substantial improvements in childhood growth and development since 1984 (reduction in both stunting and wasting), suggesting that the community's aggressive public health campaigns over the last two decades have been successful in ameliorating many childhood health deficiencies. Gurupá's hospital and public health system, of course, are legacies of Wagley's work with the Serviço Especial de Saúde Pública (SESP) under the Washington Accords during World War II.

C. Pace's current research seeks to assist local communities (including Gurupá) in preparation for the negative health impacts associated with the Belo Monte Dam. These impacts will require swift assessment of changing public health needs and nutritional patterns among affected populations in order to adjust public health policies accordingly. The ability to draw upon the existing longitudinal baseline health data from Gurupá will greatly improve the ability to reassess and alter current policies as changes occur.

Lucy Miller, Anthropology doctoral student, is conducting research on intergenerational perceptions of economic opportunities resulting from the Belo Monte dam construction. This project was motivated in part by Wagley's own timely interest in assessing the impacts of large infrastructure projects, in his case the Transamazon Highway in the early 1970s. Miller began her fieldwork in 2009 as she joined with her fellow field school students to evaluate the socioeconomic impacts of açáí production in Gurupá. With this firm grasp of the local political ecology, bolstered by Wagley's baseline research, she intends to conduct her dissertation research on the current shifts in intergenerational livelihoods, as well as social identities, as the community responds to the Belo Monte mega-development project. Critically, she will examine the survivability of the local small-scale 'sustainable'

development initiatives implemented in Gurupá over the past two decades, including extractive reserves and quilombos, in the face of migration patterns and the lure of wage labor.

Simon Hurst-Dodd, also an Anthropology graduate student, is preparing to study the impact of media (television, DVDs, the internet, cell phones) on *ribeirinhos* (riverine people) in and around Gurupá. His principal focus is on the shaping of social identities through development and environmental discourses expressed in media messages. In an interesting twist, Hurst-Dodd follows not only in Wagley's footsteps through his research in Gurupá, but also Conrad Kottak's footsteps (son-in-law of Wagley) through his interest in Brazilian media. In fact, he conducted research in Arembepe – the site of Kottak's (1983) "Assault on Paradise" – during the summer of 2013.

BENEFITS OF THIRD-GENERATION FIELDWORK

In "Chronicling Cultures", a collection of long-term field research projects in Anthropology, Anya Royce and Robert Kemper (2002) list a number of common observations researchers in settings strung across the globe have made, attesting to the value of long-term research. Among these are: a) settling into the field and the establishment of rapport happens much more quickly because the senior ethnographers have already established friendships and trust; b) the opportunity it provides to study firsthand the trends of cultural change; at the same time maintaining an awareness of how cultures are sustained in the face of change; c) the ability of other researchers or community members to use the data collected to ask new questions; d) and finally, the principal advantage is the depth, quality, and variety of understandings achievable.

Being the third generation of researchers in Gurupá imparts many benefits in terms of setting up research and settling into the field. As each of us arrived in the field for the first time, we had been well prepared for the experience through extensive telling of personal first-hand accounts of life in the community and reading of a plethora

of publications on Gurupá and the Brazilian Amazon. These advantages prepared us for nearly everything to come and lessened, to some extent, the severity of our initial culture shock. Arriving in Gurupá, we anticipated the challenges of a relatively low standard of living. We also learned from and were able to avoid mistakes made by previous researchers. For example, we all heeded Pace's (1998) "boat beans" narrative and avoided the kind of gastrointestinal problems he and his wife Olga suffered after eating food prepared with river water while aboard the boat to Gurupá. Although sanitation conditions have improved dramatically since the 1980s, we took all possible precautions to reduce our chances of illness.

As the third generation, we have the good fortune of avoiding many problems faced by anthropologists entering a new field site. Issues of obtaining official permission from local and national government representatives and seeking out and establishing rapport with local gatekeepers and key community members are less strenuous, particularly with the local political structure, due to the rapport and trust gained by the two preceding generations. We have the advantage of identifying ourselves as students of 'Doutor Charles', or as students of his students, allowing work to begin much more quickly, as we already have a research identity in place.

In C. Pace's first experiences in Gurupá, the strong level of previously established rapport and local support made a community-based participatory research approach possible. Many *Gurupaenses* appeared to know more about anthropological methodology than she did, arranging introductions and meetings relevant to her research. Instead of community members acting as 'research subjects', they led the way in forming a collaborative relationship, enabling her to arrange and conduct informal interviews with community leaders almost immediately upon arrival. These interviews highlighted many key concerns of the community, allowing C. Pace to design a dissertation project that seeks to aid the community in identifying health problems, creating policy, and implementing interventions

that *Gurupaenses* themselves find relevant and beneficial in relation to construction of the Belo Monte Dam.

Talley found that previous networks built within the community provided resources that helped her to begin work more quickly. One key advantage was the long relationship built between Pace and a locally trusted non-governmental organization (NGO), Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional (Federation for Social and Educational Assistance – FASE), located in Gurupá. The ability to associate oneself with this locally respected group allowed Talley to establish new contacts and build rapport quickly within the community based on references and support provided by FASE members. FASE also granted use of their computers and newly installed internet access to researchers associated with Pace, greatly facilitating communication with sources and contacts outside of Gurupá.

Miller and Hurst-Dodd benefited greatly from senior ethnographers' key consultants and working alongside a second generation anthropologist during their initial research on the social and economic impacts of açai extraction in the municipality of Gurupá during the 2009 field school. As experienced researchers well know, collecting ethnographic data in a six-week period would be near impossible without immediate introductions to established contacts within the community. Pace's introduction to some of his key consultants connected Miller and Hurst-Dodd to a large network of açai extractors, buyers, and sellers in the community. This greatly facilitated data collection with a larger community of people involved in açai extraction and processing.

Outside the field, our generational ties and Gurupá-based research has put us in contact with many top Amazonian researchers and provided professional development opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate levels of academia. At the undergraduate level, it is rare to have papers accepted for national professional conferences, publish articles, or to receive research grants. As undergraduate students, C. Pace, Hurst-Dodd,

and Miller presented Gurupá-based research at several American Anthropological Association (AAA) conferences, Talley presented Gurupá-based research at the Midwest Association of Latin American Studies (MALAS) conference, Miller (2010) and Hendrickson and Pace (2004) published articles on Gurupá, and Hurst-Dodd, Miller, and Talley received small grants to conduct research in Gurupá. As graduate students the professional opportunities continue. C. Pace and Talley once again read papers on Gurupá-based research at the annual AAA conference, Talley presented Gurupá based research at the XXVIII International Congress of Latin American Studies Association (LASA), C. Pace and Talley have articles under review on Gurupá, and Talley received funding for her dissertation fieldwork in Gurupá from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and a Dissertation Enhancement Grant from the Graduate School at Vanderbilt University.

FINAL REMARKS

We are grateful beyond words for the hard work, dedication, and good names of those that came before us – opening doors for all types of research which have benefited us personally and professionally. Unlike other contributors' very personal accounts and memories of Wagley's life, dedication, and kind spirit, our third generation nonetheless has

experienced, without question, the legacy he has created. We, as the third generation of anthropologists in Gurupá, receive this mantle with vigilance and recognize that with it comes a responsibility to inspire future members of Wagley's legacy in the fourth generation and beyond.

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