The London School of Economics and Political Science

Ethical Living & the Salience of Work:

Growing Up in a Cacua Community of Northwest Amazonia

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of 98,886 words.

Abstract

This thesis focuses on how an indigenous group of Northwest Amazonia that was previously highly mobile came to live together in a community, value the work required of subsistence living and raise their children to live well through learning to work. Based on long-term fieldwork among the Cacua in their community of Wacará (Colombia), the thesis explores how learning to work as part of subsistence living is key to growing up and maturing into adulthood. This process, which begins early in childhood, provides an informal medium through which children are expected to cultivate the desirable dispositions and virtues of living well. Regional literature has much to say about the virtues of living well and the role that work plays in achieving this, but little with regards to the way in which children cultivate such virtues or learn to work. While men and women's complementary roles in the subsistence economy have also been well-documented, the thesis proposes that analysis of the subsistence economy and its inextricable relation to morality requires close attention to learning processes in childhood. It investigates how a desire to live well while living in a community with others permeates the everyday and explores instances in which adults and children enact practical judgment in evaluating their actions and those of others. It argues that considering how children learn core values associated with living well and living with others by learning to work is key to understanding how cultural reproduction takes place throughout continuous processes of social change. By including children as active learners in an analysis of the subsistence economy, the thesis contributes to a broader anthropological understanding of ethics, social change and the ways in which skills and values for living well pass from generation to generation.

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advice from Rita was to record everything, even if it did not seem relevant because events and even the smallest of details can later make sense and cause connections to become apparent. Harry's positivity and warmth, cracking jokes to cheer me up when he could tell I was struggling, along with his encouragement to 'dig deeper, ethnographically speaking' and step back to see the bigger picture, really gave me strength when I felt stuck with my work. You have both encouraged me to find my voice in my writing, deepen my analysis and enrich my thinking.

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Cacua Orthography

The Cacua orthography I use in this book is based on that developed by Marilyn Cathcart and her translation partner, Lois Ann Lowers, who worked for the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and directly with the Cacua of Wacará from 1966-2000. They published a series of five textbooks[1] to teach the Cacua how to read and write in their native language with vocabulary lists at the back. This is the phonetic system that Cacua people literate in Cacua use and understand. I have adapted and translated the following text on Cacua orthography from Spanish, from the fifth Cacua textbook (see Cathcart, López & Lowers, 1994: 57-8):

Pronunciation is based on (Colombian) Spanish pronunciation with some exceptions. The main difference from European Spanish is the pronunciation of the letter **j**, which pronounced as 'h' in 'hat.'

The tilde (~) on top of the first vowel of a morpheme indicates that the whole morpheme (it can be one to two syllables) is nasal, and not only the vowel above which the tilde is positioned.

Like in Spanish, the tilde (é) indicates stress (high tone). A word can have two tildes (*wébít*, meaning 'child') in which case, both syllables are stressed. When there are two vowels in a syllable, if the first has a tilde, the tone starts high and falls (*cháa*, meaning flower). If the second has a tilde, the tone starts low and rises (*jió*, meaning 'tiger'). If neither of the two has a tilde, the tone is low and level, with a prolonged vowel sound (*yee*, meaning "lie").

When the letters **b**, **d** or **g** are not followed by a vowel, they are pronounced with a nasal ending, the letter **b**, with a nasal 'm' sound, the letter **d** or **g**, with a nasal 'n' sound. When a tilde indicates that the tone rises or falls, the nasal part has an ascending or descending tone.

When the consonants **b**, **d,** or **g** are between vowels, they are occlusive.

The letter **h** represents a glottal stop.

The combination of **jw** can sound like 'f' or 'ju' in the soft Colombian pronunciation of 'Juan.'

The letter **ʉ** sounds like 'oo,' but with parted lips as if to make an 'ee' sound.

When the letter **l** is between vowels, it can sound like **r**.

[1] Cathcart & Lowers, 1984, Papélah enat boheéát tólih [Cartilla 1 en cacua] Edition 1
Cathcart & Lowers, 1992, Papélah enat bohéát tólih 1 [Cartilla 1 en cacua] Edition 2
Cathcart & Lowers, 1992, Papélah enat bohéát tólih 2 [Cartilla 2 en cacua] Edition 1
Cathcart, López de Gallego, López L, & Lowers, 1992, Papélah enat bohéát tólih 3 [Cartilla 3 en cacua]
Cathcart & Lowers, 1994, Papélah enat bohéát tólih 4 [Cartilla 4 en cacua]
Cathcart, López L, & Lowers, 1994, Papélah enat bohéát tólih 5 [Cartilla 5 en cacua]

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Chapter 1. Introduction

'You are learning to work?' Paula asked me warmly once the two of us had stopped for a break after weeding a section of her swidden field under the hot morning sun.

She had just cut two sticks of sugarcane and handed me one. Paula cut the other stick into small chunks and sitting her sixteen-month-old daughter on a large banana leaf that she had just cut, placed the sugarcane pieces around her. The girl greedily sucked at the sugarcane and Paula sat on a trunk behind her, taking some pieces for herself. I considered Paula's question with a smile, happy with her assessment of my activities. I was into my second month of fieldwork in the Cacua community of Wacará and in truth, I had not thought of my various trips to different people's swidden fields in this way before. Though I mainly hoped to observe children's activities and interactions with caregivers in this space, I also liked how it structured my day and allowed me to see how it structured the day of the households in the community.

Most women left early in the mornings for their swidden fields, soon after breakfast around the hearth with the rest of the household. As in most parts of Northwest Amazonia, the Cacua mainly cultivated bitter manioc, from which women made manioc bread and toasted manioc flour most afternoons on return from the swidden field. While children did not always accompany their parents to the swidden field, unless they were too young to attend school and did not have a place at nursery, they often helped in other ways before and after school. This included heating manioc gruel for breakfast, fetching water, washing younger siblings in the river, scrubbing clothes, collecting firewood, and grating bitter manioc.

On the days I arranged to join one of the women in her swidden field, I enjoyed walking through the forest to get there, followed by the steady pace of work, weeding, pulling up tubers and tossing them into a basket ready to carry home. These activities lent themselves to bursts of conversation, often initiated by the women I accompanied, as well as moments of quiet concentration on the tasks in hand. On the morning I had joined Paula, I walked behind her along the forest path for an hour to her swidden field, as she carried her daughter in a sling wrapped around her side, stopping occasionally to pick her some berries from the shrubbery lining our path.

When Paula suggested that I was learning to work, I perceived her comment as a form of encouragement and modestly responded that I would like to. Perhaps emboldened by my answer, Paula asserted the importance of taking one's children to the swidden field, so that they 'learn to work.' She explained that her own mother had told her this and had taken her and her siblings to the swidden field when they were young. As children, they used to take baskets to carry the produce home, and otherwise fetched firewood and water. Paula then nodded to her own little girl and noted, 'she likes to work.'

Indeed, before taking our break to sit and eat sugarcane, her daughter had been toddling through the bitter manioc plants, using the stems to support her, squatting down every so often to pull a weed out of the ground. When we arrived, Paula had picked a handful of *lulos* to give her daughter, before the three of us got to work. Although the Cacua associated the swidden field with work, even for toddlers as Paula's comments indicated, there was also an affective side to time spent there together, which included giving food and sitting in the shade together to eat it. As we sat sucking on sugarcane, Paula pointed to the banana trees that her sons, aged four and seven, had planted. She then disapprovingly mentioned that some *señoritas* (unmarried girls) did not go to the swidden field to help their mothers, as they had not learned to work because their mothers had not taken them when they were little. Following this reflection, Paula and I began pulling up yams from the ground, shaking off the earth and then tossing them into her basket. Her daughter stayed seated, and Paula occasionally tossed a small yam her way. The girl picked up some of the yams strewn on the ground before her and occasionally rose to carefully carry one to her mother's basket.

Paula's comments in this opening vignette suggest the importance of children's actions and interactions from an early age to ensure that they develop a disposition to work and help their families. This points to the value that Cacua people attribute to children's participation in everyday activities of the household. This thesis not only enquires into how work and helping others have emerged as core values among Cacua people, especially in terms of living together in a community, but also how these are pivotal sites for learning key values and cultivating the self, a lifelong process that begins early in childhood. In the following section, I seek to embed this vignette in a portrait of life in the Cacua community of Wacará, including some of the challenges facing the Cacua today, before reviewing the theoretical literature.

Regionally Situating the Cacua of Wacará

While many indigenous communities line the bank of the large Vaupés River, the community of Wacará is completely surrounded by tropical rainforest with a small interfluvial stream running along one side of it. There is a five kilometre[2] forest path, waterlogged in parts with tree trunks to carefully balance along the top, connecting the community to the Vaupés River, where the people of Wacará keep a large canoe for transportation to the small urban town of Mitú. The community of Wacará is home to 190 inhabitants[3] all of whom are indigenous, the large majority of whom are Cacua, and 68 of whom are children aged 12 and under. Like many indigenous communities of Northwest Amazonia, the Cacua of Wacará today practice

[2] As I have not measured this distance myself, I am relying on data from secondary literature (Alcaldía mayor de Mitú, 2002 cited in Salazar, Gutiérrez, & Franco, 2006).

[3] This data is from when I arrived in Wacará and is now approximate as there were several births during my fieldwork and more since I left, the same is true of deaths.

slash-and-burn horticulture, cultivating bitter manioc to make manioc bread and toasted manioc flour, as well as crops such as pineapples, bananas, plantains, sugarcane, and yams. They also fish, hunt, and gather large quantities of wild berries for making juice and to eat when they come into season. While there are families that maintain a fairly sedentary lifestyle, barely leaving the community, others leave for hunting trips of one to eight weeks[4] several times a year. In the latter case, parents either leave their children with relatives during school termtime or take their children with them during school holidays.

Political Map of Vaupés, Colombia

Source: Wikimedia Commons (2015)

The above map indicates the rough locations of Wacará and other Cacua community of Nuevo Pueblo. The small urban town of Mitú, capital of the Colombian department of Vaupés, is shaded red.

There are only two Cacua communities, the larger of which is Wacará, located between the Vaupés and the Querarí Rivers, approximately 100 kilometres east of Mitú, the small urban town, capital of the Vaupés department of Colombia (see Bolaños, 2016: 1). The other Cacua community is Nuevo Pueblo, with 84 inhabitants, located between the Vaupés and the Papurí Rivers. While not all inhabitants of these two communities are Cacua, this is the case for the large majority. This is because the Cacua are typically endogamous with regards to marrying within their indigenous group, and exogamous with regards to marrying between different Cacua clans. Outside the two Cacua communities, some Cacua women married to non-Cacua men, live in their husband's community. In other cases, the odd Cacua family (parents and adult children) also live in non-Cacua communities.

The term 'Cacua' derives from the native term, *cə̃acwã*, meaning 'people' (*cə̃ac* – indigenous person; *wã* - plural suffix). While the Cacua refer to themselves as 'los Cacua' (the Cacua) to outsiders when speaking Spanish, in their own language they refer to themselves as *badawã*. The anthropologist Peter Silverwood-Cope (1972) uses the term 'Bara Makú' of which 'Bara' (spelt *bada* using SIL phonetics) comes from Cacua people's native term for themselves and 'Makú' comes from a generic term that outsiders at the time of Silverwood-Cope's research used to refer to the Cacua as well as other non-Eastern Tukanoan and non-Arawakan

[4] Most usual was one to two weeks, cases where hunting trips stretched further (up to eight weeks) was uncommon and only took place once the school had year ended and before the new school year began, between December and February. There was only one family who moved around, staying in different communities for various periods of time before returning to Wacará. There was one other family who lived more remotely, at around a two-hour distance from Wacará and sporadically returned to the community for short periods of time.

indigenous groups of the area. More recently, the linguist Katherine Boloñas (2016) has used the spelling 'Kakua.'

For my part, I employ the spelling of 'Cacua' as used by the missionaries, who according to records of the organisation for which they worked, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), lived and worked with the Cacua of Wacará 1966-2000 (see Cabrera, 2013: 520). My decision to use this spelling is because it is the spelling that the Cacua themselves recognised. I employ the SIL spelling of Cacua words throughout this thesis, which differs to the phonetics employed by other scholars who have worked with the Cacua, such as Silverwood-Cope (1972) and Boloñas (2016). As the literate and bilingual Cacua in Wacará employed the SIL system, this was the way I also learned how to write in Cacua.

The Cacua are one of around twenty-seven different indigenous groups living in the Vaupés (see Jiménez, 2007: 27). Each indigenous group has their own native language, which corresponds to one of the four major linguistic groupings of the region, Arawak, Eastern Tukanoan, Nadahup, and Kakua-Nɨkak (Epps & Stenzel, 2013: 17). It was previously thought and has thus been stated in much of the regional literature that the Nadahup linguistic group (consisting of Hup, Yuhup, Dâw, and Nadëb), the Kakua-Nɨkak linguistic group (consisting of Kakua and Nukak) and the language Puinave, all pertained to the same language family, known as Makú or Makú-Puinavean (Epps & Bolaños, 2017). Linguists have since stated that there is no evidence for this collective categorisation and that the error likely stems from the local categorisation of the first six of these indigenous groups as Makú (see *ibid*). Epps and Bolaños (2017) hence advocate for abandoning the use of "Makú" to name a distinct family grouping.

In the Vaupés, the most numerous indigenous groups belong to the Eastern Tukanoan language family, which consists of twenty different indigenous groups, including the Cubeo, Desano, Wanano, and Tukano (Cabrera, 2013: 513). The indigenous groups belonging to the Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak language families have also been referred to in regional literature as 'river people' (Epps & Stenzel, 2013: 19; Epps & Bolaños, 2017: 470) as they have historically lived alongside the main rivers of the region. Cultural practices historically attributed to riverine groups include felling large swidden fields, cultivating bitter manioc and other crops, producing manioc bread, and building large communal houses, called malocas, all of which align with a sedentary lifestyle. Key to this thesis is that the regional categorisation of such activities as work and the positive valence placed upon these activities as 'work,' therefore reflects an Eastern Tukanoan perspective.

As well as being a linguistically diverse region, the Vaupés is also hierarchal with regards to the way that people from different indigenous groups relate to one another. If the river people, indigenous groups within the Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak language families, have historically been at the top of the social hierarchy, 'forest people' or 'Makú,' a social category

to which the Cacua pertain, have historically been at the bottom (see ch2). Scholarly analysis of the term 'Makú' indicates that the term is an external denomination that does not refer to any specific indigenous groups and instead, is a general concept that contains pejorative undertones and cultural discrimination (Mahecha, Franky, and Cabrera, 1996: 110).

The term has been used indiscriminately in regional literature since the eighteenth century to refer to semi-nomadic indigenous groups, who supposedly live without agriculture, deep in the forest alongside small streams, and hold a subordinate position to neighbouring riverine indigenous groups, who treat them like 'servants' (Mahecha, Franky, and Cabrera, 1996: 90). Indigenous groups from the Nadahup (Hup, Yuhup, Dâw, and Nadëb) and Kakua-Nɨkak (Cacua and Nukak) linguistic groups are locally categorised as Makú, though more contemporary sources use the term 'forest people' (e.g., Epps & Stenzel, 2013: 19-20; Epps & Bolaños, 2017: 470, 496). Of the indigenous groups categorised in this way, the Cacua, Nukak, Yuhup and Hup have their territory (or part of it) in Colombia (Mahecha, Franky, and Cabrera, 1996: 91).

Anthropologists working with so-called Makú peoples have avocated for disuse of the term Makú to categorise indigenous groups or linguistic families in academic, administrative and political circles, as it contains severe perjorative undertones and lacks clarity with regards to the indigenous groups to whom it refers (e.g., Mahecha, Franky, and Cabrera, 1996: 110-1). At a political and administrative level, for instance, use of the term 'Makú' has led to repercussions regarding the distribution of resources, as well as designing and implementing programmes for health and education among indigenous groups, who have been indiscriminately categorised as Makú (*ibid*: 110). Anthropologists have thus proposed that it is more appropriate to identify each indigenous group by the name that specifically corresponds to them (*ibid*), be that Cacua, Nukak, Hup, Yuhup, Dâw, or Nadëb.

Locally, the term Makú is highly derogatory. The Cacua, for example, never referred to themselves as Makú. The very few times I heard them use this term, it was used to indicate that others thought lowly of them. For example, when one woman was complaining to her husband that the schoolteachers had barely been coming to Wacará to teach the children at the school there, she said, 'they just think we're Makú.' With this she inferred that the teachers could not be bothered to teach the children at Wacará, as in their eyes the Cacua of Wacará were just Makú, inferior and not worth their time.

One aspect of the lowly status historically attributed to the Makú is that according to the Eastern Tukanoan-centric vision of what counts as work, the Makú do not work. In contrast to their sedentary riverine neighbours, the Makú typically built unsophisticated houses in small semi-permanent forest settlements, procuring most of their food through hunting, which unlike agriculture, was not locally categorised as work. The relationship between sedentary riverine indigenous groups and Makú peoples has not yet been explored explicitly with

regards to the valorisation of work, a specific kind of work, which has long been attributed to the cultural practices of Eastern Tukanoans.

Rather than challenging this dominant model of work in the region, questioning for instance why agriculture was work but hunting and gathering was not, or why work, in terms of manual labour in the fields, should be valorised at all, many Cacua of Wacará today subscribed to this notion of work. Furthermore, they spoke of this kind of work in a way that was heavily moralised and insisted that as Cacua people, they worked hard. In this way, Cacua people of Wacará were simultaneously distancing themselves from the category of Makú and embracing a new identity for themselves as Cacua, people who work. It is within this context, that this thesis explores the work of Cacua children in Wacará, the first generation to be born and grow up in this Cacua community, at the size and with the resources it has today.

The term 'community' as used in this thesis is a direct translation of the Spanish term, '*comunidad*,' short for '*comunidad indígena*' (indigenous community). Both indigenous and non-indigenous people in Colombia use these terms to refer to the village style setups in which most indigenous peoples of the Vaupés live. As highlighted in regional literature, the setup of indigenous communities today does not reflect the traditional social organisation of the indigenous groups living in them, prompting people to find new ways of interacting and organising their work (see e.g., Killick, 2008, 2021; Buitron, 2020; Mahecha & Franky, 2010; Rival, 2000). This is certainly true for the Cacua, who used to live in much smaller groups, moving from place to place every few years, exchanging goods and their services with their sedentary riverine neighbours of other indigenous groups, to whom they held a position of subordination. Today, work and helping others with work has come to characterise daily life in Wacará, not only because of its practical importance to subsistence living, but also as subject to ethical evaluation, such as Paula's commonplace critique of *señoritas* not helping their mothers in the swidden field because they do not know how to work.

At the same time, it would not be wise to take Paula's statement about 'some *señoritas*' at face value, as it may have been more of a personal a statement of judgement on a neighbour rather than on work ethics more generally. In fact, taken at face value, many statements that Cacua people made about others could easily give the impression that they recognised 'work' as fixed in people's lives, as though there were those who worked and those who did not, when this was not the case. While Cacua people often criticised others (particularly members of their own household) for not working, they also recognised that people's capacity for and interest in work changed and fluctuated over time and the lifecycle. With criticism came the understanding and expectation that people could alter their actions (and that criticism might even encourage them to do so) to develop more desirable dispositions. Those criticised for not working at one point in their life, may have previously worked diligently alongside other family members or may do so in the future. It is also important to note that work can be seasonal. When women said that their husband or unmarried sons did not work, this was

often a reference to timeliness for felling and burning the swidden field. This did not mean that their husband or sons always missed the best time to clear the swidden field, but that during a particular season, they had been busy with something else, perhaps with other work.

Despite these points, the way people spoke about work in Wacará was always heavily moralised. As such, Paula's critique highlights an important point with which Lambek opens his edited volume on *Ordinary Ethics.* He states that 'Ethnographers commonly find that the people they encounter are trying to do what they consider right or good, are being evaluated according to criteria of what is right and good' (2010: 1). As he states later, people also interpret 'the actions and characters of others by criteria similar to those they applied to themselves' (*ibid:* 40). The kind of work Paula had been referring to, was the everyday work required of subsistence living, such as weeding, sowing, and harvesting crops in the swidden field. Quite why and how this kind of work and helping one's family with this work falls into a shared criteria of what is right and good among the Cacua of Wacará sets the undertone for the investigation of this thesis. Part of my approach into this enquiry involves exploring Cacua people's evaluations regarding how to live well while living in a community with others and the ways in which their children might learn how to live well as they learn to work.

This is not to say that there was a shared consensus among everyone in the community about what it meant to live well or that everyone valued the work required of subsistence living. Nonetheless, the leaders of Wacará often called upon work as belonging to the criteria of what was good and right, as a solution to problems in the community, such as single mothers without a partner to help them produce food for their children or theft from swidden fields (see ch6). As Paula's remark suggests, not only leaders valued work as good in evaluating the actions of others, so did children when evaluating a sibling's failure to help as lazy or an adolescent scolding a slightly younger sibling for engaging in sexual relations with a partner who did not work, or a grandmother giving her grandchildren advice to be good and work.

Throughout this thesis, I use the term 'help' alongside that of 'work.' In doing so, I draw on a loose translation that Cacua people used for their expression, *teo wáac*, a compound verb formed of the verbs *teo,* meaning 'to work' and *wáac,* meaning 'to come together to do an activity.' Literally, *teo wáac* translates as 'coming together to work.' Cacua people translated this expression into Spanish in several ways, including 'work' (*trabajar*), 'work together' (*trabajar unidos/ juntos*), and most commonly, 'help' (*ayudar*). When quoting people, who spoke to me in Spanish, such as Paula in the opening vignette, I have translated their words from Spanish into English. In such cases, I translate 'trabajar' as work and 'ayudar' as help. By providing sufficient context as to the Cacua usage and understanding of these terms, I aim to highlight that these terms do not directly correlate with their popular usage, outside of my fieldsite. As well as a popular Cacua translation of *teo waác*, my use of the term 'help' also points to children's role as 'helpers' as highlighted in literature (e.g., Lancy, 2018: 5) and what Lancy refers to as 'the chore curriculum' (1996: 144; 2012). The idea reflected by this latter notion is that children progressively move up the chore curriculum, gradually undertaking

tasks that are more complex and physically demanding as they get older (*ibid*). In clarifying my use of the term 'help' in the thesis, I wish to make clear that it should neither be read as children's lack of autonomy, nor as a diminishment of their important role as economic agents within the Cacua community.

In the following section I review the theoretical literature from which I draw inspiration throughout the thesis. I begin by exploring the notion of the 'moral economy' and how it forms a robust starting point on which to build my analysis. Within the individual household in Wacará, a couple and their children must all pitch in when it comes to work that revolves around the subsistence economy. While a husband-and-wife undertake complementary gendered roles, such as the husband's role of felling the swidden field and the wife's role of cultivating and harvesting crops to produce food and drink, children, even those as young as Paula's daughter, help. While each household should be self-sufficient, this expectation runs alongside an exchange of goods and services that take place between households in the community. For example, helping someone from another household with work and being able to call on that person when in need of help with a big job, such as felling a swidden field or sowing crops, forms part of the moral economy. When adolescent boys joined their fathers to help their father's brother with such work, they were able to learn the practical skills of undertaking such tasks, but also the moral aspect of helping others.

Through an analytical framework of the moral economy, I will explain how the themes of work, morality, social change, and childhood which emerge through the ethnography presented so far, have been explored to date both in Amazonian anthropology and more broadly outside of regional literature. Following this, I will explain how, why and to what ends I turn to other theoretical approaches, including value theory and ordinary ethics in order to extend these discussions and debates to provide additional insight into my ethnography. To conclude this review of theoretical literature, I will suggest the ways in which I am contributing to broader theoretical discussions and debates.

A Review of Theoretical Literature

The Moral Economy in Amazonia

By reinstating this concept in my analysis, I consider the indigenous community as a place in which economic practices are embedded within sociality and ethics. This includes everyday practices of the production, consumption, and distribution of food between households and among kin that have emerged through my ethnography. Nonetheless, crucial to this analysis is that the moral economy does not only consist of 'good' values. The moral economy is a neutral analytical framework and therefore consists of theft, gossip, fighting, drinking and 'maldad' (black magic) as much as working with or helping others (expressed in Cacua as *teo waác*), preparing and eating food together, and living together happily. Through this analytical framework I shall tie together the key themes in this thesis of work and production in the domestic economy, which require navigating conflict and tension as much as satisfying

the needs and desires of kin, with what children learn about living well through their participation in these everyday activities.

While the moral economy is a term that became well-known through its use by the historian E. P. Thompson (1971) and then the anthropologist James Scott (1976), the term has since been used in the Amazonian context. Thompson (1971) used the term 'moral economy' to investigate hunger riots among labourers of 18th century England. His analysis centres on norms and obligations of the moral economy, which when broken (in the case he studied, by rich landowners, who increased the price of basic food stuffs to the extent that the poor could no longer afford to eat), can drive those exploited to make demands on those exploiting them (see Fassin, 2009). Thompson describes this in terms of those exploited setting straight the difference 'between a soaring "economic" price in the market, and a traditional "moral" price set by the crowd' (1971: 126). The fact that the moral economy is embedded with social relations comes through clearly in Thompson's description of 18th century markets as places where people exchanged news, gossip, and pleasantries, as well as buying and selling goods (*ibid*: 135). Nonetheless, the moral economy became a more widely recognised concept within anthropology following Scott's (1976) use of the term.

Unlike Thompson, Scott does not focus on events or riots, but rather on the everyday, subsistence, and exploitation of Southeast Asian peasants (see Fassin, 2009). He builds on Thompson's analysis of norms and obligations by also drawing on values and emotions as central to the moral economy (*ibid*). In this regard Scott describes his analysis as 'essentially phenomenological' because he shows how the logic that peasants follow in making decisions not only impinges on material factors but also reflects their values and experience (Scott, 1976: 31). While Scott admits that the necessity for peasants to guarantee their subsistence is crucial to their livelihoods, his analysis focuses on the social context behind their actions (*ibid*: 166). To explain this point further, Scott notes that,

> 'The peasant is born into a society and culture that provide him with a fund of moral values, a set of concrete social relationships, a pattern of expectations about the behaviour of others, and a sense of how those in his culture have proceeded to similar goals in the past' (*ibid).*

This is not to refute people's potential to initiate change, but rather to emphasise that no one is born into a cultural vacuum. Scott makes this point to express that peasant social action exists within a society of cultural values (*ibid*).

He explains that,

> 'A villager whose harvest has failed does not respond randomly. He has a clear idea of those from whom he might appropriately ask help and what he might justifiably expect from each. He acts, moreover, in the expectation that his social map is more or less accurate, that his notion of the structure of moral claims conforms with the sense of obligation felt by others' (*ibid*).

While the Cacua of Wacará neither identify nor are they referred to as peasants, they also rely on subsistence living. As with Scott's approach, I also take into account the wider social context within which their actions take place. Some households within the Cacua community for instance, also ran into problems with regards to assuring subsistence for their family within their household. As Scott notes of the Southeast Asian peasants in his research, the Cacua did not respond randomly when for any multitude of reasons, they had not managed to produce enough food as a household, they too had a 'social map' regarding from whom to request help. Social obligations between kin and more generally other members of the community featured in this map, generally guiding people's interactions, and responses.

I am not writing about the moral economy through a lens of exploitation as Thompson (1971) and Scott (1976) do. Instead, I aim to extend on these classic analyses of the moral economy by drawing on the concept in line with the widespread concern among indigenous peoples in Amazonia of living well and working together. This enables me to tie together the important themes in this thesis of work and production in the domestic economy and wider community, and the moral learning of children. As I have noted, children help to produce goods through working alongside their parents or when their parents send them to collect firewood or fetch water. Children also help to distribute goods, when their parents send them to the homes of kin with bowls of food or invitations to the house to eat or drink.

What this thesis asks is where children stand in the moral economy as they participate in these everyday activities? How do they learn the commonly shared cultural values present in the society into which they are born and how do they navigate these as they help their families with the work of subsistence living? In attempting to answer these questions over the course of the thesis, one of my contributions is to show how children's learning of the necessary technical skills to work and learning important moral values are intertwined.

Much of the regional literature on the moral economy has little to say on this subject, though there are some notable exceptions (e.g., Morelli, 2017; Peluso, 2015; Mezzenzana, 2020). Gow's description of 'what children do in the subsistence economy' is a case of the former instance. His argument is based around the subsistence economy as born from the desire that a man and woman feel for one another in terms of their sexual appetite and appetite for food that the other can provide, that is meat or manioc beer. Gow writes of children as a product of this desire, as well as an interruption from it, given the couvade practices that prohibit sexual activity, work in the swidden field, hunting, and fishing (1989: 577). He describes children as 'the passive recipients of the products of adult labour' (*ibid*: 579) and that when they undertake activities in subsistence economy, these are 'simply an adjunct to adult activity' (*ibid*: 578). While Gow notes that adults ridicule children and order them around, but stop once they become adolescents, he reveals nothing of the process through which children arrive at that point. As such, Gow ignores processes of child socialisation, and the way children navigate their way through them as they learn how best to participate in the moral economy.

A challenge to the passive way in which children are often portrayed in regional literature is evident in Peluso's (2015) article about children's instrumentality. While the notion that children are unknowledgeable and 'passive learners' (e.g., Kidd 2000: 115 among the Enxet of Paraguay) is widespread among adults in Amazonia and other parts of the world, Peluso explores how children often use this to their advantage (2015: 45). Based on her fieldwork among the Ese Eja, Peluso shows that children are extremely political in their daily interactions. It is precisely because adults do not attribute full responsibility to children for their actions that they can behave in instrumental ways (*ibid*: 54). Their participation in the moral economy includes protecting one another by keeping secrets from adults, such as which of them stole food and cooked it in secret (*ibid:* 46) or blackmailing adults for whom they are keeping secrets, such as affairs, when they pass message between them (*ibid:* 50).

Like Peluso, Morelli's child-centred analysis of the moral economy explores how children's play and work takes place within a wider socio-political context (2017: 139). Morelli emphasises that processes of social change taking place throughout Amazonia, such as deforestation and urbanisation, do not simply happen to children, but that children actively navigate these changes (*ibid*). Matses people of the Peruvian Amazon, for example, have gradually moved from forest settlements to live alongside wide rivers near non-indigenous territories following peaceful contact with evangelical missionaries (*ibid:* 140). Morelli highlights that Matses children are developing different skills from previous generations by spending time playing in the river while their parents are hunting in the forest. The proximity of their settlement to an urban town, home to a predominantly non-indigenous population has also inspired different desires in young people as they imagine the excitement of city life (Morelli, 2015).

I take inspiration from such analyses of the moral economy which portray children as active participants, to build on classic approaches to the moral economy in regional literature. One such approach, coined by Viveros de Castro as the 'moral economy of intimacy' (1996: 188-89), refers to the analytical style of Overing (1992, 1993*a*, 1993*b*) and 'her former students' (e.g., Gow, 1989, 1991; Santos Granero, 1991). This style of analysis emphasises the importance of everyday living among indigenous peoples of Amazonia, particularly through production, sharing, mutuality and conviviality (see Viveros de Castro, 1996: 189). Core to Overing's argument is her critique of Kantian influence on moral philosophy in modern Western thinking which divorces aesthetics from ethics and politics (Overing, 1989: 159). The analytical importance of reintegrating ethics and aesthetics with production and conviviality for Overing, stems from her fieldwork among the Piaroa of the Orinoco, for whom beauty is a moral notion with which both production and personal relationships are imbued. As such, she states that understanding social life among the Piaroa, requires taking seriously the notion of beauty as 'an expression of moral and political value' (Overing, 1989: 159).

Among the Cacua of Wacará, being beautiful refers to a disposition of calm and tranquillity, conductive to working well and getting on with others. As I demonstrate throughout the

thesis, all practices entailed in the production, consumption, and distribution of food, as well as the complementary work of men and women with help from their children, are imbued with moral value. In this way, it is through learning to work and help their families that children learn how to live beautifully with others. While Overing's approach emphasises the importance of care, which includes raising children, her analysis portrays children from an adult-centred perspective (e.g., Overing, 1988: 177-81). In other words, Overing emphasises the importance of childcare as part of the moral economy, but not children's active role in the moral economy. Consequently, we learn little in her analysis of everyday instances which might reveal how children put into practice, negotiate, or reject what adults teach them.

I intend to build on Overing's influential approach by paying close attention to processes of learning in childhood. For instance, Overing employs the concept of *sensus communis*, which was a significant notion in Western philosophy prior to Kantian ethics and means 'the sense of the right and general good that is acquired through living in a community' (1989: 159). I investigate how children might come to learn this not only through active participation in everyday life, helping their families with work in the fields, household, and village, but also through critiques of their own and other people's lack of participation in such tasks. In this way, I explore encouragement and critique as two sides of the same coin when it comes to children and young people's learning of both the technical skills for work and moral values with which working and helping one's family are imbued. In doing so, I also draw on Overing and Passes's insistence that an emphasis on the positive aspects of sociality in analysis must not be mistaken for an absence of hostility, conflict, and violence, as these are not only present, but necessary for understanding 'the Amazonian social' (2000: 6).

In their edited volume, Overing and Passes discuss their use of the term 'conviviality,' which is best understood through the Spanish verb (and original Latin root), *convivir* and noun, *convivencia*, meaning 'to live /living together' (2000: xiii). As Killick has shown (2021), the concept of 'living together' (in a community) as a key feature of 'living well' is a relatively new concept in Amazonia. In chapter two, I shall explore this idea more fully in relation to the founding of the Cacua community of Wacará and what 'living well together' means for the Cacua people living there. For Overing, Passes and colleagues, conviviality or communal living among Native Amazonians, includes several shared features, such as,

> 'Peacefulness, high morale and high affectivity, a metaphysics of human and non-human interconnectedness, a stress on kinship, good gifting-sharing, work relations and dialogue, a propensity for the informal and performative as against the formal and institutional, and an intense ethical and aesthetic valuing of sociable sociality.' (2000: xiii-xiv)

Throughout this thesis, I explore such features of conviviality as part of the moral economy. As Overing and Passes clearly state, while they view this form of conviviality as characteristic of many Amazonian socialities, it not only reveals an ideal way of living. The aforementioned

shared features of conviviality are expressed in both the concrete everyday sense of 'friendliness, mutuality and joyfulness' and in the long-term sense of building sociality overtime, through the daily actions and interactions required of living together (2000: xiv). Conviviality also involves dissonance and violence whether in actuality or as a potential threat and must be navigated and managed. As such, a study of conviviality might also involve an exploration of situations, such as illness, death and fighting, or antisocial emotions, such as anger and jealousy, which threaten, but are also important for understanding social cohesion and community (*ibid*). In this way, understanding both positive and negative aspects of sociality and conviviality as part of the moral economy and the moral economy as a judgement neutral analytical framework, is key to the analysis of this thesis.

Unlike the focus of the 'moral economy of intimacy,' Descola prefers to analyse the 'good life' among the Achuar in 'it's strictly economic dimension' (1994: 309). His quantitative approach reveals that the Achuar do not exploit all of their potential food supply and therefore have a wide safety margin (*ibid:* 313). There are also such high rates of productivity across all their subsistence activities, that the Achuar attain sufficient calories and protein in return for relatively short spates of gardening, hunting, and fishing (*ibid:* 319-20). This distinctive approach to the moral economy demonstrates that ideas about what it means to live well are crucial for understanding economic relations and vice versa. As Descola notes, the good life is not solely about the economy, as domestic peace is both a condition for and consequence of achieving it (*ibid:* 309). This suggests that despite Descola's analytical decision to leave the Achuar 'to decide for themselves whether or not they have a happy home life' (*ibid:* 309), mood and good feeling are still an important aspect of the good life for them.

Different analytical approaches highlight different important aspects of the moral economy. As mentioned above, I aim to incorporate a child-centred approach situated within broader social context in my analysis of the moral economy among the Cacua of Wacará. Like Overing's turn to moral philosophy predating Kantian influence to analyse social life of the Piaroa, I employ Aristotelian notions of ethics and action and Graeber's notion of 'value as the importance of action' to do so. In this way, I aim to bring together the long-standing theme in regional literature of the good life and living well through the lens of the moral economy and conversations within the anthropological turn to ethics and value theory. At this point, I must add that I do not analytically distinguish between the terms 'ethical' and 'moral' or 'ethics' and 'morality' as some scholars do. As I draw on concepts that employ different terms, the *moral* economy, and ordinary *ethics*, such a distinction would not make sense in my analysis.

Value Theory & the Value of Work

My conversation with Paula in the swidden field, her approval that (in her words) I was 'learning to work' and her comment that her sixteen-month-old daughter 'likes to work' indicated the value that Paula placed on work. The more time I spent with families and their

children, the more I realised the positive valence they placed on work. The more time I spent in the community, the more aware I became of the value attributed to work and helping other members of one's household with work in the community more generally. In using the term value here, I am referring to the ethical or moral value of work. While value theory, stemming from classical economics and developed by Marx, provides a very different entry point for analysing the moral economy to that of ethics, this difference is magnified by a general tendency to think of value in terms of economic value. Nonetheless, even the classical work of Adam Smith alludes to two senses of value, economic and ethical[5] (e.g., Smith, 2000: 438). Graeber points out that it is precisely based on these two different senses of the term 'value' that anthropologists have engaged with the concept (see e.g., Munn, 1986; Turner, 2006 [1984], 2003, 2008). In this vein, Graeber calls for 'a theory of value starting from the assumption that what is ultimately being evaluated are not things, but actions' (2001: 49) and therefore examines 'value as the importance of actions' (*ibid*).

Olivia Harris draws on Graeber's line of reasoning in arguing that 'most theories of value concentrate their attention on the things that work produces,' rather than the value of work itself (Harris, 2007: 149). She writes of 'work as value' to describe the positive value attributed to work among Andean highlanders, explaining that work is a way through which Andeans strengthen and nurture their networks of social relations. This leads her to emphasise work (she focuses on agricultural labour), particularly hard work and collective work as holding value in Andean society, rather than the material products of that work (*ibid*: 149). Similarly, I investigate the importance placed on work (rather than the material products of work) and working with others, also expressed as 'helping' in the Cacua language, within the household, kinship network and community among the Cacua of Wacará. The value of this work is not only in the action of work itself, but also in the products of work in a non-material sense, such as the harmony that cooperation, social awareness, and responsiveness to others generates. Cacua parents recognise their children's participation in such processes of production as imperative for living well in the present and to ensure that their children live well in the future.

Turner draws on value theory to different ends, investigating production, structure, and value among the Kayapo of Central Brazil through the circulation of their social values and how individuals assume them, analysing the relation between these values and the Kayapo's political organisation (2006 [1984]: 19). He explains that values are communicated, recognised, and appreciated, that is circulated, on the level of communal organisation (*ibid:*

[5] In Smith's manufacturer - menial servant comparison, Smith states, 'the labour of the latter, however, has its value and deserves its reward as well as that of the former' (2000: 438). According to Smith, 'unproductive labourers' include those with the 'most important… professions,' who perform services, which are 'honourable… useful… necessary' (ibid: 439). These include churchmen, lawyers, physicians, the army, and the navy (*ibid*: 439-440). Smith alludes to the ethical value of such jobs by remarking that of all the 'unproductive labour' he lists, 'the labour of the meanest of these has a certain value' along with labour 'of the noblest and most useful' (*ibid:* 439), despite the fact they produce nothing material (*ibid:* 440).

28-29). In here lies 'the social production of the values' (*ibid:* 29). Turner is not speaking of the value of things, such as manioc beer or meat like Uzendoski (2004), but the value of values. Turner explains that there are socially appropriate forms of political and ritual expression through which individuals can become widely recognised among their people as holding value, which is in turn considered as a personal attribute. Attaining such value(s) is the reason such individuals undertake rituals in the first place. While the value bestowed upon an individual enables them to ensure positive solidarity among their people, when others struggle to attain such value themselves, this creates conflict (Turner, 2006 [1984]: 29-30).

Cepek (2008) draws on Turner's use of value theory in his exploration into the value of fearlessness among the Cofán of the Ecuadorian Amazon. He notes that Cofán people use the term *opa* 'to refer to a "satisfying" existence, a "happy" community, and a "good' person"' (*ibid:* 335). When asked to explain what the term meant, they used phrases such as 'not fearful or prone to timidity, nervousness, or embarrassment, calm like still water, silent and generally positive terms like happy and good' (*ibid:* 341). By contrast, Cepek explains that in cases where Corfán activists did not value *opa,* it was because the valued fearlessness to enable them to destroy enemies, such as oil companies posing a threat to Cofán territory. For Cofáns, who were not leaders and activists, but lived together in the community, the value of fearlessness instead came from not needing to worry about enemies (*ibid:* 348). In applying value theory to explore this conception, Cepek explains,

> 'For scholars aligned with the anthropology of ethics and morality, it is impossible to understand human beings apart from the values that orient their actions. For an anthropologist like me who join the concept of values as criteria for action to the idea of value as the practical potentials produced by action, it is even harder to look at human existence and not see value in some form' (2019: 320).

In regional literature, the concept of living well has commonly been tied to that of pre-Kantian or indeed Aristotelian ethics (e.g., Overing, 1989: 159; Walker, 2015: 179), but apart from the notable exception of Cepek (2008), not explicitly to value. In the Cacua case, the value of work and living well, which are neither mutually exclusive nor valued in the same way (or at all) by everyone in the Cacua community of Wacará, indicates how these themes might be brought together in analysis. Most anthropological analyses of social life that draw on value theory neglect to include children in their discussions. My aim is to investigate how children learn the value of work in Wacará and as part of this process, play a role in their own socialisation as active producers, producing themselves through their actions and evaluations in relation to those of others, including their peers. As Graeber points out, people are usually unaware that through their actions, they are at once reproducing and transforming the social system of which they form part, as well as transforming themselves in the process (2001*:* 64). I extend on this notion in the thesis by investigating how such processes take place through two concepts that I will discuss further in the final section of this literature review, an 'education

of attention' (Gibson, 1979: 254) and the 'ethical affordances' (Keane, 2015) that this provides children as they work alongside their parents from an early age.

Ordinary Ethics & Foundations for Ethical Life

Building on value theory as discussed above, this thesis seeks to understand how children's participation in the everyday activities of their household and community generate possibilities for their development of skills and moral dispositions as they reproduce and reshape their world through everyday actions and interactions. This entails paying attention to the way children interpret, negotiate, and ultimately learn from life's endless 'lessons' to make sense of the world around them and find their place within it. I call upon what Das describes as a 'descent into the ordinary' (2015: 54) to further investigate how such processes unfold within the everyday. With an emphasis on the everyday and people's ordinary everyday actions and interactions, ordinary ethics draws on Aristotle's notion that it is through one's actions that the process of cultivating virtue and a good life is possible (Mattingly, 2012: 167). As this approach offers an understanding of human life as entailing 'processes of becoming,' and therefore potentiality and possibility (Mattingly, 2012: 167; Cavell, 2004), it is also significant for discussions in childhood studies. This neo-Aristotelian perspective means that it is not only during childhood but throughout people's entire lives that they are developing through 'processes of becoming' as they cultivate virtue through acting and judging the best course of action, judging the actions of others, and being judged themselves.

The understanding that ethics is not separate from the ordinary or the everyday, which Lambek expresses through stating that ethics is intrinsic to action (2010: 1), is core to the ordinary ethics approach. This approach stems from two different streams of philosophy, Aristotelian Ethics and Ordinary Language philosophy, the latter of which refers to the scholarship of Wittgenstein and Austin, whose arguments reveal ethical insight as embedded in people's everyday use of language (Lambek, 2010: 2). At the same time, this philosophy of language goes beyond linguistics by exploring 'our notions of what is ordinary, what is extraordinary… and how our expressions and actions are always in danger of falling apart' (Das, 2015: 58; see also Das & Han, 2015). Das explains that the smallest acts could maintain or disrupt concord among neighbours where she undertook fieldwork in a crowded neighbourhood of Old Delhi (2012: 135; 2010a, 2010b), and that it is precisely in these small acts that the ethical is located (2012: 139). In this sense, ethics is but one dimension of people's everyday lives, mundane routines, and ordinary practices (*ibid*: 134).

This contrasts to the way that other anthropologists have approached ethics as something outside of the ordinary, which brings people out of their 'unreflective state' during everyday life (e.g., Zigon, 2007: 133). In response, Das warns that while people often relate their lives in such terms, it is dangerous to privilege such moments outside of the ordinary as if they present 'the ethical in some pure form' over the complexity of everyday life (2015: 113). As Lambek explains, the 'ordinary' is an ethics taking place 'without calling undue attention to

itself,' as understood without being explicitly stated and as practiced and agreed upon, rather than exerted through rules (2010: 2). This understanding and emphasis on ordinary everyday life does not preclude processes of social change or critique. The point is that when people develop critical attitudes and seek to improve the conditions of their everyday lives, they do so '*within* the everyday,' rather than according to 'transcendental, objectively agreed-upon values' (Das, 2012: 134).

Having briefly addressed the 'ordinary' of 'ordinary ethics,' let us turn to 'ethics,' which stems from Aristotle's notion of virtue as a quality of actions and ultimately actors (Lambek, 2010: 19). Key to this understanding is Aristotle's *phronesis*, the practical judgement actors exercise regarding the best course of action according to their circumstances, which involves finding a happy medium between extremes, otherwise characterised as vices (*ibid*: 20). In this sense ethics is not so much about doing what is right or good but judging how best to act in each situation that emerges from everyday life (*ibid:* 9). As such, the ordinary ethics approach for scholars entails recognising ethics as omnipresent and exploring the ways it permeates 'ordinary speech, action, and the situation of persons living together' (*ibid:* 10).

One problem that Lempert raises with this understanding of ethics as immanent in interaction is that it provides a loose and unspecific sense of what ethics is (2013: 377). In response, Lambek clarifies that the immanence of ethics points to actions as neither automatic nor predetermined, meaning that in acting and interacting, people must make continuous judgements regarding how to act and what to say (2015: 129). For Lambek, ethics is ubiquitous because,

> 'Human beings cannot avoid being subject to ethics, speaking and acting with ethical consequences, evaluating our actions and those of others, acknowledging and refusing acknowledgment, caring and taking care, but also being aware of our failure to do so consistently. As a species, given our consciousness, our socialisation and sociality, and our use of language, we are fundamentally ethical' (2010: 1).

Employing this understanding of 'virtue ethics' in anthropological analysis as guiding people to live well rather than conform to social norms (see *ibid*: 19), also means rejecting Durkheim's once influential approach in the anthropological study of morality. One of the problems contemporary anthropologists have found with Durkheim is that he writes of morality in terms of rules and obligations, without space for freedom or the possibility for people to reflect and evaluate the best course of action (see Laidlaw, 2002). Durkheim conceives of rules as governing society and society as inspiring such respect in its citizens that 'it automatically causes or inhibits actions' (1915: 237-8, cited in Laidlaw, 2002: 313). While the roots of Durkheim's scholarship lie in Kantian Ethics, Durkheim's analysis excludes Kant's understanding of actions as only being moral when undertaken freely (Laidlaw, 2002: 314).

To consider what discussions in anthropology's recent turn to ethics might mean for an analysis including children and the process of growing up and maturing, Webb Keane's approach has much to offer. He begins his book on *Ethical Life* with a discussion about findings in developmental psychology which reveal children's tendencies to help others, share and cooperate, judge the actions of others, and seek as well as enforce norms from an early age (2015: 35). While none of these tendencies indicate that all young children (or human beings) are innately ethical, Keane notes that they may lay the foundations for what he calls 'ethical life' (*ibid*) or 'the ethics that runs quietly through ordinary everyday activities' (*ibid*: 10). Here, the terms 'ethics' and 'ethical' do not necessarily mean good, but rather the capacity to make evaluative judgments regarding the best course of action depending on the situation, evaluating the actions of others, and becoming subject to the evaluation of others regarding one's own actions (Lambek, 2010: 9; Keane, 2015: 6).

While propensities in early childhood explain why humans are disposed to making ethical judgements, they do not explain how this possibility becomes a reality (Keane, 2015: 35). Key to this point is the importance of everyday social interaction and the active role children play in their own learning and development. Keane explains this in terms of children's relationship to their surroundings, which they neither develop solely through what they learn from others nor from their innate abilities, but also through discovering what their surroundings 'afford' (2015: 30-31). While the concept of 'affordance' was initially employed in the psychology of visual perception, it has since been extended and used in anthropology (Keane, 2015: 27).

For example, Ingold draws on the work of the psychologist, James Gibson (1979), to investigate how people from one generation to the next, learn cultural practices and the skills associated with them. Ingold explains that Gibson's approach differed from those of his contemporaries because of his assertion that perception did not occur in a mind separate from the body, but in a person as a whole being that moved, explored, and discovered what its environment afforded (Ingold, 2000: 3). Ingold extends this idea, exploring how the novice hunter learns by accompanying someone more experienced in the pursuit (2000: 37), by drawing on what Gibson calls an 'education of attention' (1979: 254). In this way, Ingold notes that the more skilled practitioner draws the novice's attention to particular aspects of their surroundings, encouraging them to make use of what their environment affords (2000: 22).

In the case of children's learning and development, Keane notes that 'affordance' refers to the range of possible outcomes available from children's interaction with the world around them (2015: 31). By way of example, he notes that children may hold the innate capacity to acquire language, but if no one engages them linguistically before a certain age, 'that cognitive window of opportunity shuts forever' (*ibid*: 30). The same is true of young children's capacities to act in certain ways (e.g., to help, share, cooperate etc…), which will only fully develop as they interact with others and their surroundings (*ibid*).

Lancy makes a similar point regarding children's drive to help others from an early age, arguing that it is 'extinguished' if they are not provided with opportunities to assist with tasks (2018: 61). He references findings from a significant psychology study in the early 1980s with US children between the ages of 12- 30 months, who spontaneously helped adults (parents and strangers) to undertake tasks (see Rheingold, 1982: 114; Lancy, 2018: 61). Not only was there evidence in the study of children understanding the goals of the tasks, but also carrying out appropriate actions, which the adults had not modelled (*ibid*). There have since been studies modelled on this one, highlighting the strength of young children's motivation to help others (see Warneken & Tomasello, 2006; Warneken, Chen, & Tomasello, 2006).

Unlike Keane, Lancy does not explicitly cite literature from the anthropology of ethics. Nonetheless, his work very much centres on the ethics of what it means to be a child, acknowledging that this depends on the society in which children grow up. The point Lancy makes through drawing on studies in developmental psychology is that despite children's strong motivation to help others from a young age, their efforts are often snubbed (2018: 61). He argues that relatively new understandings of childhood cast children as 'cherubs' in need of protection from the adult world, including the world of work, cultivate such tendencies in caregivers (Lancy, 2008; 2018). This encourages caregivers to raise their children as 'unique individuals' rather than an integral part of maintaining the household through their participation in everyday tasks (Lancy, 2017).

In the study cited above, for example, parents told the investigator that they preferred to do chores while their children were napping to avoid 'interference' (see Rheingold 1982: 122; Lancy, 2018: 60). This example suggests how children can miss out on opportunities to help their caregivers and develop skills, both technical and moral, from participating in such aspects of family life. The consequence is that children stop 'engaging in reciprocal relations with caretakers,' and thus become 'conditioned to receive care, not give it' (Lancy, 2017: 133). This contrasts to the way in which adults in other parts of the world allow and even encourage children to engage in a great variety of activities that scholars, such as Bourdillion and Spittler (2012: 9) have called 'work[6]' (Lancy, 2018: 3).

Given the importance of children's actions and interactions for developing their propensities to help and cooperate with others, opportunities to participate in everyday tasks and help others from a young age are crucial. Keane employs the term 'ethical affordance' to refer to 'any aspects of people's experiences and perceptions that they might draw on in the process of making ethical evaluations and decisions, whether consciously or not' (2015: 27). If children's early experiences include helping their parents with day-to-day tasks or assisting

[6] Work in this sense refers to performing tasks as part of everyday family life, which provide children with opportunities to learn and develop through helping others. Work may include tasks, such as collecting wood, fetching water, taking care of younger children, gardening, and so on. Children may (help others) undertake this work spontaneously or adults may instruct them to do so, either way the degree to which they work corresponds to their skills and abilities, and therefore roughly to their age (*ibid*).

older siblings in doing so, these will become part of the repertoire of experiences from which they can draw. The position from which developmental psychologists might argue this is that cultural influences serve as tools to shape the 'basic pro-social and cooperative tendencies' that young children display (see Tomasello & Vaish, 2013: 251).

As Keane highlights, psychology studies reveal that humans are disposed to being ethical[7], but they do not tell us how the process of becoming ethical actually takes place (2015: 35). This is something that ethnography can help to uncover (see e.g., Ochs and Izquierdo, 2009; Rogoff, Dahl, & Callanan, 2018; Gaskins, 2000). My own ethnographic data shows that children accompany and help their parents with work from a very young age. By paying attention to the 'education of attention' (Gibson, 1979: 254) that takes place as caregivers subtly direct their children's attention to the affordances of their surroundings and the way in which children respond, I also investigate the kinds of ethical affordances to which caregivers implicitly direct their children's attention and actions.

Childhood Studies

Margaret Mead (1928, 1932) has been acknowledged as 'one of the first anthropologists to take children, as children, seriously' (Montgomery, 2008: 48). Through the lens of cultural relativism, Mead argued against universal claims made at that time about adolescence based on psychology and biology. While Mead's research put childhood on the agenda for anthropology, her work has since been heavily critiqued, along with the work of her collegues at the Culture and Personality School. All the same, Mead's assertion that 'as a theoretical concept, 'the child' is a fiction' (1977: 18) lies at the heart of the anthropology of childhood, highlighting that the question of what it means to be a child, is an ethical one. Discussions raise ethical questions, such as the difference between children's contribution to the household economy and child labour. While the former is highly valued in Amazonia and non-industrialised societies in other parts of the world, the latter is recognised as a human rights violation. Whether children's participation in the subsistence economy should be seen as child labour and exploitation is unclear regarding legal definitions (Lancy, 2018: 193).

In response to such debates, numerous scholars have sought to historicise the very notion of childhood. In doing so, they highlight the shift in social perception across Europe and North America of work as revered for producing moral children, to work as belonging to the adult

[7] See Rogoff and colleagues (2018) for challenges to this claim. Findings from a naturalistic observation study among middle-class North American families (Dahl, 2015), for example, show that caregivers begin to encourage children to help and participate in tasks from around six-months-old. Rogoff and colleagues draw on this study to highlight that this could well be the reason that eighteen-month-old children help unfamiliar adults to complete tasks in laboratory-based psychology studies rather than proving evidence that humans are born with pro-social tendencies (2018: 10).

world, from which children must be protected (see, e.g., Hendrick, 1997; Boyden, 1997; Zelizer, 1994). Montgomery notes that childhood as conceived in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 'privileges education over work… and consumerism over productivity' (2008: 22). While such understandings of childhood are presented in international legislation as universal rights, scholars uncover these ideas as products of Europe and North America in response to industrialisation (see e.g., Hendrick, 1997: 38-41; Boyden, 1997: 201; Zelizer, 1994). Boyden explains that these very notions of childhood were first exported to other parts of the world through colonialisation and the role of missionaries (1997: 199-203). In the context of Amazonia, Rival reveals how school villages set up for the Huoarani by missionaries, recast children as those 'who go to school and become dependent consumers,' in contrast to their parents 'who produce food and do not go to school' (1997: 114). This created a division of labour that had not previously existed among the Huoarani, who typically involved their children in everyday life of the longhouse, encouraging them to participate in activities of gathering food and sharing it with others (*ibid*: 113-4).

Scholars from various disciplines have grappled with questions concerning children and work. As an economist, Deborah Levison has implored that economics does not recognise children as agents and that this is a cause for concern as it renders children's work, including unpaid work such as household chores, invisible (2000: 125). She argues that economists should treat children as economic agents to avoid supporting policies that 'not only undermine children's well-being within their work contexts but also threaten their ability to be contributing and appreciated members of families, communities, and societies' (*ibid*:127). In developmental psychology, researchers have undertaken ethnography to contextualise child development within the cultural beliefs and practices of the societies, in which children live their everyday lives (e.g., Rogoff et al., 2018). Much as in Wacará, Gaskins notes that economic production for Yucatec Mayan takes place in the family, meaning that as adults work, their daily activities structure those of their children. Gaskins refers to children in this setting as 'legitimate cultural participants in adult work, even as they are learning how to participate appropriately' (2000: 397). Rogoff (2014) describes such processes as 'learning by observing and pitching in to family and community endeavours,' drawing on her research among Mayan communities in Guatemala (see Rogoff, 2011).

In my own research, I endeavour to contribute to discussions pertaining to the interdisciplinary scholarship of childhood studies by outlining Cacua-specific definitions of childhood and the cultural ethics surrounding this definition. In doing so, I also aim to contribute to scholarship on the anthropology of ethics, which has largely ignored processes of learning in childhood and children as economic agents. Key to the very conception of childhood studies is considering the role that children play in their own socialisation (James, 2009: 39). James traces this shift in the way scholars came to study children, as initially emerging from challenges within the social sciences to structural functionalism in the 1950s and 60s and its view of institutions as shaping society. Alternatives to this approach centred

on ‘agency’ rather than ‘structure,’ and thus on people as shaping society through their actions and interactions with others as part of everyday life (*ibid*: 38). Central to the impact that the structure-agency debate has had within childhood studies, is the notion of children as ‘beings’ rather than ‘becomings’ (James, 2009: 34).

James (2009) argues that prior to the 1970s, studies of children across the disciplines of social anthropology, sociology, and developmental psychology, investigated children in terms of the adults they would become, rather than their everyday lives and experiences as children. She refers to this as a dichotomy of understanding children as ‘becoming’ versus ‘being’ individuals (*ibid*: 34). While the child as a ‘being’ refers to children being active in their own socialisation, learning and discovery of the world around them, and as social actors in their own right, the child as a ‘becoming’ refers to children as lacking the competencies they need to ‘become’ an adult (see James & Prout, 1997; Uprichard, 2008).

In 1973, Hardman published a paper entitled ‘can there be an anthropology of children?’ in which she proposes the merits of studying children in their own right, ‘not just as receptacles of adult teaching’ (87). Bluebond-Langner’s (1978) ethnography on children in hospital with terminal illness in North America is one such early example of this kind of work and since many anthropologists (and sociologists) have adopted a child-centred approach in their research (e.g., James, 1993 on childhood identities in British primary schools; Montgomery, 2001 on child prostitution in Thailand; Offit, 2008 on children working on the streets of Guatemala City). While Hardman referenced the work of Margaret Mead (1928) as ‘the germ of the possible use of children in the field’ (1973: 86), along with other anthropological works prior to Hardman’s publication, she stated that,

> ‘anthropological fields concerned with children… view them to a greater or lesser extent, as passive objects, as helpless spectators in a pressing environment which affects and produces their every behaviour. They see the child as continually assimilating, learning and responding to the adult, having little autonomy, contributing nothing to social values or behaviour except the latent outpourings of earlier acquired experiences’ (1973: 87).

LeVine defends studies of child socialisation against such critiques, arguing that they deepen our understanding and knowledge of child and parenthood without taking on the political agenda of some of the studies promoting children’s voices and agency (2003: 5). Lancy makes a similar point in his article ‘unmasking children’s agency’ (2012: 2-3), where he also notes that the concept of children’s agency promoted in research is ethnocentric, classist and hegemonic. Toren finds the study of children as a subdiscipline problematic, and rather than studying children as having agency or their own culture, she has found working with children invaluable for the data this provides for understanding adult practices (1999: 28).

Toren explains that like adults, children have to live in the world and make sense of it, which means that overtime they come to form an understanding of adult practices and the way that

adults justify them (*ibid*: 27). In seeking to analyse social practices and the ideas constituting them, anthropologists have much to learn from children, through whom they might learn how people come to know what they know (*ibid*). In my own research, I investigate the salience of work as morally good among the Cacua of Wacará, accompanying both adults and children in their work, speaking to both about the work they do and why they do it. Toren insists that her approach is not to suggest that children are incomplete, mere adults in the making, but rather that they can provide an insight as to what they know about the world, embedded with social practices, understandings, and relations, in which they are growing up (1999: 28).

Szulc notes that the concept of children's agency has proved fruitful for her study of mapuche children, helping her to understand and analyse numerous everyday examples of children's capacity for social action (2019: 55). At the same time, she recognises that mapuche children's agency is incentivised by their own families in accordance with their sociocultural conception of childhood and personhood. In this way, agency among the mapuche is not the same as agency as recognised in Western individualism. In fact, extensive childcare networks, including various adults and older children support mapuche children in developing autonomy in the first place (*ibid*: 56). Szulc warns that exclusively investigating children's worlds, exoticises childhood. She suggests that a more productive approach lies in analysing children's culture as interlaced with the institutions and social discourses that stipulate childhood as a social space (*ibid*: 60-1).

Uprichard (2008) expresses the importance of moving beyond the dichotomy of children as 'beings' versus 'becomings,' arguing that each approach is problematic without the other. Issues with conceptualising the child as a 'becoming' have been clearly expressed in childhood studies as promoting a view of children as incompetent proto-adults and denying the present timeframe of children's lived experiences (*ibid*: 304). By contrast, conceptualising the child as a 'being' has been lauded in childhood studies, but has the issue of neglecting children's 'future experiences of becoming adult' (ibid: 305). Drawing on Prigogine's (1980) conception of time as 'being and becoming,' Uprichard explains that the relationship between different notions of time as pertaining to children's present and future is essential for making sense of the notion of the 'child' (2008: 308). In this way, acknowledging the child as a 'being and becoming' within discourse makes it possible to appreciate the present and future as interacting in everyday life (*ibid*: 308).

Many of the technical, social, and emotional skills I observed Cacua children develop as they helped their parents will certainly serve them in 'becoming' adults. At the same time, paying close attention to the process through which children learn to work, I also hold space for them as 'beings' in a present timeframe in my analysis. This notion in child studies of the child as both being and becoming aligns with ideas about human life in ethics as entailing 'processes of becoming' (Mattingly, 2012: 167). In drawing the Aristotelian notion that the cultivation of virtue and living well takes place through one's actions, I investigate children's everyday actions through their participation in production and social life. I examine how learning the

skills of previous generations takes place through an education of attention, as those more experienced direct children's attention encouraging them to make use of what their environment affords, a notion that has been extended by Keane to include ethical affordance. As such, children do not only learn technical skills as they work alongside parents, siblings, and cousins, but also how to evaluate their own actions and those of others.

Graeber's discussion of 'value as the importance of action' highlights the point that a person's actions and the importance placed upon those actions in society produces value. This means that when it comes to children undertaking actions locally imbued with value, such as helping others and learning to work, children are producing value as they act and interact with their environment and the people around them. In seeking to address how work and helping others have emerged as core values among Cacua people and values that children must learn, my ethnography calls for an engagement with a number of approaches. Through this review, I have proposed some ways in which debates in childhood studies can inform the way anthropologists think about value and production, ethics and action, and moral economies in Amazonia, and visa-versa. As has been emphasised in childhood studies, the idea of including children in ethnographic analysis is not to privilege their voices over all others, but to make for a more inclusive, ethnographically rich, multivocal and multi-perspective outlook of culture and society (Bluebond-Langner & Korbin, 2007: 242).

Fieldwork in a Cacua Community: Methods, Language Learning, Positionality & Ethics

Methodology scope and strategy

During my eighteen months of fieldwork in the Cacua community of Wacará, I came to perceive three distinct interconnected spheres to which I paid particular attention, community life, family life and the everyday lives of children. I conducted a range of research methods to understand each of these aspects with participant observation as my primary research method for each. Other research methods included conducting household surveys, short interviews with parents about family life, life history interviews and participatory methods with children, though in the case of one activity, with their parents as well. The participatory methods for children usually took place through structured 'activity sessions.' These took the form of an arts-based mixed methods approach, including photo-voice, photo elicitation, mapping exercises, timelines, focus group discussions and drawing.

Regarding the scope of my research, I did not begin fieldwork with the expectation of focusing on work. It was a topic that Cacua people in Wacará frequently raised among each other, in communal meetings and with me. Women complained to other women that their unmarried children and daughters-in-law did not work, leaving all the work to them (see ch3). Leaders spoke at community meetings, imploring each family to work in their swidden fields to grow and produce enough food for their household (see ch6). Among the community leaders, there was an appointed president of work charged with organising days of communal work, such as clearing village paths or undertaking large projects like building a bridge across Wacará River

(see ch2). When I asked the children open-ended questions like 'what do girls do in Wacará' or 'what do good people do,' they responded with the Cacua phrase *teo wáac*, a compound verb that literally translates as 'coming together to work.'

In focusing my research on work, a particular kind of work, historically rooted in indigenous social and political relations of exchange, perpetuated, and altered by white traders, merchants, and missionaries, I have made a methodological choice to focus on the process through which children learn this kind of work and the value ascribed to it in Wacará. This choice means that the scope of this thesis does not cover other aspects of children's everyday lives and learning in as much depth as it could. This is to say, I recognise that children do not only learn alongside their parents and older siblings, and they do not only learn in the swidden field or at home making manioc bread. When children are working, they are not only learning to work, but they are also learning about their environment, their capabilities, and their social relations. My choice to frame the thesis through the lens of work and its salience among Cacua people in Wacará means that there is an emphasis on children as operating within the family, over being at school, directly interacting with peers, or looking after younger siblings.

Participant Observation

Community Life

By community life, I am here referring to the more formalised and structured aspects of life in the community, such as community meetings at which the community leaders would impart information and share grievances; Sunday church services, which was often sparsely populated and at which leaders also imparted important information regarding upcoming events; days of communal work, which began with a communal breakfast of chilli pot and manioc bread and usually ensued with undertaking the work of clearing the village paths of the community; celebrations organised by the school at Wacará to mark national and international days. There were also visits to the community from state institutions, local politicians, non-government organisations with funding for projects, who spoke at community meetings or ran workshops. There were several visits from evangelical missionaries during my fieldwork too. Two missionaries came to the community to give the children Christmas presents in November 2018 and 2019 and ran several sermons and activities over their three-day-stay at Wacará. There was also a Christian conference (*conferencia Cristiana* in Spanish) held in Wacará over the Easter weekend of 2019, which indigenous peoples from all over the Vaupés attended. A group of young charismatic evangelical missionaries, who also worked as actors, musicians, and DJs, came to Wacará over three days to run workshops for children, teenagers, on playing the tambourine (in praise of God), the guitar and other such activities. I attended all of these formal community events and participated in days of communal work.

As part of my analysis of the performative aspects of community life, I recorded some of the speeches that leaders gave during community meetings and listened back to sections of the recordings with them to discuss, transcribe and translate. I did this once my Cacua language

skills improved and I had a better idea of what the leaders had said during the community meetings before asking them to transcribe and translate sections of what they had said. This required narrative analysis to ascertain the function of what was being said, context within which it was said, and an idea of the speaker's motive and intention (Cortazzi, 2001: 385). As I will explore in chapters 2 and 6, community leaders often presented themselves as selflessly helping the community, without noting the many privileges their role afforded them.

While most people in the community spoke Spanish to some degree, even if unconfident doing so, daily interactions between the residents of the community took place in Cacua. All communal gatherings, such as meetings and church services were held by leaders in Cacua, though they would sometimes throw in the odd Spanish phrase as they spoke. When visitors came to the community to run workshops or introduce themselves, they did so in Spanish, unless they were Cubeo, a language that Cacua people also understood and spoke. Non-Cacua people did not speak Cacua and as such, visitors never addressed the community in their own language. When visitors addressed the community in Spanish, community leaders translated what they said into Cacua for those, particularly of the older generation, who did not understand. In turn, when visitors were present, the leaders continued to address the community in Cacua but included Spanish translations as they spoke.

Once I learnt some simple phrases in Cacua, people began to include me in their daily greetings, calling, 'Where are you going Sasha?' Knowing how to respond appropriately meant that I could call back, 'Going to the swidden field' or 'Going to bathe,' perhaps following up with 'What are you doing?' to be told, 'Sitting, looking,' in response. Sometimes when I responded appropriately in Cacua to questions that people asked me in Cacua, like 'are you playing too?' when a basketball match was about to ensue and I responded, 'No, I don't know how to play,' I was congratulated for my efforts with the response, 'You are (female) Cacua.' Despite such encouragement, Cacua people always referred to me as *jiwá boli* (a generic term, meaning 'non-indigenous female'). They used the same Cacua term to refer to the linguists/ missionaries, for whom the Cacua interchangeably used the Spanish terms 'linguistas' and 'misioneras,' to refer to the women working for SIL who had intermittently lived in the community during several decades, before my arrival.

The Cacua leaders' familiarity with non-indigenous people through their experience with missionaries meant that they were very open to me staying in their community to undertake fieldwork. I proposed teaching English at the school as a way of offering something to the community in return of allowing me to stay. The Captain of Wacará was especially keen on this suggestion as he had learnt English with the North American missionaries, and we agreed that I would teach one class a week at the school in Wacará. Many people in Wacará said that I reminded them of the missionaries, partly because I spent lots of time with the children and was learning to speak Cacua. One of the missionaries had died just a couple of years before I began fieldwork and the other was terminally ill when I began fieldwork, dying just a few

weeks after I started. As such, sometimes people were quite emotional and teared up when they told me that I reminded them of the missionaries.

While I found this touching, I also felt uncomfortable being so closely compared to missionaries, who as I discuss in the following chapter have historically played an integral role in the state's mission of 'civilising' indigenous peoples. I acknowledge and explore the importance of Christianity as part of the historical and social context of the community, but I decided early in fieldwork not to centre my analysis on religion. During my fieldwork I tried to establish friendships, accompany, spend time with, and talk to families who both strongly identified as Evangelical Christians, for whom drinking any form of alcohol is prohibited, and those who did not. As such, on the one hand, I attended church services held in the community, borrowing a copy of the Cacua bible to follow along the readings and Cacua hymn book to sing along to the translated hymns. On the other hand, I also dropped in on infrequently held drinking parties, where I drank manioc beer when served and danced to traditional songs performed by men playing panpipes and long flutes as they marched up and down stomping the rhythm with their feet. I chatted, drank, and danced with people at these parties, hoping that this would stop me from being too strongly associated with missionaries and allow me access to different aspects of community life.

Family Life

Given the focus of my research it was important for me to become embedded in everyday family life. As such, I arranged to live with a married couple in their late thirties, whom I call Felicia and Yair in this thesis, and their three children, aged two, six and eight. I was treated as an extension of this nuclear family and became part of their food sharing networks, as I was invited to join when their kin invited them to eat after returning from a successful hunt or to drink juice prepared from collecting seasonal berries. I also helped Felicia and her children to gut fish and other animals when Yair returned from hunting or fishing. Whether living with this particular family affected the way people in Wacará treated me or responded to my questions is hard to say. There were many aspects of my positionality as a White foreigner, non-indigenous, unmarried, female, researcher that would have affected how people treated me and responded to my questions. There were certainly people who seemed unsure of me, though as I learned Cacua many began to warm to me, calling greetings and smiling warmly as I responded and conversed with them as best I could.

The family I lived with had a strong religious orientation and therefore did not drink or attend drinking parties and went to the church service every Sunday without fail. However, this was not unusual in the community and many families in the community behaved as such. The family I lived with never discouraged me from visiting other families, attending work parties with manioc beer, or dropping in on drinking parties and when I attended such gatherings, I was warmly received. I would also visit Yair's mother, aunts, and unmarried brothers, who would invite me into the house as they made manioc bread and chatted to me. Though they

identified as evangelical Christians, unlike Yair and Felicia, they often attended drinking parties too. In this way, despite the positionality of the family I lived with, I managed to become acquainted with various households, whom I would visit, chat to, and accompany on trips to the swidden field and forest. One of the positives about the particular household I stayed in was that people who would not normally have associated with them, because they were not kin, would come to the house because Felicia was trained in first aid and had a ready supply of pain killers for those who needed them. I also assisted her on two occasions when she was called on to stich up wounds, providing her with a needle, thread and antiseptic.

I have heard anecdotally that living with one family can be extremely limiting for anthropologists and prevent them from speaking to people from certain households because of rifts. I never found this to be the case for the family with whom I lived. They seemed genuinely curious about my research and keen to help me by suggesting other families in the community with young children to whom I could speak and visit. When I told them that I wanted to attend the work party of a household (who would be providing manioc beer) but did not know how to get to the swidden field, my host family suggested someone who was attending whom I could accompany.

As well as including me in their own family life, early on in fieldwork Yair and Felicia helped me to arrange morning visits to other households, followed by accompanying the families or women and young children to their swidden fields. From spending time with women at the swidden field and sometimes also helping them to process the bitter manioc on arriving home, I had the opportunity to engage with mothers in conversations they initiated about family life, children, and their own childhoods. In other cases, I joined families in the forest to gather wild nuts and berries, vines for weaving baskets and on one occasion, I joined a group of three families on a week-long fishing trip.

Everyday Lives of Children

Despite the methodological scope of my research, I spent a lot of time with children when they were not working, at home, in the swidden field or with their parents. I joined children in games of catch at the river and on the football pitch, in spontaneous fruit collecting expeditions, and in aimless wanderings about the community. I joined groups of young boys in racing across the grassy spaces of the community to chase after lizards that they were hunting with bows and arrows or blowpipes and I crept beneath trees with them as they aimed to shoot small birds with blowpipes. In the mornings before school, I observed children sweeping outside the front of their homes, fetching water from the river, and carrying it up the steps and back home atop their heads. After school, I observed them collecting firewood from the edge of the community by the forest, washing clothes in the river, and with their mothers and grandmothers in the manioc kitchen, undertaking various tasks.

I also observed a couple of lessons at the school in Wacará each term and I attended the weekly whole school 'information' sessions in which students stood in lines on the school playground as the teachers gave them information about the upcoming week. I taught an English class once a week at the school during term time and ate lunch with the teachers in the school kitchen afterwards. Ultimately, I made the methodological decision to focus on children's informal learning outside of school and considered how this played into the salience of work (particularly in the swidden field and processing bitter manioc) within the community.

Interviews

Informal Interviews

Most of the interviews I conducted during my fieldwork fall under the category of 'informal interviews' (c.f. Bernard, 2011: 163-4), otherwise described as 'merely carrying on a friendly conversation while introducing a few ethnographic questions' (Spradley, 1979: 58). Such interviews unfolded throughout participant observation, accompanying women in their work in the swidden field and manioc kitchen, walking in company from the drop off point along the river Vaupés through the forest to the community of Wacará and when visiting families at their homes. It required intense concentration on my part, remembering conversations and anecdotes with the help of jotting notes in my notebook or phone, followed by typing everything up as soon as I arrived home before anything else could distract me (c.f. Bernard, 2011: 164). The advantages of this research method lie in building rapport with interlocuters and allowing new topics to emerge through casual conversation (*ibid*). It also avoids the feeling of interrogation that formal interviews risk creating, which can dispel rapport and discourage interlocuters from sharing.

Given the informal aspect of this research method, it was important for me to explicitly make people of the community aware of my role as an anthropologist and researcher. When I first arrived at the community, I introduced myself at a community meeting as an anthropology student, who had come to learn about the way Cacua people live and how they raise their children, and that as part of my studies I would be writing a thesis and hopefully publishing a book in the future. Many of the Cacua people I accompanied asked me about my studies and wanted to know more about my research. This was the perfect opportunity to elaborate on anything they wanted me to clarify and make it clear that as I was spending time with and speaking to people in the community, I was also learning about how Cacua people live and think for my university studies and doctoral research.

Positioning myself as a student seeking to learn from the Cacua, many sought to teach and inform me, and it was in this way that the topic of work often emerged. I soon discovered the importance Cacua people attributed to work in the household, including the contributions of children from a young age, as well as the importance work held in the community for it to function 'without problems.' It is important to bear in mind that my positionality as 'non-

indigenous' (*jiwá* in Cacua) is likely to have influenced these interactions and the way people spoke to me about work. The fact people spoke to me so much about work, for instance, may have reflected the kinds of interactions they had previously had with other non-indigenous people who came to the community. A non-indigenous missionary who came to the community to give the children at Wacará Christmas presents, commented during his sermon on how impressed he was by all of the cultivation plots he had seen around the community. His missionary partner later told me that he had told the Cacua during previous visits that they could not just rely on hunting and fishing, they had to cultivate more crops.

It is possible that the Cacua expected non-indigenous visitors to lecture them about working the land to cultivate crops and impressed the importance of work on me during our casual conversations to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. From a Cacua perspective, as an unmarried woman, *jáap wili* in Cacua, meaning young/ immature female without a husband or children, there were expectations regarding the kind of work I should undertake (see ch3). My position as an unmarried and therefore 'young/ immature' female, working alongside women in their swidden fields, may have also influenced how women spoke to me, often leading them to reflect on their own unmarried daughters and whether they worked in the swidden field as I and their younger children did. My position as a *jáap wili* (young/ immature female, referring to my unmarried, childless status) was very helpful for putting me into the position of a learner as women and children sought to teach me about their work.

Household Surveys

While household surveys are considered a quantitative research method, I found the valuable aspect of conducting them was that it enabled me to meet and speak to everyone in the community, visiting them in their homes. I had an assistant, who spoke fluent Cacua and Spanish. He taught me how to ask each of my questions in Cacua, which meant that I could use our visits as a language learning activity, and as he accompanied me to each visit, he was able to repeat or explain anything I had asked that people did not understand. I recorded the household survey interviews along with my assistant's translations in Spanish. Conducting these surveys allowed me to see where each family lived, the setup of each household and how people from different households in the community were related. It was particularly interesting to ask people when, from where and why they moved to Wacará, as it gave me an idea of when and how the community began to grow. Some of the leaders, who were more confident speaking to outsiders, went into detail regarding their studies, places they had lived outside of the community and how they and their family had come to live in Wacará. Only a few people declined to take part in the household survey, which was fine, as I was able to get a general idea of who everyone in the community was, which families lived where and with who, and how everyone was connected.

While I found this method of data collection extremely useful, there are drawbacks in that it is reminiscent of institutional practices, potentially perpetuating relations of power between

the researcher and community members, placing me even more firmly in the position of an outsider. Bernard notes that 'over the years, government agencies in all industrialised countries have developed an insatiable appetite for information about various ''target populations'' (poor people, users of public housing, users of private health care, etc.)' (2011: 195). Indigenous peoples stand firmly in the group of 'target populations' and are often subject to surveys from health organisations or organisations providing funding for infrastructure. Scott (1998) has explored the creation of cadastral surveys, population registers, and even permanent surnames as tools of the state to make society more legible and therefore easier to monitor and manage.

Parental interviews

The interviews I conducted with parents about everyday family life, though most of the couples (or at least one person in the couple) I interviewed were competent Spanish speakers, I insisted on conducting these interviews in Cacua without an assistant. This was partly to challenge myself and enhance my Cacua language learning, but also because I believed that people's responses in their native language, would better highlight Cacua understandings about family life. As my language skills grew more competent, I was able to transcribe and translate large chunks of the recorded interviews myself. If one person from the couple I interviewed was bilingual and literate in Cacua, I would check my Cacua transcription and Spanish translation with them, adding anything I had missed. Otherwise, I undertook this task with Felicia.

Before conducting the interviews, I arranged a day and time that suited the couple when they would both be at home. I asked one set of questions to one person and then the same set of questions to the other. Each person tended to take around five to six minutes answering the set of questions. Conducting these interviews in Cacua without an assistant translating for me, meant that I was unable to probe or ask follow-up questions as I was not suitably proficient in Cacua. I had to simply ask the questions I had written down and wait for the interviewee to respond. However, these interviews served both as a language learning and rapport building activity, giving me the opportunity to communicate with families solely in Cacua while spending time with them in their homes. These interviews also highlighted important themes in family life for me to pay attention to outside the normative setting of an interview. A core theme of this thesis, regarding work, working together, and helping within everyday family life, came through in the parent interviews very strongly. Once I had transcribed and translated the interviews with an assistant, I was able to draw common themes from the interviews. Cacua terms, which I had not uttered in any of the questions, such as 'teo wáac' and 'tɯ́i jɯmna' came up frequently. I was then able to unpack what these concepts meant to Cacua people and why they were considered so prevalent in family life.

As I noted with informal interviews and household surveys, my positionality as a non-indigenous female, a researcher or simply as someone asking, likely impacted the way that parents responded to my questions about family life. As Bernard notes, 'people are inaccurate

reporters of their own behaviour for many reasons' (2011: 191) and this includes trying to paint themselves and their families in a good light. Though many parental interviews presented me with an idealised picture of everyday life, I was able to compare what people did and what they said they did through participant observation and attention to gossip. The family interviews were most useful for highlighting the kinds of topics that parents raised and the way they spoke about them.

Participatory Research Methods

Alongside spending a great deal of time with children, undertaking participant observation, I ran activity sessions twice a week between late January and early June 2019 with a group of children aged seven to twelve. I employed a number of research methods known in literature as 'participatory' or 'child-centred' during these sessions, which included mapping exercises (e.g., Morrow, 2001; Clark, 2001, 2011; Powell, 2016), photovoice and photo elicitation (e.g., Cook & Hess, 2007), drawing (e.g., Atkinson, 2006; Hunleth, 2011), timelines (e.g., Atkinson, 2006) and focus discussion groups (e.g., Hunleth, 2011). These were sometimes loosely based around the themes in my research of ethics and morality, but mostly the idea was to elicit responses from children about their everyday lives in the community.

The standard rationale for using such 'participatory' research methods with children is to take them seriously as research participants in their own right with the opportunity to take an active role in the research process (e.g., Thomas & O'Kane, 1998). This can seek to overcome the tendency of researchers speaking to adults about children and therefore presenting adult perspectives of children rather than those of the children themselves (Morelli, 2017:141). Participatory research methods are also generally considered more 'child-friendly' than the kind of methods we might typically conduct alongside participant observation with adults, such as interviews (Barker & Weller, 2003: 36).

Nonetheless, since child-centred research methods have become so popular, there has been a growing concern regarding the lack of critical reflection in using them (See: Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Spyrou, 2011). For Gallacher and Gallagher, the very notion that children should require 'adult-designed "participatory methods"' to fully 'exercise their "agency"' and become 'empowered' in research contradicts the point that children are already actively shaping their social worlds (2008: 503). They advocate for paying attention to the way that children exercise agency outside of predefined activities designed by a researcher (e.g., Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008: 508-9; for similar critique, Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999: 396).

As part of these critiques, there has been call for critical reflection on the implicit assumptions that such rationales for employing child-centred techniques contain. For example, the assumption that drawing is a child friendly activity is also a reflection of the researcher's own adult assumptions about what it means to be a child (Mitchell, 2008; Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). Gallacher and Gallagher note that children often undertake activities such as drawing at school, meaning that employing these activities with children in research exploits

their 'schooled docility' rather than encouraging their active participation in research (2008: 505-6). There is also the possibility that children simply draw what they find easy to draw, copy the child next to them, or draw what they think will please the 'teacher,' none of which are examples of active participation in research (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999: 394).

While photovoice does not emulate the kinds of activities undertaken at school (at least in Wacará) in the same way as drawing, Gallacher and Gallagher discuss the problem of uncritically employing this as a 'participatory' research method. They note that participation in 'participatory photography' is limited to what the researcher asks their participants to do. There are many things that children could do with cameras that do not count as participation, such as breaking the camera on purpose, taking photos of things they find interesting or pretty instead of what the researcher asks them to take photographs of, giving their camera to another child to take photos, or refusing to take photos. Nonetheless these are all examples of children exercising their agency, which is exactly why researchers usually conduct 'participatory' research methods in the first place (2008: 507-8).

While some researchers believe that 'participatory' methods with children reduce the power imbalance between child participants and adult researchers (e.g., Atkinson, 2006: 8), I did not find this to be the case and do not claim to have made the methodological choice of using such methods to achieve this. In my case, playing catch in the river with the children or sitting together on the rocks to wash our clothes, where in both cases they were much faster and more skilled than I, reduced power imbalance between us far more than in the activity sessions I ran. Instead, I found that the strength of using participatory methods alongside participant observation with children was in eliciting commentary which did not typically occur in their everyday lives as they played, walked about, climbed trees, picked fruit, did chores and went to school. For instance, the theme of work and 'coming together to work' (*teo wáac,* a Cacua expression, which the Cacua often translate as 'to help'), emerged from the children's responses during the first activity sessions I ran with them, undertaking mapping exercises and photovoice. It was not until after the children had raised the topic of work and helping their parents with chores in several of our activity sessions that I began to design some activity sessions specifically around the topic of *teo wáac* and learning to work in the swidden field.

As the activity sessions provided regular opportunities for me to spend time with the children, we grew much closer and they soon felt comfortable talking to me, including me in their games and simply having me around. As the activity sessions played such a big part in my language learning, they helped me to understand children's interactions with one another outside of our activity sessions as they played together and undertook daily chores. What children told me during the activity sessions also provided me with a point of comparison between what they said they did or more generally, what good people did and what the children actually did when I spent time with them more informally.

I decided not to run the activity sessions through the school, as I did not want the sessions to be compulsory or for children to associate them with school. As such, I spoke during a communal meeting to explain that I would like to run activity sessions for children aged seven to twelve as part of my research about how children in the community live. I gave some examples of activities we would do and asked for any children interested to come to me so that I could write a list of their names. Felicia offered to be my assistant in running the sessions when I asked if she could think of anyone suitable. Before I began the sessions, I spoke to the parents of each of the children on the list to check that they gave their consent for their child to participate in the activity sessions, what these would consist of and that this would form part of my research.

I prepared for activity sessions by writing the instructions for the activity in Spanish (i.e., what to take photographs of or draw, which was usually phrased as a question, like 'where do you like spending time?' or 'what things does a good person do?'). I then wrote a list of questions to ask the children about their drawings, maps, photographs, or videos, depending on the activity, in Spanish. Felicia and I would then arrange a time to sit together and translate my instructions and questions into Cacua. I used this as an opportunity to improve my Cacua language skills. Felicia allowed me to record her reading each of the instructions and questions in Cacua so that I could play it back to practice speaking before I ran the activity session with the children in Cacua.

During the activity sessions, I recorded myself asking the children questions about their drawings and photos, along with their answers. This was a formula that the children got used to and more confident with as time went on. They would often be the ones to tell me that it was time for me to record them answering questions about their pictures. I learned very basic questions in Cacua, which I could ask as I pointed to different parts of the children's drawings or photos, such as 'what/ who/ where is this?' and 'what are they doing?' I encouraged children to take it in turns to ask each other similar questions about their drawings and for other children to film the exchange.

After each activity session, I listened back to these recordings with Felicia to transcribe them in Cacua, before translating them into Spanish. Felicia was so helpful in this process, offering context and further explanations of the children's comments. She also translated sarcastic comments and jokes between the children in Cacua as they asked and answered one another's questions about their pictures. When I stopped running the activity sessions in this way after June 2019, children would still ask me if they could draw or take photographs and still expected me to ask them questions and record their answers about their pictures when they had finished. This meant that our activities sessions became much more spontaneous, requiring me to think of questions to ask the children about their pictures on the spot, rather than carefully planning a whole session as I had done previously.

Alongside the activity sessions, I also employed photovoice as a research method among the families of the children who attended the activity sessions I ran. The children who attended the activity sessions took it in turns to borrow a digital camera to take photographs throughout an entire day, along with each of their parents. We then used these photos for photo elicitation. As most parents would usually go to the swidden field or forest, leaving their children in the village with older ones taking care of the younger, these mini-photo journals enabled me to see the different activities in which different family members were engaged on a given day. Families enjoyed looking at their photographs on my laptop during our photo elicitation session and were generally enthusiastic to partake. One family requested the cameras for their week-long fishing trip, while another girl and her father each took a camera on a hunting trip for a few days and the mother took photographs while she stayed at home. I gave each family that participated in this activity a printed selection of their photos.

Chapter Outline

The thesis is dived in two parts with a preceding chapter, chapter 2, to provide the historical and social context in which the community of Wacará became established and how the salience of work became a core value among the Cacua of Wacará today.

The first part of the thesis builds on the importance of work and social values associated with it as highlighted in chapter 2 by exploring expectations among the Cacua of Wacará regarding children and young people learning to work. Given that these expectations shift as children grow up and mature, each chapter in Part One focuses on a different age group. Chapter 3 centres on the moralisation of work regarding young people (adolescents or older, not yet married with children) helping their families to ensure the autonomy of the individual household in domestic production. Older generations, including parents and grandparents, advised young people at this stage of life that knowing how to work before finding a spouse, having children, and forming one's own autonomous household was imperative to living well.

The focus of chapter 4 is on young children as they accompany their parents undertaking daily work and in doing so learn to work themselves from very early in life. I draw on Ingold's use of Gibson's (1979) notions of affordance and education of attention to pay close attention to processes of learning, not just skills but also social values associated with work and helping others. Chapter 5 uncovers the way in which the children (aged seven to twelve) with whom I ran regular activity sessions spoke about work and the tasks they undertook to help their families. I use this chapter to reflect on instances when I joined some of the children as they undertook work to help their parents and the various social values they had to navigate when it came to sharing the fruits of their labour.

The second part of the thesis explores various aspects of the undesirable underside of the moral economy in the community and how this respectively provides parents and leaders with

counterexamples for advising their children and people of the community how to live well. Chapter 6 highlights the value of autonomy and self-sufficiency alongside valued forms of interdependence as part of communal living, through the moral condemnation of theft. Children's depictions of such actions as bad during activity sessions with me reinforces the important point that scholars often neglect to include in analyses of the moral economy, that children are also privy to moral discourse.

Chapter 7 addresses the positive aspects of interdependence between households in terms of the food-giving economy, but also the politics involved regarding who [not] to give food to when asked and the possible threat of malevolent spells for refusing. Chapter 8 explores division in the community between 'those who drink' (and get drunk) and 'believers,' who are evangelical Christians and as such, refuse to drink. I explore drinking parties in terms of the values that Cacua people associate with living well and how conversely, drunkenness can lead to incidents that the Cacua strongly associate with not living well. This ties into parental concerns regarding the undesirable underside of what children in the community might see and copy when they are older. The chapter emphasises the fragility of the community and the work it takes, literally and metaphorically, to live well while living with others.

Chapter 2. The Salience of Work from a Historic Perspective

The captain of Wacará was a man of short stature and jovial character with a protruding round belly and rectangular wire frame glasses. He was much loved in the community and very warm towards visiting outsiders. He had been a child when his parents and grandparents moved alongside Wacará stream, after which the community was now named. They had been the first family to occupy the area, and it was some decades before other Cacua families moved there to join them, making Wacará their permanent home. Arturo had been the captain of Wacará for around twenty-eight years by the time I began fieldwork there, with few breaks from the role since he was first named captain at the age of fifteen. His father had been captain before him and his grandfather before that, but that was when the community had been much smaller and the role of the captain much less demanding and bureaucratic.

Officially, the captain of an indigenous community is the representative in all governmental matters, and responsible for promoting communal events and activities (e.g., Jiménez, 2007: 45-46). I use this official line because by his own accounts, Arturo had not been very present in the community during the time I lived there, as he had been in Bogotá translating the Old Testament into Cacua. Despite his reluctance to remain captain any longer, given his ill health and pending work with missionaries in the capital city, the people of Wacará kept voting him to be their captain every four years when the time came for renewal. When Arturo fleetingly returned to the community during my second Christmas there, I decided to act quickly and asked to record his life story before he left. His story touched on a number of themes that I realised were crucial for understanding who the Cacua are today. Arturo referred to his role as captain as work, and more specifically as work for the community. His story introduces and traces the formation of the Cacua community of Wacará and the pivotal role that 'work' has come to play in it. His story also points to the social and economic relations that Cacua people have historically had with their indigenous neighbours and the role of missionaries in promoting sedentarisation among indigenous peoples through the formation of communities.

As Arturo recounted his story, he occasionally paused to chuckle or to look at me as if drawing me further into the tale. All the while he worked methodically, preparing the long-stemmed, woody vines on the ground at his feet, which he would later use to weave a basket to sell to a contact of his in Bogotá. Arturo bent each vine until its outer casing, black from having been lain over fire, cracked open and came off in his hands. He cast the blackened casing aside, revealing the pale wooden vine inside, from which he tore four supple strips, equal in length and thickness, away from their stem, tossing strips to one side and stems to another. The captain wore a pair of belted beige shorts with his neat round belly sticking over the top, and no shirt to hide it. He sat on a low wooden stool in a shady patch behind his home as the zinc roofing turned the houses in Wacará into furnaces during the day, too hot to spend time in.

Captain's Life Story

Arturo was just a small boy when his family moved alongside Wacará stream, a place now known as the community of Wacará, of which he is now Captain. He had been born in a place called *Devil's Stench* (*Nemép chej jumni* in Cacua), which acquired its name from the stink that would flood the rocky hills every evening and early hours of the morning, after a loud noise sounded, *nemép* sliding the rocky door of his cave in the mountain to exit and re-enter. From what he recalled, it was a harsh living place by a tiny stream that his family even had trouble bathing in because of its size and had to use a gourd to scoop up enough water with which to wash. His parents and grandparents had always moved from place to place every few years, until they left *Devil's Stench* to move to Wacará. When Arturo's family first moved to Wacará, the river had many fish, which were easy to catch. His family had moved imagining a better life for their children, rather than thinking of founding a community.

Arturo's grandfather often travelled from the small Cacua community of Wacará to the Cubeo community of Timbó with baskets to exchange for hammocks, batteries, torches, soap, and salt. By Arturo's reckoning, around six months to a year after his family had moved to Wacará, a husband-and-wife pair of missionaries living in Timbó, whose names Arturo recalled as Jaime and Neeva[8], approached his grandfather during one of his visits. They communicated with him in Cubeo to explain that two white women like them, wanted to live and work with the Cacua and that they needed the women to live nearby, either with the Cacua at Wacará or at another nearby location with a different indigenous group. Arturo's grandfather returned home to discuss the matter with his wife before giving an answer. She was very keen for the missionaries to stay at Wacará and urged her husband to accept the request, berating him for not having agreed straight away. She said, 'we will not pester the Cubeos anymore (e.g., for things they needed). Why should we pester the Cubeos anymore? Better that the missionaries come.' More than anything, she was thinking of her grandchildren, so Arturo's grandfather returned to Timbo the following day.

The missionary, Jaime, immediately contacted the women at their base in Lomalinda via radio once Arturo's grandfather agreed to their arrival. A week or so later, this new pair of missionaries (known to the Cacua as Mariela and Anita[9]) arrived, flying from Villavicencio to Mitú, where they took a chartered flight to Timbó. They stayed a day in Timbó, before making their way to Wacará with the assistance of several Cubeos, who carried their belongings, and Jaime, to translate introductions. Once Mariela and Anita had established themselves in a house in the small Cacua village, Jaime called a meeting for all the Cacua families of the surrounding areas, who lived up to four hours away. He addressed them in Cubeo, explaining

[8] Records from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a North American evangelical organisation, show that a husband-and-wife pair of missionaries, J. K. Salser and Geneva Salser, undertook work with the Cubeos in Timbo in 1963-1977 (SIL, 2000 cited in Cabrera, 2013: 520).

[9] SIL records show that Marilyn Esther Cathcart and Lois Ann Lowers, as they were officially called, worked for the organisation 1966-2000 with the Cacua of Wacará (see Cabrera, 2013: 520).

that Mariela and Anita needed a runway for their aircraft and that he would take the measurements for it. As everyone agreed to work, they were sent all the necessary tools, such as spades, machetes, and axes, which were thrown down from an aircraft. As Arturo told me this part of his story, he noted, 'As for the work, my grandparents, my father, all of them, they worked night and day. They were a small group, but they did it.'

He reflected on present day life in the community by comparison,

> 'But now, we have enough people, more than enough so that they can do work easily. [When building the airstrip] there were around seventeen people in total, adults. Some worked by night, others worked by day, and they swapped. Those, who worked at night, rested a while, slept until just nine or ten. When they got up, they went to gather food or go fishing and hunt wild turkeys. In this time, one did not have to go so far, it was close. As such, they could leave, hunt for what they needed and return immediately. They were well organised. When they worked, they ate together.'

When the airstrip was ready for the missionaries to return to Lomalinda, Arturo noted,

> 'I remember that the missionaries, Mariela and Anita, wanted to take my family, my father, my mother, all of us… They wanted to work with my father and mother in Lomalinda… They were like my mothers. They always took me when they left for Lomalinda. They taught me mathematics, how to read a little in our language. They knew these things; they wrote some books for studying in Cacua and Anita taught maths. That's how I learnt.'

Arturo's parents had worked for rubber gatherers when the family first moved to Wacará and then for the Cubeos. His father used to fell and clear the Cubeos' swidden fields, while his mother used to plant bitter manioc for them. 'That is to say, we were the Cubeos' slaves,' Arturo noted, 'They ordered us, and we worked for them. We could barely do our own work. Every year they sent for us, ordering us to do their swidden fields.' Arturo then explained that when his father went to work for the Cubeos, Mariela and Anita asked, 'Why do you work? Why can't you say no? They order you to work, this is not good. You should have your own work, make your own swidden fields. If you say yes, they will order you about more, order more work.' By way of explanation, Arturo told me that his father was scared of the Cubeos. They had ordered him to work many times and if he did not respond, they would say ugly things and threaten to not give him soap the next time he asked.

As Arturo's parents had worked for rubber gatherers when he was young and then for the Cubeos, he spent most of his time with his grandparents. When Arturo's grandmother grew ill, she called him to her side and told him that she would die in the next few days. 'Now your grandmothers are Mariela and Anita,' she told him, 'They will take you where they work. I am very proud; you will work with them.' She held him and said, 'don't go elsewhere. Stay here. More people will come. You will have to receive them. In the future, you will be their leader.'

At that time, Arturo told me that he had not known this himself, everything she told him was as if she were observing a dream, like a vision. She died the following day.

Little by little, Cacua families arrived to live in Wacará, building themselves their homes. When Arturo reached the age of fifteen, he was named captain of Wacará. His grandfather had been captain first, and then his father. At first Arturo did not understand what the role entailed, but a Cubeo from a neighbouring community, Wacuraba, taught him, explaining how to speak to governors and bosses at the mayor's office. He also guided him at meetings by explaining who was saying what, and how to respond. Arturo's four-year stance as captain was renewed several times over. He explained that he had also worked as a translator, revising the New Testament with Mariela. As such, he did not have much time to guide the community as captain. He spent many years in Lomalinda, returning to the community sporadically. This meant that it was hard for the mayor's office to reach him, and they advised him to officially appoint someone in charge in his absence. He eventually decided to leave his role as captain to work solely on bible translation. In 1994, the missionaries moved to Bogotá, as there were security risks in the area. They took Arturo and his wife with them, where Arturo studied and worked with the missionaries.

When Arturo left his role as captain, Jacobo, who had been the president of the community's committee at that time, became captain. Arturo explained that there had been a back and forth in leadership, 'Then they changed to Faber, he worked and then one year later, they changed back to Jacobo, and then they changed back to Faber.' When Faber was unable to continue as captain, the residents of Wacará voted for Arturo to be captain once more. Arturo referred to this as 'four years of work,' though it lasted longer because his role as captain was renewed again. 'I think I have been Captain for a total of 28 years,' he laughed, before concluding, 'this was my story. I think this is the last year for me. In 2020 another leader will replace me. We will choose some new leaders so that they can work for the community.'

He continued to wrap up his life history, 'This is how it was when I arrived here, I grew up right here. I will not go to another place, I grew up right here in my community, my mother too. They did not go to another place, they totally changed from when we were slaves of the Cubeos.' He then explained that when he became captain, the Cubeos had called on him to send young people to work for them and he refused, telling them, 'Before it was like that. But for my part, I will not let my people work for you. Work for yourselves and we will also work for ourselves. What would you think if I ordered you? We all have hands, we can all work.' Arturo then explained, 'it is good because now, as captain, I will not say yes. They can work separately… That is how we set ourselves free in our community.'

Work and Conviviality in Amazonia

Work and community emerge as salient themes in the Captain of Wacará's life story. He speaks of work as producing material goods, such as handwoven baskets, swidden fields, and homes, but also social relations and social values. Effectively, his story is about work as producing the very community in which the Cacua of Wacará live together and have worked together to build over several generations. The Captain's story indicates that it is by working for themselves to build and strengthen their own Cacua community rather than living dispersed and working for others, that the Cacua of Wacará are reconstructing and reflecting upon what it means for them to 'live well.' This ideal is upheld by values of hard work and relationships of care (Sarmiento Barletti, 2017: 109) but is difficult to maintain and constantly under threat (Walker, 2015: 178; Overing & Passes, 2000: 6). As Walker notes of tranquillity, living well is 'not a natural state, but collective achievement of people working well together: an immaterial product of people's labour' (2015: 183). In this way, the significance of working and living together as Cacua is necessarily a collective project, one that entails everything from maintaining one's family to projects of self-fashioning and upward mobility.

The Cacua are not unique in the types of social transformation that they have faced, negotiated, and instigated over the years, as regional literature about living and working together in village-style communities shows. This literature suggests that while work is widely valued among native Amazonian peoples, it is often organised in response to external factors in ways that both maintain and reconfigure convivial values of production and autonomy (see e.g., Buitron, 2020; Killick, 2008, 2021; Mahecha & Franky, 2010). Before discussing the effects of social transformation on Amazonian styles of work and conviviality as explored in contemporary literature, let us consider the approach of earlier scholars. Goldman (1963), for instance, has been recognised as the first to emphasise good feeling, mood and autonomy as conducive to working with and alongside others and key to understanding conviviality in Amazonia (see: Overing, 1989; Walker, 2015).

Goldman's analysis centres on 'the social construction of emotions and the relation between values and social action,' enabling him to unpack relations between individuals and the community (Overing, 1989: 160-1). He makes this point in relation to various kinds of work among the Cubeo, noting for instance that maintaining a 'high level of good feeling' in the community is seen as the only way to help a disaffected woman, who grows apathetic towards her work in manioc production (Goldman, 1963: 53). He describes other (men's) work, such as basket weaving, making tools, hammocks, or fishing lines, as more fluid, something that people drop in and out of, switching between tasks as and when they feel like it (*ibid*: 65). Goldman notes that the exception to manufacture being considered 'pleasurable recreation[10],' is the strenuous work required to build a maloca (*ibid*: 66), the large ceremonial

[10] At some points Goldman says that his interlocuters regard the manufacture of basket, hammocks, fishing lines and tools as 'a pleasurable recreation' (1963: 65) and in other places he refers to it as 'work' (*ibid*: 68).

house traditionally inhabited by Eastern Tukanoans of the Vaupés. Nonetheless, he says, 'Even then, when the exertion of the task has broken the spell of good feeling, the men stop and return to another task' (*ibid*).

While an important part of Goldman's ethnography explores conviviality within these traditional Cubeo community setups, instances of social transformation during Goldman's fieldwork among the Cubeo in the 1930s are apparent. While Goldman describes the setup of the Cubeo community as everybody living under one roof, that of the maloca and the leader of such communities as the 'owner of the house,' he also mentions attitudes among the Cubeo as changing. He describes one leader as 'interested in adapting the life of the community toward the standards of the white man' by referring to himself as '*capitán y general*' (*ibid*: 37). Goldman notes that this leader told him that 'he planned to have a community of many houses and he would be chief over them all,' using the term 'man of great influence' rather than 'owner of the house' (*ibid*). While this notion clearly struck Goldman at that time, today the Spanish term, *capitán,* is both the official and commonly used term for the highest appointed leader of the indigenous community, now typically formed of many houses.

Goldman centres his analysis on the traditional Cubeo setup rather than attempting to analyse how the social values developed in such settings transpire in the wake of social change. In more recent scholarship, Buitron explores the convivial values of productiveness and autonomy among the Shuar, who have formed communities since the 1950s in response to encroachment on their territory and subsequent involvement of missionaries (2020: 5). While the Shuar previously had highly mobile lifestyles, they have come to embrace living in sedentary villages, a process that involves channelling state resources and electing their own formal leaders (*ibid*: 10). Buitron highlights instances when Shuar have reappropriated government projects to match Shuar values by assigning them to individual families instead of the whole community (*ibid:* 4). While technical trainers insist that projects require 'community work' and tend to fail when 'people don't commit to work together' (*ibid:* 10), the Shuar prefer to respect people's 'freedom to choose how, when, and with whom to work' (*ibid:* 8).

Nonetheless, in instances where Shuar people have undertaken contractual relations with the state to build facilities for the community, convivial values have become reconfigured to fit new notions of community development. Unlike the reappropriation of government projects, Buitron describes contractual relations as resulting in labour specialisation and the need for self-reliance in the market, which in turn leads to social inequality within the community (*ibid*: 3). This is one example of contemporary scholarship that explores the theme of conviviality among Amazonian peoples as simultaneously shaping and being shaped by external factors. Killick explores similar themes of conviviality, work and the creation of indigenous communities and like Buitron, finds that the Ashaninka tend to reappropriate ideas put in

place by the state, such as community setups, to match their own values, while in other cases these values are reconfigured to fit with external influence.

Killick notes that the consensus among the Ashaninka is that 'it is better, and more peaceful, to live apart' (2008: 25), in line with a preference for providing only for the needs of one's family with help of immediate household members to achieve this (*ibid*: 30). Killick describes this in terms of a 'desire for autonomy,' which 'seems to underpin their distrust of working together too much' (*ibid*). In one of the officially recognised Ashaninka communities, most of the inhabitants live at varying distances from one another in the forest. The community's centre has only recently grown from four to seven families, despite the community officially consisting of roughly forty families (about 300 people), across its whole territory (Killick, 2021: 281). Preference for living in this way clashes somewhat with standardised ideas about 'what an official community should look like' (*ibid*: 283), which involves notions about 'the need to live and work together in a much more ordered and clustered form' (*ibid*: 284).

Killick points out, the unintended consequence might be 'the assimilation of indigenous peoples into forms of living as being dictated from the outside, rather than based on their own logic and values' (*ibid*: 280). The importance of work and conviviality among Amazonian peoples is prominent across regional literature, though the styles in which it is carried out and responses to external factors vary. In the Captain of Wacará's life story, work appears as a key feature of conviviality in the Cacua community of Wacará today and has been key to its expansion as more Cacua families have moved there over the years. In line with contemporary scholarship about the formation of indigenous communities in Amazonia and different ways of enacting convivial values within them, I will proceed with a brief overview of some of the more bureaucratic procedures involved, as referenced in the Captain of Wacará's life story. In subsequent sections of this chapter, the regional and historical context behind references in Arturo's story to the Cacua's relations to their Cubeo neighbours and evangelical missionaries will help to uncover why work has become such a salient value in their community.

Bureaucratisation of 'the Community'

As parts of Arturo's story suggest, there was a level of bureaucracy regarding 'the community,' which included his own role as captain and those who had replaced him or otherwise stood in for him while he was away. To give an idea of the various layers of bureaucracy it takes to sustain an indigenous community today, every four years each community holds an election of the community's leaders. In the elections I witnessed in Wacará, only adults (over 18-years-old) with an identity card and recorded in the community's census, were allowed to vote. As well as voting for their captain and vice-captain, members of the community voted for those who would form the community's committee of representatives.

There was a representative for women, sport, health, education, and youth, as well as two particularly prominent roles (at least in Wacará) of the 'president of conflict and resolution'

and the 'president of work.' Nonetheless, most of these roles seemed to bare such little relevance to everyday life in the community that I did not realise that all these positions existed when I first moved to Wacará, let alone who had been undertaking which role for the previous four years. The only leaders I was initially aware of were the captain, Arturo; vice-captain, Antonio; president of conflict and resolution, Faber; the president of work, Yair and Juan, who appeared to have no official title but always introduced himself as a leader when he met outsiders. Aside from the most prominent leaders listed above, most people occupying a position in the community's committee claimed to not know what their roles entailed. Felicia, for example, told me that she was the representative of health, but did not know what this entailed, other than giving people paracetemol when they asked her for it. When two nurses visiting the community spoke to Felicia about her role, she admitted that she did not understand what it required of her. The nurses responded that asigning people to roles in the community's comitte was not for the sake of filling out a form to submit to the mayor's office.

Historian, Palacio notes that such levels of state bureaucracy in Colombia date to the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth century following wars of independence from Spain (2006: 13). At this time, the dominant postcolonial elite of Colombia were working to overcome the country's economic problems, rebuild relations with Europe and re-join the international market. Treaties, laws, maps, and the progressive liberal discourse of this time all served to symbolically shape Colombia's territory, which formed part of a deep-seated notion to 'civilise' the country (*ibid*). Such ideologies are apparent in Law 089 of 1890, which is celebrated today as the first law to protect indigenous land rights in Colombia, but also explicitly links *la vida civilizada* (civilised life) to Missions and sedentarisation, while indigenous peoples are referred to as *salvajes* (savages). This law outlines the duties corresponding to the *Cabildo,* more commonly known as the indigenous leaders of a given indigenous community, which include formally registering all the titles and documents belonging to the community they govern in the Notary, as well as creating and safeguarding a community census.

While law 089 of 1890 was the first to legally recognise the existence of indigenous communities by authorising *Cabilidos* to act as mediators to represent them, other laws have since been made to further protect indigenous communities in Colombia. This process of establishing indigenous communities and laws to protect them has involved incorporating elements from the experiences of indigenous peoples with many non-indigenous actors, including slavers, merchants, rubber barons, missionaries, the military, civil servants, travellers, and scientists (see Fundación Gaia Amazonas, 2000: 243). As anthropologist Franky also notes, social scientists began visiting the Vaupés in the 1970s, inciting processes of education and community development, alongside and as part of their research (2000: 31). On the one hand, laws to protect indigenous populations employ a discourse regarding the rights of indigenous peoples to organise themselves according to their own customs, reaffirming their identity and autonomy as indigenous before national society (e.g., Fundación Gaia Amazonas, 2000: 242-3). On the other hand, this very process has led to a

bureaucratisation of 'the indigenous community,' which is foreign to the way in which indigenous peoples have previously lived.

Having established that indigenous communities today hold a legally granted status, subject to laws of protection, and as such entail bureaucratic measures, what is left to emphasise is that this has led to another kind of work, the work of leaders. Founding a community not only requires people to work to fell forest and physically build homes, swidden fields and airstrips (at least when missionaries were active in the area), it also requires the work of leaders, bureaucrats, and organisations. The most prominent leaders referred to their positions as 'work' and 'work for the community,' which involved securing funds and resources for community development in terms of health, hygiene, and formal education. This involved trips to Mitú to liaise with local, national, and international organisations, attend meetings hosted by indigenous organisations and putting pressure on local politicians. Leaders then had to keep the community informed of these matters by calling meetings when they returned.

In Arturo's story, work appears in many different contexts, as well as the work of being captain or leader of the community; work with missionaries (linguistics and translation); the work of building the missionaries' runway (felling trees for it to be laid); the work of making a swidden field; and work in the swidden field, cultivating crops. In short, while work can refer to many activities for the Cacua, this thesis centres on the salience of one particular kind of work, sometimes specified for my benefit as 'work of the indigenous'. This included carrying heavy loads of firewood, bitter manioc and other crops; going to the swidden field to weed and harvest manioc tubers; felling the swidden field; peeling and grating bitter manioc to make manioc bread and toast manioc flour. This kind of work is heavy going and heavily moralised, requiring a sedentary lifestyle. Quite why this kind of work has gained such salience among the Cacua is worth investigating further, as is the framework within which it transpires.

Eastern Tukanoans and the 'Makú'

Not only Cacua people referred to agriculture when they used the term work in the general sense. During my first week in Mitú, for instance, I met a Cubeo man, who worked in the indigenous organisation representing Wacará and seven other indigenous communities in the area. He told me, 'With so much land, we must not beg from others. We must work and produce.' He then explained that they had discovered who in the communities had swidden fields and who did not and as such, who was stealing from other people's swidden fields. They made sure that everyone planted and worked their land, so that the stealing stopped. Whether or not this would have been logistically possible is beside the point. This way of speaking about work was common among indigenous peoples of the Vaupés.

The notion that those who do not work, steal from others was widespread among indigenous peoples across the Vaupés. Faber, a prominent Cacua leader, alluded to this notion when we

were chatting one morning after I asked him what he had said in the communal meeting the previous evening. He told me that he had reminded everyone at the meeting to treat the boarding students in Wacará's school well and then elaborated solemnly, 'Before, their parents used to laugh at us, they said ugly things, that we are slaves, we don't work, we are lazy.' Faber paused, before assuring me, 'But we don't bother anyone. Who is our neighbour?' he asked, shrugging in response, feigning to look about in vain before answering, 'Nobody.'

Most boarding students at the school in Wacará were from a Cubeo community, just a five-kilometre trek through the forest and river crossing away, along the Vaupés River. As such, I concluded that Faber had been speaking to me about the Cubeo parents of the boarding school students in Wacará and what they used to say about the Cacua. His comments revealed the association between those who are too lazy to work for themselves and stealing food from other people's swidden fields, instead of working to make one's own fields and cultivate one's own food. By telling me that the Cacua 'do not bother anyone,' Faber meant that they did not steal from others and thus defended his community against the Cubeos' disparaging comments. He also inferred that his people had no neighbours from whom to steal anyway.

Faber's comments about work reflected the relations between the Cacua and their Cubeo neighbours that Arturo had also referred to in his life story. Nonetheless, details I did not learn from my Cacua interlocuters, were present in missionary publications specifying how Cacua people were living when Mariela (Marilyn Cathcart) and her translation partner, Anita (Lois Ann Lowers) first arrived. Something that none of my interlocuters had directly told me was that the community of Wacará had originally been set up for a Cacua (Arturo's) family by the Cubeos of Timbó, for whom they (Arturo's family) had worked at that time. The Cubeo leader of Timbó had named the Cacua man who had previously been living and working in his home, as the first Cacua leader of Wacará (Cathcart, 1973: 102). By the time missionaries Mariela and Anita arrived in the small Cacua village alongside Wacará stream in July 1966, it had been established for several years. To give an idea of its size at that time, the village consisted of four houses, thirteen adults and six children (*ibid*).

While the small group of Cacua living in Wacará at that time worked for the families of various Cubeo villages at a distance of one-to-three hours on foot, Cacua families living elsewhere worked for families of neighbouring Desano and Wanano communities (*ibid*). Such arrangements meant that the Cacua sometimes lived in the homes (or under the homes, if built on stilts) of the families they served, while other living arrangements consisted of small areas for the Cacua to reside within the village of those for whom they worked. In other cases, the Cacua lived in the forest, around one-to-two hours trek away from the village in which they worked. All the same, they were expected to respond to requests to work, hunt or make toasted manioc flour and sometimes the Cacua would be 'loaned' from one family to another to carry out specific tasks (Cathcart, 1973: 101). As Arturo noted in his interview with me, his father used to fell swidden fields for Cubeo families while his mother sowed bitter manioc in their fields. Cathcart mentions that the Cacua also undertook tasks including hunting,

housebuilding, babysitting, and basket weaving for their non-Cacua indigenous neighbours in exchange for second-hand clothing, hammocks, salt, soap, and other such items (2004).

Faber once spontaneously referred to this time in the Cacua's recent history when we were walking back to the community from the drop-off point along the Vaupés River after a trip in Mitú. As we chatted, he mentioned that Wacará did not used to have a Captain, and that the leader used to be Cubeo. He noted that at that time, none of the Cacua ever went to Mitú and instead traded with the Cubeos, obtaining soap and hammocks for baskets or meat. Faber told me that the Cacua had been very poor in those times, repeating that that nobody went to Mitú to run errands or show their face at the mayor's office. 'We were forgotten,' Faber said, before reflecting on what he had just told me and adding, 'the rich say that we are not poor, we are rich in nature, we don't pay water [e.g., household bills].'

I responded by asking Faber what he thought about this. 'Maybe…' he replied tentatively, 'but people need to work. Nobody works like me, nobody sows crops like me, bananas…' Faber's reflection highlights his concern about work and Cacua people today, suggesting that the importance of work for him lies in its role of shifting from a time when the Cacua did not show their face in the mayor's office and relied on their Cubeo neighbours for material goods. In this way, dominant regional ideas about work, including relations construed within a deep-seated social and historical context between the Cacua and their neighbours, have also influenced Cacua people's conceptions of work and of themselves today. It is precisely a rejection of the past, when Cacua people depended on and worked for their indigenous neighbours, rather than working, obtaining industrial goods, and soliciting services from the state for themselves, that has influenced Cacua notions of work, such as those held by Faber.

The Cacua have historically worked for people from indigenous groups of the Eastern Tukanoan linguistic family, such as Cubeos, Desanos, Wananos and Tukanos. The Cacua perception that Cacua people 'need to work,' sowing crops, as Faber had insisted to me, was a rejection of their previous position performing such tasks by working for others, rather than themselves and their Cacua community. The Cubeo, Desano and Wanano neighbours of the Cacua living in Wacará and its surrounding areas, have typically referred to the Cacua as 'Makú' (Cathcart, 1973: 101-2). This is a derogatory term, referring to their supposed lack of agriculture and semi-permanent bases, deep in the forest alongside small streams. Indigenous groups belonging to Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak linguistic families have historically treated those they refer to as Makú with inferiority (Mahecha, Franky, & Cabrera, 1996: 90).

Anthropologists, Mahecha, Franky, and Cabrera present a historic account of these hierarchical relations with linguistic evidence that the term 'Makú' originates from Arawak, meaning 'without language' or 'without kin.' They propose that the term would have originally been used to label nomadic groups, who did not have kin among indigenous groups of the Arawak or Eastern Tukanoan linguistic family because they did not speak languages that

sounded intelligible to groups who did. In pre-Hispanic times, Arawak and Eastern Tukanoan groups moved to the Vaupés region when nomadic indigenous groups were already living there. As newcomers, Arawak and Eastern Tukanoan peoples fought and defeated the nomadic groups, who they called 'Makú' and took them as 'prisoners of war' to keep as orphans and servants (2000: 144).

As nomadic inhabitants of the forest, the Makú were able to acquire diverse products to exchange with their Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak neighbours, who by contrast lived in permanent structures (malocas) alongside the main rivers of the region. Goods that the Makú obtained either directly from the forest or made with primary material sourced in it, included curare (poison to coat darts), handwoven baskets, blowpipes, and meat (*ibid*, 2000: 144, 147). In exchange, their sedentary Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak neighbours gave the Makú products they had cultivated in their swidden fields, such as tobacco, coca, and manioc (*ibid*: 148). Given that indigenous groups of the Eastern Tukanoan linguistic families have historically lived alongside the main rivers of the region, they were the first to construe relations with white tradesmen, missionaries, and rubber gatherers, who used the main rivers to travel (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 30). The arrival of Europeans in the area profoundly altered relations between forest and riverine indigenous groups (Mahecha, Franky, & Cabera, 2000: 144-5).

From the second half of the 19th century, there was a growing demand for forest products, especially rubber, which brought an influx of white people to the region of Rio Negro and the Va (Hugh-Jones, 1981: 35). Tradesmen gathered indigenous peoples into camps for the rubber collecting season, often by force and almost always with military assistance (*ibid*: 36). In other instances, tradesmen negotiated with indigenous leaders to organise a system for rubber collecting in exchange for payment in western goods. This often led to slave raids and fights between indigenous groups and subsequently, the Makú transformed from inferior to their Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak neighbours to commodities to enslave, sell and trade (*ibid*). Mahecha, Franky, and Cabrera suggest that these were the circumstances under which the term Makú came to mean slave (2000: 145).

While the Makú responded to this unfavourable situation by seeking refuge in the forest and protection from isolated riverine groups, many of the Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak indigenous groups began to work and trade with Europeans. As such, sedentary riverine peoples became familiarised with the 'westernised' market economy, which gave them access to 'prestigious' Western goods and therefore reinforced their superiority over the Makú, for whom they had historically always acted as mediators (Mahecha, Franky, & Cabera, 2000: 151). At the same time, access to 'prestigious' Western goods also put Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak indigenous groups in a position of the provider for the Makú. As Goldman writes, those who wanted to acquire industrial goods, but did not have the opportunity (or desire) to do so directly from white tradesmen, were able to offer the Cubeo native goods in exchange

(1963: 69-70). The Cubeo could not refuse offers of exchange, given that 'an important principle of native trade in the area is that an object asked for must be surrendered' (*ibid*: 70).

As steel tools became widely available among indigenous riverine groups, they traded them with the Makú. As such, manioc cultivation not only became more widespread among different indigenous groups of the Vaupés, but also intensified (Silverwood-Cope, 1972*:* 54). During Silverwood-Cope's fieldwork in the late 1960s, he learned from people of both Makú and Eastern Tukanoan indigenous groups that the Makú had not adopted agricultural practices until around two generations previously, when Eastern Tukanoans had given them manioc cuttings. According to his Desano and Cubeo interlocuters, they told the Makú to sow their own fields because the Makú were too lazy to do so of their own account and always asked them for manioc (1972: 52-4). Nonetheless, among the reasons the Makú gave for their limited manioc cultivations were that they missed the best times for felling and burning their fields because they were undertaking those very tasks for their Eastern Tukanoan neighbours, who had ordered them to do so (*ibid:* 55). This is also what Arturo told me of his father's situation when he used to work for the Cubeos.

Silverwood-Cope noted of his visit to Wacará, 'By Makú standards and even by average acculturated Tukanoan standards, the Makú of Caño Wacará are very prosperous.' In contrast to widespread assumptions about the Makú, he also noted that they 'have considerable and varied cultivation. They have built quite permanent houses and by their own account rarely go away on prolonged hunting trips' (1972: 112). Silverwood-Cope mentioned the presence of two North American Protestant missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics, who had been living and working with the Cacua at Wacará since 1966 but did not comment on whether this directly linked to the 'prosperity' of the Cacua living at Wacará. The missionaries themselves noted of the Cacua of Wacará,

> 'The cultivation of manioc is an integral part of their life. Although they are hunter-gathers, they have come to depend on manioc bread and fariña[11] so much that when for whatever reason there is little or none, they say that they do not have food' (Cathcart, 1973: 117).

What historical relations between Eastern Tukanoans and the Makú have to do with widespread regional conceptualisations of work and its valorisation are the following. Typical cultural practices attributed to sedentary riverine groups include felling large swidden fields, cultivating bitter manioc and other crops, producing manioc bread, and building large communal houses, called malocas. The categorisation of such activities as work and the positive valence placed upon work therefore reflects an Eastern Tukanoan perspective. The Makú typically built comparatively unsophisticated houses in small semi-permanent forest settlements, procuring most of their food through hunting, which unlike agriculture, is not locally categorised as work. For instance, while Cacua people refered to agricultural activities

[11] Toasted manioc flour

in the swidden field as work in their native language (*tewat* [n]; *teo* [v]), they refered to hunting, fishing, and gathering as 'searching for food' (*jeémát bidna*), searching for animals (*ñ~~u~~nu~~p~~p bidna*) or 'going to the forest' (*jiaboó bejna*). In Arturo's story, for instance, he referred to building the runway for the missionaries as work, but hunting wild turkeys as what people did when they were not working.

The Eastern Tukanoan-centric vision of what counts as work in indigenous livelihoods and its valorisation is one aspect of the lowly status that they have historically attributed to the Makú, which has not yet been explicitly explored among anthropologists. Silverwood-Cope, for instance, explains that for Eastern Tukanoan peoples, felling swidden fields, cultivating crops, and living in large communal houses (malocas) are what humans do. As such, Eastern Tukanoans have historically categorised the Makú as the lowest of humans or else as animals (1972: 195). Silverwood-Cope notes that from an Eastern Tukanoan perspective,

> 'Like animals, Makú inhabit the inland forests where they feed on other animals and forest fruits, and their movements and whereabouts cannot be controlled or predicted. Like predators the Makú are game-killing "specialists" who do much of their hunting at night… whatever human attributes they may now have, such as a degree of cultivation and knowledge of ritual and shamanism, are things that they have been taught by Tukanoans' (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 195-6).

This extract comes from Silverwood-Cope's ethnography based on fieldwork conducted over fifty years ago among the Cacua of the region in which the community of Nuevo Pueblo is now located. Nonetheless, some people of Eastern Tukanoan groups today, still make comments based on such perceptions. The linguist Katherine Bolaños, for example, notes that when she discussed her proposed research with the Cacua to a Desano person, working with the local government in Mitú, they responded by asking, 'why would you want to work with those "little Makú"? They live like little animals, they are not like us' (2010: 9).

Silverwood-Cope does not explicitly write about the valorisation of work and its categorisation in terms of the Eastern Tukanoan world view in his explanation of the status of animality they attribute to the Makú. However, Griffthis who explicitly writes about the role that work plays in Uitoto cosmology, an indigenous group of lowland Colombia, describes a similar outlook for the Uitoto as Silverwood-Cope of Eastern Tukanoans. For the Uitoto, humans fell swidden fields, cultivate crops, build, and live in malocas, if they grew lazy, reluctant to work hard and failed to fell and sow their swidden fields properly, it was thought that they were 'becoming like animals.' This refers to game animals who laze around in the day and hunt at night (Griffiths, 2001: 254). While I did not encounter any reference to the Cacua as animals, I encountered comments that they were lazy, did not have swidden fields or make manioc bread.

After my initial week-long visit in Wacará to introduce myself to the community and discuss my proposed research project, I bumped into one of Wacará's schoolteachers when I was in Mitú. At this time, there were two young Cacua men working as teachers in the school but apart from them, the teachers were Cubeo, Barasana and of other Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak indigenous groups. The teacher I met must have been in his early thirties and always wore fashionable shirts and belted jeans, but most notable was his sassy attitude and dry quips. As I chatted to him and his mother, who asked what my study was about, he quickly cut in to tell me that my study was a waste of time.

He proceeded to recount that the Cacua had conserved nothing of their traditions in Wacará, only the language. While other communities had traditional dances, Wacará did not. The teacher blamed this on evangelicalism, which prohibits manioc beer, traditional dances, and shamanic prayers. The teacher told me that the Cacua had not been civilised when the missionaries came, whereas other communities had been. This meant that the missionaries got them as 'virgins,' by which I suppose he meant that this was why the missionaries made such a big impact on them. He said that other communities had swidden fields, but not the people in Wacará, they did not make manioc bread, they were lazy.

The teacher's comments reflected Eastern Tukanoan perceptions as described by Silverwood-Cope above, in that 'cultivation and knowledge of ritual and shamanism' (1972: 196) were highly valorised and what made people human. What Eastern Tukanoans once claimed were human attributes that the Makú had learned from them, according to Silverwood-Cope, the teacher seemed to be telling me that the Cacua had lost because of their engagement with evangelical missionaries. What struck me most about the teacher's comments was that as he lived in Wacará during termtime, he knew that the Cacua had swidden fields and made manioc bread. This suggested to me that the teacher was speaking out of prejudice rather than direct observation. Though the Cacua have now practiced manioc cultivation and production for several generations, the stigma attached to them as lazy and as people who do not work still held strong among other indigenous groups. After hearing the teacher's remarks, I was unsurprised that he did not like living in Wacará and was only there because the local government had sent him there to teach. He hoped to be able to leave at the end of the year.

Missionaries and the Christian Perception of Work

As apparent in Arturo's story, the arrival of the missionaries in Wacará required Cacua people to work together to build a landing strip for the missionaries' plane. Arturo also told me that the missionaries challenged the fact that the Cacua worked for their Cubeo neighbours, felling, and sowing their swidden fields whenever they ordered it. When Arturo became captain, he described himself as speaking to the Cubeos in such a way that echoed the missionaries' advice to his father regarding the Cubeos working for themselves and the Cacua felling and sowing their own swidden fields, doing their own work. The role of missionaries is

prominent in Arturo's story, in part because of encouraging Cacua people to work for themselves and thus helping to shift the deeply rooted relations they held with their neighbours. In turn, this has contributed to the value that Cacua people now attribute to working for themselves (e.g., making their own swidden fields) and their Cacua community.

To understand why the missionaries in Wacará might have actively encouraged the Cacua to do their own work and make their own swidden fields, it is important to consider the value of work from a Christian perspective. In Weber's writings on the Protestant ethic, he notes that the moral objection to relaxation stems from consequential 'idleness and the temptations of the flesh, above all of distraction from the pursuit of a righteous life' (2001 [1930]: 104). This drives the understanding that 'not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God' (*ibid*). As such, activities not associated with work, such as sociability, idle talk and too much sleep, are seen as wasting time that should be dedicated to God, and thus as one of the greatest sins (*ibid*). This conception of work as morally good and leisure as a sinful waste of time does not fit with Goldman's description of work among the Cubeo, in which sociability and enjoyment lies at the very heart of working together (1963). In this setup, desire for relaxation and leisure drove the amount of time dedicated to labour rather than the other way around. This indicates that while the Eastern Tukanoan perception of, and importance attributed to, work was not the same as that of the Protestant ethic, these two perspectives reinforced one another in promoting the valorisation of a specific kind of work, agricultural and other forms of manual labour.

What philosopher Arendt emphasises regarding the Old Testament and what it reveals about the value of work in Christianity, is that when man was expelled from the garden of Eden, he was not punished with labour, but with harsher labour (1958: 107). After all, it states in Genesis (2:5) that God put man in the garden of Eden 'to work'[12] (see Arendt, 1958: 107). Harris builds on this point in her discussion of why people work, by highlighting that this curse upon mankind suggests that 'the ethical value of hard work is essentially a negative one,' a form of atonement for the inherent wickedness of humanity, and a means to avoid temptation (2007:138). From this Christian perspective, as well as liberating people from sin, Harris explains that work is also seen as liberating them from servitude if they work freely, and not as slaves (*ibid*). The missionaries in Wacará have certainly presented the asymmetrical relationship between the Cacua and their indigenous riverine neighbours in terms of slavery in missionary publications. For instance, one of Cathcart's missionary updates was entitled, 'Once slaves, these native Colombians now reach their former masters with the gospel' (2004). Here, she compared how the Cacua were living when she first arrived to how they were living around forty years later, concluding that,

[12] The Hebrew word used in this passage לְעָבְדָהּ (lə·‘ā·ḇə·ḏāh) can translate as to work, to cultivate or till, but also to serve or enslave (Bible Hub, n.d). Arendt also notes this (1958: 107). The SIL missionaries in Wacará translated this text with the Cacua noun *tewat,* meaning work.

> ‘The Gospel is having a life changing effect on the Cacua people and on those around them… We rejoice in the amazing changes God has made in the Cacua people, transforming them from people with a slave mentality - who were at the very bottom of the social ladder - to those who are reaching out and actively sharing the Gospel of God’s power and love with others’ (2004).

While this article was published for a Christian missionary audience, elsewhere Cathcart described this relationship with more nuance. In an earlier missionary report, she wrote of the relationship between the Cacua and their Eastern Tukanoan neighbours,

> ‘This is a relationship, which is complicated… Although it is difficult to establish what the emotional relationship between the Cacua and other groups, we have observed cases in which the exchange was definitely of mutual benefit’ (Cathcart, 1973: 102).

These different forms of describing Cacua relations with their Eastern Tukanoan neighbours, points to the term slavery as opportunely fitting a Christian narrative of salvation, one that the Cacua themselves adopt with regards to their past. Linguists, Epps and Stenzel note that while scholars have tended to describe relations between ‘Makú’ and Eastern Tukanoan peoples in terms of slavery or servanthood, this heavily reflects the Eastern Tukanoan perspective (2013: 20-21). By contrast, ethnographers working directly with ‘Makú’ peoples have described such relations differently, as ‘symbiosis,’ ‘intelligent parasitism’ (Reid, 1979: 184; Ramos, 1980) and ‘complementary ecological niche exploitation’ (Milton, 1984; See Epps and Stenzel, 2013: 21).

The importance attributed to work among the Cacua of Wacará, is thus upheld by a combination of factors, one of which is Cacua people’s relationship to work as a response to the negative perceptions that their Eastern Tukanoan neighbours have historically held of them. This has generated a sense of self-awareness in Cacua people, of a need to publicly valorise work and continually make a point of doing so. This is coupled with missionary ideas and models for work, inextricably tied to the notion of salvation. Work provides salvation on two counts, firstly through the classic Protestant understanding of work as deliverance from sin and temptation in the face of idleness. Secondly, working provides salvation from slavery, that is forcedly working for others instead of freely working for oneself, as the Cacua did for the Cubeo and other neighbouring Eastern Tukanoan groups when SIL missionaries, Mariela and Anita, first made the Cacua’s acquaintance. Distinguishing these important and interconnected influences on Cacua notions of work, that is decades of missionary intervention and rejection of the past as Makú peoples, builds a standpoint from which to analyse the ways in which Cacua people of Wacará speak of and engage in work as they do.

The Making of a Christian Community

The missionaries based at Wacará worked for the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a North American organisation formed of born-again evangelical protestant Christians, which is the sister organisation of Wycliffe Bible Translators. Acting on the claim in the Book of Revelations that 'the millennium will not arrive until the Bible has been translated into every language on earth' (see Keane, 2007: 44), the organisation sent missionaries-come-translators in pairs to work with specific indigenous groups (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 24). The SIL setup included a large base at Lomalinda, fully established by 1970 with over 200 employees, 153 of whom were North Americans. In total there were SIL translators posted with 33 of Colombia's 48 indigenous groups (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 24).

The general procedure following tentative agreements with suitable indigenous communities was to establish an SIL residence in the community, complete with a radio to communicate with the base in Lomalinda and an airstrip for more accessible travel and the delivery of goods. The missionaries aimed to establish friendly relations with the indigenous group with whom they lived and began conducting paid informant sessions in their (SIL) house. SIL missionaries would generally split their time between the small indigenous village where they had been posted and the missionary base at Lomalinda, where they would invite their informants to accompany them to work on language studies (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 25).

While Colombia is predominately a Catholic country, during the 1930s protestant missionaries also became active in the Colombian Amazon (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 22). This coincided with a time in Colombian history when the Liberals came into power [1930-1946], after 44 years of Conservative rule (López Amaya, 2014: 68). This new political context, which involved particularly cordial relations between Colombia and the United States, also provided an opportunity for protestant missionaries from the United States to move to Colombia (López Amaya, 2014: 81). In 1962, the Indian Affairs Division of Colombian Government Ministry completed a contract with North American organisation, the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

It is widely suspected that this contract between the Liberals and the SIL was a political move against the alliance between the Conservatives and the Catholic Church and their growing power in underpopulated and economically underdeveloped regions of Colombia (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 23). Nonetheless, it is unclear as to the extent the government representative who signed the contract, was aware of the organisation's primarily evangelical orientation, given that this was not explicitly stated in the contract. Officially, SIL activities and obligations roughly fell under programmes for educational, medical and community development for Colombia's indigenous groups; transport and communication networks in isolated areas; and scientific record and analysis of unwritten indigenous languages and culture (Silverwood-Cope, 1972: 22-23).

Key to the evangelical mission of SIL in Amazonia was not only teaching indigenous peoples to read and write in their native language for the purpose of translating the bible, but also encouraging them to live together in a community and spread God's word among them. This forms part of a gradual process, in which formal education, conversion to Christianity and learning the skills to lead one's community are intricately connected. The following missionary report by Cathcart (Mariela), reveals how teaching Arturo to read and write as a child led to bible translation and eventually bringing together Cacua people as Christians.

> 'Very early on, I began teaching a young boy named Arturo to read and write. Arturo accepted the Lord at the age of 10, and that same night, led his mother to the Lord. He began to help us teach the Cacuas to read and write, and to help us translate simple bible stories, which he then read to his family and others who would listen. Later, when we began translating Christian choruses and sections of Scripture, Arturo began to gather the people on Sunday mornings to lead them in singing the choruses and read and explain the passages we were translating. At first the small group met in our house. Then, as interest grew (with the help of Colombian Christians from a church in Bogotá), the Cacuas were able to construct a church building that also served as the school facility. By the time we were forced to stop living in the village (early 1994) due to subversive activity in the area, almost the entire village of about 80 people met on Sunday mornings to worship the Lord and hear His Word taught' (Cathcart, 2004).

Like Arturo, the most prominent leaders in Wacará during my fieldwork there, had all been educated by the SIL missionaries in their childhood, at the missionary base in Lomalinda and the school that the missionaries set up in Wacará. Antonio, for instance, was the Vice-Captain of Wacará during my fieldwork there and like Arturo, was also a priest. He told me that he had grown up in Bird Stream, around a four-hour distance from Wacará on foot by forest trail. His father had helped to build the missionaries' runway in Wacará and used to regularly take them handwoven baskets to exchange for soap and matches. When Antonio was a child, the missionaries spoke to his parents to offer him a place to study at the school they had set up in Wacará, where they taught Maths, Spanish, Cacua, and the Word of God.

By the time many of Antonio's nephews and nieces attended the school, Antonio was a teacher there, along with Arturo and Faber. Respectively, they taught Maths, Cacua, and Spanish. Many of the adults, who I estimate were in their late-thirties and early forties during my fieldwork in Wacará, remembered being taught by them when they had attended the school. Antonio's nephews and nieces used to travel with him from Bird Stream to Wacará, where they would board, returning home every second weekend. When Antonio's nephew Juan reached grade 5, the missionaries sent him to Villavicencio to study Pastoral Theology with Antonio. Juan was to be the Youth Pastor of Wacará and his uncle, Antonio, the Senior Pastor. During the household survey that I conducted with Juan, he responded to my question about why he had moved to Wacará by telling me,

> ‘I came because I was studying Pastoral Theology. We finished studying Pastoral Theology and then our linguists said to us that as they had spent so much money on our return travel and our stay at the institute in Villavicencillo… What I mean is, we spent four years studying and then we graduated. After graduating, they did not permit us to go home, they said that they had invested this, the money and they helped us so that we would unite all together here, as Cacuas, here in Wacará and help one another, mutually with other families, as much in the spiritual sense as in the material sense.’

Juan’s recollection of events points to the pressure that the SIL missionaries put on the Cacua people in whom they had ‘invested’ to live in Wacará and undertake the ‘work of teaching God’s word,’ as Juan referred to it later in the household survey. Juan’s mention of help in the material sense, refers to the role of leaders in obtaining resources from state institutions and NGOs for the community. The formal education that the missionaries funded for the individuals in whom they ‘invested,’ reinforced this idea because those with education were the ones best equipped to lead the community. As Juan told me, ‘To be a leader, one needs to have experience. If one does not have experience, does not have study, how will one be able to lead the people, the community?’ He explained the importance of speaking Spanish well and being able to fill out application forms for development projects.

The missionaries not only encouraged the Cacua to live together, but also to work in several different ways, which would enable them to maintain their new living situation. While they encouraged the Cacua to work for themselves by making their own swidden fields and building their own homes in Wacará, they also taught children the word of God as part of their formal education in Maths, Spanish and reading and writing Cacua. As those who had been formally educated outside of Wacará were in the best positions to take on leadership roles within the community, which was commonly referred to as ‘work’ or ‘working for the community,’ all the most prominent leaders of Wacará were evangelical Christians.

Living Together in One Community

It was not until around the mid to late 1990s that the various scattered groups of Cacua families began to move to Wacará ‘to live together as Cacua.’ From conducting household surveys in Wacará, I learned that several extended families had moved to Wacará from their settlements in the forest, from a two-to-four-hour distance away on foot. Each of these settlements was named after its nearby interfluvial stream, Bird Stream, Black Stream, and Sloth Stream. There are records of the distribution of this Cacua population from the mid 1990s, which tell us that there was still a degree of dispersion at that time, with a population of 64 in Wacará; 13 in Sloth Stream; 19 in Bird Stream (Salamand, 1998: 164).

Aside from the pressure that the missionaries put on those whose studies they had funded, another pressure for Cacua people to live together in a single community was described to me separately by Juan and by his uncle, Antonio as ‘el orden publico’ (public order). This refers

to around the time when the missionaries 'were forced to stop living in the village (early 1994) due to subversive activity in the area,' the village meaning the community of Wacará (Cathcart, 2004). This subversive activity caused much worry among indigenous groups. Felicia told me that it was around this time that people would say that the *guerrillas* had no respect and would kill whomever if they crossed a small group of indigenous peoples living together in the forest. When I conducted a household survey with one of Juan's older sisters and asked her why she had moved to Wacará from Bird Stream, she told me that her brother, Juan, had come first. He had sent word to their parents to live together in Wacará, as the *guerrillas* might kidnap them, so it was better to live together.

When conducting my household surveys, one woman told me that she had moved to Wacará from Sloth Stream in 1999 because of the takeover in Mitú, explaining that it was dangerous to live apart and safer to live in 'una sola comunidad' (one single community). In 1998, there was a 72-hour takeover in the town of Mitú, which mestizo friends of mine who lived in Mitú and had been living there as children when the takeover happened, occasionally spoke about together in my presence. One of my friends remembered hiding in his home while the bombs went off and that ash fell from the sky during the following days along with fragments from the uniform of government soldiers. There was a commemoration on the date that marked 20 years since the takeover, during my fieldwork, which likely prompted such discussions while I was there. Though Cacua people had remained in the forest at this time, they often heard news about what was going on in the town of Mitú and surrounding areas.

Many people who had moved to Wacará from Bird Stream, Black Stream, and Sloth Stream around this time simply noted that Arturo, who was captain at that time, had invited them to live together as Cacua in Wacará and that they had moved after seeing other Cacua families do so. Additionally, Jacobo mentioned that leaders of the mayor's office in Mitú had said that it would be difficult to hold meetings or for politicians to arrive and distribute goods if Cacua families did not live together in one community. Aside from families of the surrounding areas moving to join Arturo's extended family at Wacará in the mid to late 1990s, there are also several extended families, who moved from the other Cacua community of Nuevo Pueblo, located a journey of several days away by motorised canoe and on foot. As such, many of the Cacua who grew up in Wacará and its surrounding areas, have since married and had children with Cacua who moved to the community from Nuevo Pueblo. As families began to move to Wacará, working the land was a way in which they became part of the community.

Juan explained this regarding his extended family, who moved from Bird Stream,

> 'They started to come and made swidden fields first, swidden fields, houses and then they started to populate here. Still today, we have our own house, our own terrain for work, the swidden field. What I mean is that now, we understand really well, without problems. That is why we live this way, with such a family working such a part, like that, we divide everything.

So now we understand who works which part. Everyone is located in their own terrain, where they have their work.'

By the time I arrived in the community of Wacará in August 2018, there were 190 inhabitants living across thirty-six households. Most households consisted of one to three wooden huts with corrugated zinc roofs and external walls made of sawn wooden planks. Some households in the community consisted of one large hut with no interior walls and a corrugated zinc roof, where all family members slept in hammocks that could be tossed over the rafters during the day, with enough space to cook, and make manioc bread or toasted manioc flour. Other households consisted of two to three smaller huts, with one for sleeping, another for cooking and sometimes a third hut for making manioc bread and toasted manioc flour, often with a roof of palm leaves rather than corrugated zinc and no exterior walls.

The core individual household setup consisted of a husband-and-wife and their unmarried children. Knowing how to work was key for the husband-and-wife head of each household as this enabled them to be autonomous and self-sufficient without 'bothering' others for goods they should have the skills to produce or access themselves. While children did not 'know' how to work as their parents did, by running errands and contributing to subsistence work in accordance with their skills and strength, they learned. In cases where additional family members resided in such households, they also had to contribute to household production.

Daily life in the community of Wacará tended to be calm and industrious, with adults keeping themselves busy with their work in the swidden field and other tasks. Outside of school, children spent their time playing together, often while taking care of younger children and helping their families with the daily work of subsistence living. Most days culminated in an afternoon of volleyball or football when most people set their work aside at around four in the afternoon to watch or participate in team sports. If someone in the community had enough gasoline and was happy to share it, they would start up the generator after dark to play films in the church-come-communal-meetinghouse. This was often the case when leaders had information to impart and wanted to encourage everyone to gather and listen. While playing sports in the late afternoon and watching films in the evening marked the end of work for each day, work was certainly the key organising factor of everyday life in the community.

Each household had its swidden fields to fell, sow, tend and harvest, manioc bread to bake or manioc flour to toast, patios to clear of weeds, water to fetch, firewood to chop and so on. The importance of work in this everyday sense not only came through in such everyday activities, but also through people's criticism of those (particularly members of their own household) who did not work. As swidden fields and houses belonged to individual households, any work required for them was for the individual household to undertake. While general maintenance and work in the swidden field tended to fall on women, housebuilding

and maintenance was generally considered men's work. In both cases, one's partner and children might participate[13] in these tasks. Depending on the magnitude of the task, a household might invite certain individuals or a larger work party to help. The man of the house provided meat or fish to feed workers, while his wife prepared the meal with manioc bread. Unless the couple strictly observed abstinence from alcohol for religious reasons, the wife also prepared manioc beer. Such occasions were different from days of communal work for the general upkeep of the community, organised by the community's president of work.

The role of the community's president of work was to regularly organise days of communal work to ensure that village was kept tidy and 'well organised,' an expression commonly used by indigenous leaders and non-indigenous visitors to express the ideal community setup (see Mahecha & Franky, 2010). These days were formulaic, always unfolding according to the following structure. Those who chose to participate, met at the church, bringing food or drink to share, so that there was manioc bread, chilli broth and warm drinks, such as manioc gruel or freshly made juice. The president of work would instruct everyone with regards to the morning's tasks and then a morning of work together would ensue, often using shovels to clear the village paths and the space around communal buildings of weeds and grass. In other instances, communal work involved cutting the grass of the football pitch and by the riverbank with machetes, chopping, and collecting firewood for the playschool kitchen, carrying heavy freshly sawn planks of wood from the forest to reconstruct the flooring of the health post, building an extra dorm for new students at the boarding school, and so on. Children often took part if there was no school, using the spades and machetes of adults, while they were lying around and not in use.

The atmosphere was light and jovial despite the hard physical labour and when the morning passed, people bathed in the river before meeting back at the church for the lunch provided by the president of work. He either purchased food like rice and pulses with community funds or went fishing or hunting so that his wife could prepare everyone a meal. Once everyone who had worked (and any children, regardless of whether they had worked) was gathered for lunch, leaders tended to take the opportunity to share information regarding communal matters, such as upcoming visits from organisations and so on, before the food was served. The pastor of the community or one of the leaders led a prayer before people were called to the table at the entrance of the church with the plastic bowl and cup that they had brought from home, to be served their meal. This was always followed by an afternoon of football matches, often with cumbia music blasting through some generator powered speakers.

While days of communal work were not explicitly religious in and of themselves, they very much fed into notions of community development as promoted by SIL missionaries. There were also aspects of communal work that directly related to church activities, such as prayers

[13] The Cacua often used the Spanish term 'colaborar' (collaborate) rather than 'participar' (participate).

before eating lunch together, as well as hosting the communal breakfast and lunch in church, before and after communal work. The religious overtones of working together and eating together afterwards were not often explicitly acknowledged, but there were instances when this was the case. On one occasion, Juan led a Sunday church service, which he used to encourage everyone to take part in communal work to build a bridge, for which he had secured funds to buy the materials. He opened the service with a prayer, before reading Chapter 2, Verse 43-47 from the bible, which refers to the apostles sharing everything, praising God together and eating together with glad and sincere hearts.

After reading this bible passage in Spanish and Cacua, Juan explained its message with the present-day example of communal work to build the bridge. The bible passage he had selected did not mention work, but rather togetherness, 'míic wáacna' (coming together, in Cacua) and eating together, which the Cacua always did preceding and following communal work. Nonetheless, Juan added work into his explanation of the biblical passage by speaking of 'míic teo wáacna.' As I have previously noted, 'teo wáac' literally means 'coming together to work' in Cacua. Following this, Juan relayed a list of resources that would be supplied for communal work from the funding he had secured, which included gasoline, oil and 10lbs of popcorn for people share in the evening after work. Juan insisted, 'It's not for me, but for everyone in the community to share,' emphasising the message from the bible. Finally, he announced that he would give his 'reflection on sharing,' which consisted of telling everyone which days would be designated for communal work (Wednesdays and Saturdays) and what food or drink people should bring to share before work began.

Despite spouts of enthusiasm in running days of communal work (every Wednesday and Saturday when I first moved to the community), many weeks and sometimes months also went by when no days of communal work were called. Levels of enthusiasm peaked and dipped on the part of leaders as well as members of the community. Regarding the communal work set in motion to build the bridge referenced above, it soon came to a halt when a trusted member of the community stole the funds for the project. In other less dramatic cases, the issue was usually one of attendance. While on some days of communal work, there was an excellent turn out, with only a few families missing, on other days, there was minimal uptake with only a handful of elderly people and four or five families joining. Low attendance was usually attributed to people having their own work to do, though in other instances I was told that if word spread that the president of work did not have much food to provide for workers, then people would not attend. Low turn outs were enough to dilute the enthusiasm of leaders and put them off from calling further days of communal work.

On the first Saturday that a newly elected president of work called a day of communal work, he was severely disappointed at the lack of attendance. Unbeknownst to him, another member of the community had called his own work party on the same day, to clear his swidden field. His wife had made manioc beer for attendees, which was strictly forbidden for

days of communal work for the community, and thus the young people that the president of work had expected to attend, opted for the work party offering manioc beer. Despite the position of those elected in the community's committee lasting four years, the aforementioned president of work, denounced his position before the first year was over. Following a drunken argument, in which the president of work got accused of not being a good enough leader, he sent another leader straight to the church where members of the community were gathered for communal breakfast, to announce that he was stepping down from his role. Juan had been asking members of the community to clear the village paths at the far end of the community, when Faber burst through the door to address those gathered.

Both Faber and Juan were very emotional as they addressed those gathered with regards to the renouncement and related issues in the community. Juan noted that it brought him great sadness to see the community so divided. He stated that being a leader was hard and that the new leaders (those voted into position at the beginning of the year, eleven months previously) still did not know how to lead. He explained that one day only five will turn up for communal work, but it does not matter, those five will work. Another day many more will turn up or else, few will turn up for work and many more for sports and films in the evening. All the same, he noted that it did not matter and should not give cause to discriminate.

Such instances illustrate that the positive valence placed on work did not necessarily translate into work happening, but the discussion of work as a positive ideal. They also revealed the role of work in maintaining the community, both in terms of its physical state with paths cleared of weeds and new bridges across the river, and as an ideal, uniting Cacua people to live well together. The morning of communal work had taken an unexpected turn, but following the prolonged communal breakfast, those gathered spent around two hours cutting the grass with machetes and clearing the paths and areas that Juan had indicated. Following the usual formula of the day, a game of football followed the communal lunch, and, in the evening, there was a film in the church. As everyone gathered in the evening, Juan addressed the larger crowd to relay the events of that morning. He also expressed that when visitors arrived at the community, they always commented on how well organised it was, as if everyone in the community was united, but, he confessed, this was not the case.

Unlike days of communal work, which did not always run, the church service ran every Sunday at 9am without fail. In the hours before the service began, people would throw buckets of river water onto the dry dusty earth floor of the church and heat pots of chilli broth, manioc gruel or other drinks in their kitchens. Women and their children would take their household's contribution, a pot of whatever they had prepared and perhaps a quarter piece of manioc bread to the table at the entrance of the church. Before the service began, a few volunteers (usually men) would break up the manioc bread into small pieces and share it out among the congregation, carrying pots of chilli broth for people to dip their manioc bread in soon afterwards and finally pots of freshly made juice or manioc gruel to pour into their plastic

cups. Communal breakfast was followed by an opening hymn, though the musicians (playing guitars and tambourines) wore rather sombre expressions with stiff movements to match.

After the congregation joined in uttering the Lord's prayer in Cacua at the end of the hymn, the pastor or a leader replacing him, would begin the sermon. These were always related to issues or upcoming events in the community, such as the service Juan gave in which he spoke about upcoming days of communal work to build a bridge, using bible passages to frame the points he addressed. In this way, church services were a form of building community among people as much as they were about religious worship. This was a space in which a different kind of work transpired from that of physical labour in the swidden fields or community. Church services involved the work of teaching the word of God but also, in bringing people together and addressing issues within the community, church services also involved the work of leaders, whose role was to work for the community.

While church service took place every week, attendance fluctuated, and it was often quite empty. Children were not forced to attend. They often joined for the communal breakfast, before running off to play together outside, running in and out of the church to sit with their parents during the service as and when they felt like it. Beneath the corrugated zinc roof of the church, services were often unbearably hot, and children played in the river while their parents sat in the heat. While a handful of families and elderly women attended the services every week, staying for the whole duration of the service, others dropped in midway through and left before the end. The Cacua tendency to respect the autonomy of others, which extended to their children, also meant that a large majority of people were often not present when leaders used the Sunday church service as a space to address communal issues. Leaders tended to find the most reliable instance was when they had enough fuel to start the generator soon after dark to play a film in the church. Once sufficient people had gathered to watch the film, one of the leaders would pause it and stride to the back of the church, stand on the stage before the television and address those gathered about community matters. After speaking, they would press play and allow the film to continue.

Incorporated into Cacua understandings of work and community today, are the perceptions and values of state and non-state actors with regards to community development and sendentarisation, evangelical missionaries and Christian teachings, and dominant indigenous groups of the region. This amalgamation of factors, though operating under different logics, are mutually reinforcing in promoting the value of work and community. Nonetheless, not everyone in the community valued work and sedentary forms of living. Some preferred to come and go as they pleased, moving to different parts of the forest as opportunities to fish and hunt presented themselves. In other cases, families worked their own swidden fields and predominantly lived in the community, but did not attend communal meetings, church services or days of communal work.

This illustrates that views regarding the value of work and cohesion of the community were not homogenous. Leaders, for instance, had a vested interest in promoting the value of work in line with cohesion of the community, as their roles depended on keeping the community 'well organised' in order to secure funds for community projects. While leaders described their jobs in terms of 'working for the community' and frequently denied any personal benefit in having the role, this was not strictly true. In occupying a position at the interface, dealings with outsiders and access to community funds and resources placed leaders in morally dubious position (see e.g., Long, 2001: 73-92). Though working as a leader did not earn people money, it awarded them a position of status, enabling them to make contacts, hear about and have access to temporary unskilled wage labour. I also learnt from others about instances of misappropriated community funds. When Faber had been captain, for example, he had sold the cattle, which belonged to the community and kept the money for himself. I was told that this had made people in the community very angry. While leaders spoke in community meetings with strong emphatic messages, many of the community members took their words with a pinch of salt, knowing that these did not necessarily reflect their own actions.

All of the above forms part of the rich complexity of community life, comprised of numerous overlapping logics, seeping into the way people relate to one another, the place in which they live, how they undertake daily tasks and understand themselves as a people. This in turn shapes and constructs the moral economy, in which economic practices are embedded within sociality and ethics. In this chapter, I have argued that work has emerged as a morally salient category for Cacua people of Wacará, integral to their ideas of what it means to live well today, for a number of important historical reasons. These include the nature of the increasingly bureaucratic work required of leaders to ensure funding and resources to sustain the community and its population; complex, hierarchical relations with neighbouring Eastern Tukanoan peoples, in which fixed notions of 'work' have been used to denigrate and oppress Cacua people; and values attributed to work by Christian missionaries in the 'civilising' process, of which notions of community development formed part. In short, this chapter has sought to unpack the framework in which the value attributed to work and living together in a single community, has transpired among the Cacua of Wacará.

Chapter 3. The Production of Manioc and Maturing of Young People

You are Young. I am Mature.

'Meme jáap wili,' Antonella said pointing at me, as she sat on a tree trunk lying across the ground, a large basket filled with bitter manioc at her feet.

'Weém beh wili,' she then said, pointing at herself.

I looked at her quizzically, understanding the words but not the implication behind them. Despite my age of twenty-eight, Antonella was referring to me by a Cacua term loosely fitting the category of female adolescence, *jáap* meaning 'new/ young/ immature/ unripe' and *wili* meaning 'female.' She was then referring to herself as a 'mature' (*beh*) 'female' (*wili*).

As I stood in my wellies, clothes and skin stained with dirt from a morning of weeding and helping Antonella harvest bitter manioc from her son and daughter-in-law's swidden field, I gave up trying to decipher what she meant. Instead, I turned to Antonella's daughter-in-law to enlighten me. Felicia explained in Spanish, 'You are young, you don't have children, you should carry heavy things.' After a brief pause, she nodded at the heavy basket of bitter manioc and asked, 'Don't you want to carry it?'

It finally dawned on me that Antonella had been soliciting my help to carry home the bitter manioc by drawing on my status as a *jáap wili* and the expectations that this stage of life entailed. Cacua people used Spanish terms such as 'young people' (*jovenes*) and 'single people' (*solteros*) to express the plural form of this Cacua term, *jáapata.* At this stage of life, unmarried men and women of marriageable age were supposed to learn the work of subsistence living by helping 'those who are mature' (*behnít*), usually a parent of the same sex as them. When I had previously come across the term *behnít,* while transcribing interviews in Cacua, Felicia translated the term for me as 'adult, already married with children.' While this indicated that Cacua people did not consider someone as an adult until they had a spouse and offspring, from a Cacua perception, key to having either was knowing how to work.

Learning to Work and Becoming Mature

As described to me by Cacua adults, those with a spouse and children, learning the work of subsistence living played a prevalent role in 'maturing' (*behe* in Cacua) from a 'child' (*wébít*) into a 'young man or woman' (*jáapata*). The idea was that learning to work from 'those who are mature' (*behnít*) began in early childhood, as I shall outline in the following chapter, and intensified as children got older and became 'adolescents' (*jáapata*). While young children of both sexes spent much time with their mothers, participating in tasks related to manioc production, as children grew up into young adults, their tasks tended to become more gender

specific. Girls typically learned 'women's work' (*yáadih ĩib tewat*) by helping their mothers in the swidden field and with all the stages of manioc production. Girls also tended to weave tiny baskets with discarded pieces of vine, which their mothers had snapped off from their own basket weaving, referred to as 'basket work' (*wu̵h tewat*). As boys grew up, they tended to help their fathers with tasks such as chopping firewood and when they got older and stronger, helped their fathers to fell swidden fields, both for their own household and other 'mature' male kin. While tasks tended to be gendered, there were men and boys who would undertake 'women's tasks,' such as carrying home, peeling, and grating bitter manioc, to ease the burden of female kin. All the same, many men refused to participate in any aspect of manioc production, claiming that it was for women. In such instances, men would still tend to help with the initial sowing of manioc crops. From joining numerous families in their swidden fields, I also noticed that men tended to undertake different tasks from their wives, using a machete to clear coarse patches of brambles rather than pulling out smaller weeds with their hands.

The importance of young men and women learning to work was the centrality of work in establishing an autonomous household as husband-and-wife. When new couples formed, young women would ideally move in with their husband and his parents. Work was significant in the process of new wives smoothly incorporating themselves into the household of their husband's parents. The most common complaints women had of their daughters-in-law were that they did not work or help and were lazy. Ideally, young women would go from helping their own mother with work in the swidden field, producing bitter manioc and other tasks, to helping their mother-in-law, until their husband felled them a swidden field of their own. At this point the husband would usually build a separate house next door to his parents, to live in with his wife and young children.

Alongside housebuilding and felling swidden fields, 'men's work' (*neona tewatdih* in Cacua) also included handweaving all the implements that their wives needed to produce manioc. This included weaving sieves, fans for the cooking fire, the long stretchy tube for squeezing liquid of out manioc pulp, and a wide shallow bowl for storing the final product, the manioc bread. One man told me that in his youth, his father had asked him how he expected to find a wife if he did not know how to weave such implements, as she would have to pester her in-laws to borrow them. This anecdote emphasises the importance of new couples having the skills and knowledge to establish their own autonomous and self-sufficient household, as well as the complementary nature of their work in providing for one another.

While parental advice often drew from a prescriptive notion of 'maturing' (*behe*) through learning how to work before finding a spouse and having children, in reality this process was much more dynamic. Adolescents often had sexual relations before parents believed them to have the necessary skills to work and raise a family. There were also a number of instances where young men in the community ended relationships with young women as soon as they fell pregnant. Several young men in the community had young children of similar ages with up to three different young women and refused to acknowledge their fatherhood. Women

who had children but no husband, were referred to in the community by the Spanish term 'madre soltera' (*single mother* in English). In the cases I observed, young women in this position left school and continued to live with their parents, spending their days going to the swidden field with their baby wrapped in a sling around their front and returned home to make manioc bread. Most of the women I saw and spoke to, returned to school once their children were around two and old enough to leave at Wacará's state-run nursery school.

Part of the concern in the community with 'single mothers' was pressure from the state. Faber, for instance, told me that when he was Captain, he had taken one of the young women to register the birth of her newborn in Mitú and was rebuked for not bringing the baby's father. Regardless of the relationship between the parents, officials in Mitú expected men to register their names on their children's birth certificates and provide for their children, whether with money or with food from hunting and fishing. While the ideal among Cacua people was for young people to learn how to work before having sexual relations with someone with whom they would then raise their children, community leaders also promoted the notion of men providing for the children they had had with ex partners. Nonetheless, even despite one case of public rebukes during a communal meeting, most young men in the community did not provide for their children with young women they had left.

Another important point to note is that many of the parents who urged their children to follow the seemingly prescriptive process of learning to work before finding a spouse and having children, had not necessarily followed this process themselves. Several of the adults in the community did not know who their fathers were or else there were rumours that their father was not really their father, as their mother had been with other men. These processes of maturing through learning to work, finding a spouse, and creating a family are dynamic rather than linear. At the same time, the fact that there is an ideal way of undertaking such processes, as heavily emphasised by elders, parents, and community leaders, highlights the importance of the Cacua perception of work, as a reproductive life force at the heart of hearth and home, as well as communal living.

Women's Work as a Form of Control?

Once women were married with children, the majority of their days were taken up with the production of bitter manioc to make fresh manioc bread and toasted manioc flour. For the Cacua, as for most indigenous groups of northwest Amazonia, 'women's work' refers to all of the tasks involved in producing bitter manioc. This includes going to the swidden field, where bitter manioc is grown, to weed and harvest the tubers, cutting them from the manioc stick, and either directly replanting the stick or leaving it to replant several days later, before carrying a large basket full of bitter manioc home. Once home, women would collect firewood and set to work washing, peeling, grating, pressing, and sieving the bitter manioc, before baking manioc bread atop a large clay griddle over a fire. This was the minimum involved in the

process of making manioc bread, as depending on the type of manioc bread, there were additional stages.

Figure 1 – Twelve-year-old Lina's Drawing of Manioc Production

The above sequence of drawings was produced by twelve-year-old Lina at one of the activity sessions I ran for children in Wacará. The task I had set the children was to draw all the different things they did on a day when there was no school. The above drawings, marked 6-12, depict the different stages of making manioc bread. Though these images are very typical of how the women in Wacará, including Lina's eighteen-year-old sister, spent most days, Lina drew herself undertaking all of these tasks alone. From having spent time with Lina, I know that she did not spend entire days going to the swidden field and making manioc bread by herself, nor did any of the twelve-year-old girls in Wacará. However, Lina certainly helped her older sister with many of these tasks when there was no school, as did her seven-year-old sister. Lina also undertook some of these tasks by herself, such as grating bitter manioc, which she did most days after school. In the following descriptions, the initial Cacua phrases are Lina's responses to my asking her, 'what is this?' about each drawing in Cacua. I have also included my own extra descriptions to highlight some of the details in each drawing. In the final drawing, Lina has drawn herself sleeping in her hammock, as these drawings represent all the things she does in a full day when there is no school.

6) *Wápchi bejna.* Going to the swidden field.

Lina has drawn herself on her way to the swidden field with her dog. She has a large empty basket, woven from fibres, hanging down her back from a tough long strap, made from tree bark, which is looped around the top of her head. Typically, women filled their basket with tubers after pulling up bitter manioc in the swidden field and carrying the heavy basket home.

7) *Wápchi.* Swidden field.

8) *Tõi píit.* Peeling bitter manioc.

Lina sitting on the earth floor at home, taking one tuber from the basket at a time and peeling it with a knife, before placing it into a pot of water to be washed. The peelings are falling to the floor as she works and lie scattered on the ground around her.

9) *Tõi jiít.* Grating bitter manioc.

Lina sitting on the ground with her legs stretched out in front of her with a wooden board, metal spikes protruding out the top of it, upon her lap. Lina is slightly bent forward, each hand gripped around a tuber, which she will drag back and forth in alternating motions over the spiky board to grate the manioc.

10) *Bói.* Wringing out the manioc mass in the press.

This image depicts a stretchy tube (*maí pii* in Cacua, literally meaning 'long snake'), intricately woven from fibres with a loop at the top to secure it in place atop a tall Y-shaped stick, and a loop at the bottom, through which a straight wooden beam is inserted. Once the stretchy tube has been stuffed full of the manioc mass, someone sits on the wooden beam, which acts as a lever pulling down the stretchy tube, until all the liquid has been squeezed out and collected in a metal pot beneath.

11) *Yec.* Sieving.

Lina sitting on the ground with a handwoven sieve, placed over the top of a plastic tub.

12) *Chɯ́h jwej.* Baking the manioc bread.

Lina sat behind the clay griddle upon which she is baking the manioc bread.

The cultivation and production of manioc takes place all over Amazonia, though as Rivière notes, the amount of time dedicated to this practice and techniques used to undertake it vary widely (1987: 178). By comparing practices in Northwest Amazonia, as described above, with the much simpler and less time-consuming practices in Guiana, Rivière comments on aspects of social organisation in these two Amazonian regions. As manioc production is considered 'women's work' in most of Amazonia, Rivière argues that the varying levels of demandingness required to undertake such work correlates with the degree of control that the social systems of different Amazonian regions give men over women (1987: 179, 187). What Rivière means by control, he explains, is that it is exercised through the gendered division of labour and 'routinisation of the women's essential contribution to the subsistence diet' (*ibid*: 193). Key to his argument is that manioc production is more complex and time-consuming in regions where men have less direct control over women and that 'the more direct and assured this control the less need there is for men to resort to cultural mechanisms to bolster it' (*ibid*: 187).

Rivière argues that as marriage systems in Guiana are endogamous and matrilocal, women stay in their father's household and thus, under his direct control (*ibid*: 191). By contrast, in Northwest Amazonia, patrilocal marriage systems mean that women leave their natal household to live in the household of their husband's parents (*ibid*: 192). According to Rivière's argument, this means that men in Northwest Amazonia have less direct control over women and female resources of production and that emphasis on freshly baked manioc bread and the lengthy process required to make it serves to give women 'little freedom of action' (*ibid*). Comparatively, women's work in Guiana is much less structured and this correlates with the direct control exerted over them in the community (*ibid*).

To highlight the lack of assured control over women in Northwest Amazonia, Riviere draws on examples of in-marrying women refusing to cooperate and thus fulfil their marital obligations, even escaping back to their parents' community or household (*ibid*: 193). In cases where Cacua women married men from other communities, I was struck by their bravery in finding their way back to Wacará to escape unsatisfactory and abusive relationships. A teenage girl, for example, returned to Wacará having stolen a canoe when she heard that her parents were on a hunting trip near the community of her new husband. Her parents had given her to the son of a family they knew on a previous hunting trip, but once she moved in with them, she found that they drank a lot of manioc beer and whenever her husband got drunk, he beat her.

When women moved into their husband's households within the community, there were also instances when they left, temporarily or permanently moving back to their parents' households, and thus withdrawing their help with domestic tasks in the household of their husband's parents by helping their own mothers instead. Nonetheless, I find glossing over such instances in terms of 'men's control over women' or at least over female resources of production (e.g., Riviere, 1987: 187), inadequate. The point that 'men control women' as a theoretical stance is highly problematic has been highlighted by Overing (1986). She directly challenges this notion as stemming from ethnocentric presumptions that unequal oppositions, prevalent in Western thought and classified in terms of dominance and subordination, are applicable universally (*ibid*: 136). Despite ethnographic evidence that this is not so (*ibid*), such assumptions point to the incorrect notion that women's work and other activities are universally conceived of as inferior to those of men (*ibid:* 141).

Despite drawing on Goldman's monograph, Rivière also ignores the crucial point that 'a Cubeo woman cannot be coerced to work any more than a man can be… The only control the community has over a domestic situation is by maintaining a generally high level of good feeling' (Goldman, 1963: 53). In this case, Goldman's analysis indicates something quite different from men's (or the community's) control over women. Goldman explains that whether a married woman is willing to work hard is first and foremost subject to her feelings towards her husband and following this, her relations within the community more generally. He notes that 'the Cubeo know that a lazy woman is a disaffected woman' and as such

recognise the social impact of a happy marriage (*ibid*). This point aligns with Goldman's influential notion that 'mood' and good feeling (rather than control) are conducive to work and communal living (e.g., 1963: 67).

If there is an aspect of control in the production of bitter manioc among the Cacua, I would argue that this is reflected in 'mature females' (*beh wili*), usually mothers, ordering 'immature/ young females' (*jáap wili*), usually daughters, to work and complaining about them to other women when they do not. If this is an attempt of mothers to control their adolescent daughters, whether their daughters listen to and obey their demands is another matter. All the same, it does not suggest a case of control of 'men over women,' especially as women are the ones who benefit from having their daughters (and daughters-in-law) around to help them with chores and making bread.

Rather than trying to control young women, I argue that mature women are instead 'looking out' for them to ensure that they have the skills to run their own autonomous household in the future. In the Cacua language, there are many phrasal verbs containing the word 'look' (*en* in Cacua), which are integral to learning such skills and to the intimacy of family life in the community. These include 'look after' (*en dao* in Cacua, literally meaning 'look a lot'), 'imitate' (*en yac* in Cacua, literally meaning 'look and copy'), and 'criticise' (*en naoh* in Cacua, literally meaning 'look and tell'). By drawing on this simple linguistic point, I would argue that manioc cultivation and production is a female space in which girls and women *look* to one another for help as they work together. As such, I find it productive to explore women's work as a relational process of maturing, rather than one of dominance and subordination.

First you must learn, then you can marry.

In my case, I learned about women's work from Felicia. She patiently explained how to ensure that the manioc dough was equally thick when baked atop the clay griddle and how to avoid burning it on one side by equally distributing the burning embers beneath. She showed me how to stuff the manioc press, an intricately woven long stretchy tube, without dragging it through the dirt and how to stop manioc flour from burning when toasting it. I often joined her in the swidden field, which took us an hour or so to reach, walking along the jungle path, with baskets slung over our shoulders and machetes in hand. We often chatted as we walked and when we reached the swidden field, while we weeded and threw the weeds onto a bonfire, as we pulled bitter manioc from the earth, cut off the tubers, scraped off the dirt with our machete blades and filled our baskets to carry the manioc home.

During these moments away from the village, we spoke about our lives, family, friendships, and relationships, asking one another questions, curious to learn the answers. On one such occasion, as we were weeding around some manioc plants, Felicia asked me whether parents could prevent couples from being together in England. I tried to give her a satisfactory answer by explaining that sometimes people found it uncomfortable to have a partner that their

parents did not like, but parents had to make an effort, especially if there were grandchildren. Felicia listened closely before noting that this had been the case with her own mother-in-law.

Unlike most women in Wacará, Felicia had been raised by the missionaries, Mariela and Anita, who had taken her to study in Lomalinda when she was about ten and then to Bogotá, where she completed the baccalaureate. She met her Cacua husband, Yair, when he went to revise bible translations at the missionaries' home in Bogotá with a group of Cacua men from Wacará. When Felicia finished her studies and moved to Wacará, her mother, who also lived there, tried to dissuade her from moving straight into Yair's house. She reminded Felicia that she still did not know women's work and compared her to another girl of her age in Wacará, who was still living with her family and still learning.

'First you must learn,' Felicia's mother had insisted, 'and then you can marry.'

Felicia disobeyed her mother and went to live with Yair. His father made no objection, happy with the arrangement as Felicia had medicine that the missionaries had given her to take to the community and she was trained in first aid. As Yair's mother was away, his father told Felicia that she could work in their swidden field. This arrangement only lasted one to two weeks, as Felicia had to leave to accompany an elderly man from Wacará to hospital in Bogotá, where she looked after him for a couple of months.

On Felicia's return, she learned that Yair's mother had objected to their partnership. Her main grievance was that Felicia did not know how to work, meaning, as Felicia explained it for my sake, that Felicia did not know the 'work of the indigenous woman' (*trabajo de la indigena* in Spanish). As she told me this, Felicia admitted that having lived with the missionaries in Bogotá for so long, there was a lot that she did not know about working the swidden field. When she used to go home in the school holidays throughout her childhood, she had helped her mother in the swidden field and collected firewood or fetched water as required, but she did not really *know* how to work, she had never been to the swidden field to work by herself.

Felicia's mother had felt bad for her but ultimately agreed with Yair's mother. Felicia's mother asked Felicia how she could have a husband if she did not know how to work. Felicia felt angry but accepted that she could not disrespect the wishes of Yair's mother, so she lived with her own mother instead. Antonella approached Felicia a couple of weeks later and told her that her son loved her, so she would allow them to speak, but not live together. For the following year, Felicia went to the swidden field with her mother most days and learned all the work of the indigenous woman. Eventually, Yair spoke to Felicia's parents to ask if they could live together. Felicia's mother did not want her to live with Yair's family because at this point, they drank a lot of manioc beer and often fought. She warned Felicia that they might mistreat her, so Felicia and Yair agreed to live with Felicia's mother instead and several years later, built a separate house next door. Felicia assured me, as she had done her mother-in-law in the past, 'at least I do all I can, all I'm capable of. I was not brought up here, I was brought up by the missionaries. Other women, who grew up here, will do more than me and do it much better

than me, but I do everything as well as I know how.' She then added that Yair never complained in any case.

Felicia's situation highlights the importance that Cacua people placed on young women learning how to work as they grew up and knowing how to work before securing a husband. In Felicia's case, having spent most of her adolescent years away from her family and the rainforest, she had not had the same opportunities to learn women's work as other young women of her age in Wacará when she moved there. As apparent from the way Yair's mother, Antonella, reacted to the relationship, parents could assert themselves to prevent partnerships from forming. While young people did not always obey their parents' wishes, parents' disapproval made it difficult for new couples to establish themselves in their own self-sufficient household, as they usually relied on their parents' help to achieve this.

When Antonella was 'just a girl'

Antonella's objection to Yair's choice of partner may well have stemmed, at least in part, from her own experience of having a partner and children before she knew how to work. The way Antonella spoke about the trajectory of her life when I interviewed her revealed much about work, men, and having children in relation to becoming mature. I arranged the interview through her son, Yair, and his wife, Felicia, who agreed to act as an interpreter. I began by asking Antonella to tell me about her life in any order she wished. As I recorded the interview, which Felicia transcribed and translated at a later date, I have been able to use some of the specific phrases Antonella used as she recounted her life history.

Antonella was born deep in the forest, where there were no people, only her parents and siblings with whom she grew up. They lived in the area where the Cacua community of Nuevo Pueblo currently exists. When her paternal uncle visited them from Wacará, he wanted to take her back with him so that she could toast manioc flour for him.

'I didn't know how to toast manioc. He took me. I was just a girl,' Antonella said.

'Children' (*wébít*) are not expected to 'know' (*jéih*) how to work and therefore a girl who helps her mother with tasks associated with women's work is not considered as knowing how to work, but rather as 'learning' (*bohe*). Antonella told us that after arriving at Wacará, she met her future husband. She repeated several times that she was 'just a girl' (*wébít wilidih jeh*) at this point in her life. When pregnant with her first child, Antonella told us that she had wondered how one became pregnant and gave birth, before emphasising, 'I did not know, I was a girl.' This part of Antonella's life history demonstrates that 'knowing' (*jéih*) is key to maturity, not only knowing how to work but also about pregnancy and childbirth. Being 'just a girl' (*wébít wili jeh*), Antonella neither knew how she had become pregnant nor about the 'pain' (*t~~u~~bat*) of childbirth, nor did she know how to toast manioc flour. When Antonella finished recounting her life history, I took the opportunity to ask whether she ever gave her grandchildren any advice. Felicia summarised her response in Spanish,

> ‘She says, yes, to the girls. She always advises that they live well because they are still girls, they are not yet adults. So, they must stay well with the family, with the parents. They must not bother young men because the work of an indigenous woman is very heavy going. It’s very hard going to the swidden field and sowing bitter manioc.’

In Cacua, Antonella had employed direct speech to relay her advice for her granddaughters. One such expression was, ‘You have to live well.’ *T~~ú~~ini jeh ñi j~~u~~mu~~p~~*[14]* in Cacua, which literally means ‘just being beautiful.’ The first part of the expression, *t~~ú~~ini jeh,* ‘just beautiful’ signifies beauty in terms of maintaining a calm and diligent disposition. As the rest of Antonella’s response indicates, her advice ‘to live well’ referred to cordial relations at home, which generally entailed children and young people listening to and obeying their parents, who gave them advice and required their help with work. Collaborative efforts in undertaking the work required to achieve self-sufficiency as a household brought about the ideal conditions for ‘living well.’ Cacua people were highly critical of restlessness, laziness, and anger, which by contrast to ‘just being beautiful,’ were not conducive to such a state of equilibrium.

‘Bothering’ men, as Felicia translated Antonella’s words, was not conducive to ‘living well’ either. The way Antonella had phrased this was also through direct speech, ‘Don’t you chase after men, you are just children.’ *Ñi j~~u~~mu~~p~~ neonádih met yapo caa bojoó, wébít jeh caa yeéb,* in Cacua. The Cacua verb, *met,* in this phrase has two meanings. The first meaning is ‘to chase playfully’ and the second is ‘to fornicate’ (Cathcart, López L, & Lowers, 1994: 69). Antonella told her granddaughters that they were ‘just children’ (*wébít jeh*) and perhaps partly reflecting on her own experiences with men at a young age, insisted against such behaviour. Antonella then listed some of the tasks expected of a woman with a husband and children, which Felicia summarised for my sake as ‘the work of an indigenous woman.’ The association Antonella was making was that the younger a girl had children, the earlier she would need to assume these ‘heavy’ tasks.

As such, encouraging children to ‘work’ from an early age prepared them in several ways. For instance, as well as learning practical skills they would need for adult life, working with their parents and older siblings encouraged them to adopt the calm and hardworking disposition required for ‘living well.’ By encouraging their daughters to help with work, women not only prepared their daughters for life once they found a partner and had children but also kept them busy at home and in the swidden field, away from potential partners before they knew how to work. Despite this ideal scenario and the advice parents and grandparents gave young people, many complained that their adolescent children did not help.

Antonella’s eldest son and his wife, Eunice, had two daughters, aged eleven and fourteen. When I accompanied Eunice and the eldest daughter to the swidden field one morning,

[14] Elsewhere in this thesis, I cite this expression as ‘t~~ú~~ni jeh ñi j~~u~~mat.’ The difference lies in the verbal suffix *-at* used by Cacua people from the area of Wacará versus the verbal suffix *-~~u~~p* used by Cacua people from the Apaporis, the area around the Cacua community of Nuevo Pueblo.

around two months before interviewing Antonella, Eunice told me that while her youngest normally helped a lot, the elder did not like to work. On this occasion her youngest daughter had a cold, which was why she was not joining us. When Eunice fell seriously ill over a year later, Antonella complained that Eunice's children were young and should help in the swidden field. Antonella stressed that the eldest son (aged eighteen by this point) should be felling the swidden field by now and that the eldest daughter should work in the swidden field to make manioc bread. Eunice had told Antonella that whenever she told her eldest children to do such tasks, they said that they were busy or had to study. Eunice said that they were just lazy.

For the Cacua, being lazy meant not being willing to 'pitch in' (Rogoff, 2014) or to use the Cacua term, *teo waác*, 'come together to work.' When complaining that someone was lazy, people usually substantiated the remark as such. For example, 'My daughter is lazy, she hardly comes with me to the swidden field' or 'People say that woman is lazy. She lies in the hammock all day while her mother-and-sister-in-law make manioc bread.' Laziness was also expressed as *not wanting* to work and, in this way, was different from *not knowing* how to work, which was not bad in itself, as one could learn by pitching in. I heard of mothers warning prospective mothers-in-law that their daughters did not know how to work. This was not necessarily an issue, as the new wife could learn by working alongside her mother-in-law, allowing for an interim period of dependency. The insistence that young people knew how to work before marriage was to make this transition easier, but young people did a variety of things, which included exploring relationships before knowing how to work. In fact, wanting to be in a particular relationship could be what prompted someone to start working when previously they had taken no interest in doing so. In Eunice's case, her eldest children did not rise to the occasion and work when she became ill, but this was not to say that they would not take the importance of work more seriously at another point in their lives.

She's Not Mature!

The first time I asked Felicia for the names of different stages of life in Cacua, she reeled off the main categories of *wébít, jáapata* and *behnít*, before asking, 'haven't you heard them calling out when it is time to queue up for food in church?'

By this time, I had attended many community gatherings in the church but had not noticed the use of these terms. When there were official days of 'communal work,' for example, all those who had worked in the morning returned to the church for a communal lunch, which the president of work sourced and provided, often with communal funds. When the president of work called people in groups to form a queue and collect their meal, he always started by calling out, 'behnít' (mature ones), followed by 'jáapata' (young men and women) and finally 'wébít' (children). After informing me of this, Felicia proceeded by telling me an anecdote that that revealed the discrepancies between who fit into which category.

The last time Felicia had been in the church for communal lunch, as always one of the leaders called out 'behnít' and all of the adults formed a queue. Felicia overheard one of the women complaining to her husband, 'Why is she getting in the queue? She's not *behnít*!'

Felicia enquired as to whom the woman was speaking about.

'Erika,' the woman told her, indicating a pregnant fifteen-year-old girl ahead of them in the queue, 'she is still young.' The woman's husband laughed, suggesting that the girl must have thought herself 'mature' because she was pregnant.

Felicia had already spoken to me about this situation during some of our conversations in the swidden field. On one occasion, she had noted that girls thought they could sleep with any man after getting their first period and gave the example of Erika, who had 'always followed after' Ademir, a married man around twice her age. Felicia noted that people did not like such a young girl going after a man. Felicia assured me that Erika's mother had told Erika not to 'bother' (*molestar* in Spanish) him as he was married, but Erika never listened to her. Ademir was the alleged father of Erika's unborn baby, though his fatherhood was contested because of timing and rumours that she had spent every night with another boy while Ademir had been away from the community.

According to Ademir's sister and mother, Erika did nothing but sleep in the hammock all day when she moved into their household while pregnant. Ademir's sister lamented that at least his previous wife had helped make manioc bread and went to the swidden field. Erika's mother-in-law and sister-in-law were so fed up with her not helping, that while Erika went to her mother's house one afternoon, they hid the manioc bread from her. Erika arrived home in the evening and went straight to the spot where they usually kept the manioc bread. When she did not find it, she huffed in frustration and began to search the house, before giving up and going to bed. Some weeks later, Ademir's sister moved out as she found living with Erika, who never helped with work, such a strain. As the husband of Felicia's mother was of the same clan as Ademir and his sister, they counted as his kin and Ademir's sister went to live with them. Ademir's mother began to spend most mealtimes with her daughter in the home of Felicia's mother and as such Erika's new family unit disintegrated.

Prior to Erika's pregnancy and before I knew about her situation with Ademir, I interviewed Erika's mother, Stella about family life. It was a very generic interview that I then repeated with other parents in the community. As Stella was bilingual in Cacua and Spanish, I asked her questions in Spanish, to which I asked her to respond in Cacua. A couple of weeks later Stella listened back to the interview recording with me, to transcribe and translate it. The idea behind this was to help me understand how Cacua people expressed different aspects of family life in their native language. Stella was the first parent I interviewed about family life and translated the questions I wanted to ask in future interviews with parents, into Cacua.

When I asked Stella what each of her children were like, she told me of her ten-year-old daughter, 'she accompanies me, she helps when I get home (from the swidden field), grating bitter manioc and if she's not lazy, she makes manioc bread.'

By contrast, when she told me about Erika, she said, 'I have to order her forcefully so that she works. When she disobeys, she usually works once her anger subsides.'

Key to running a household was the notion of 'coming together to work' (*teo wáac*), a Cacua expression that Stella used when telling me that her younger daughter 'helps.' The Cacua term, *teo wáac,* which Cacua people usually expressed in Spanish as 'help' (*ayudar*), but also 'work' (*trabajar*), and 'work together' (*trabajar unidos/ juntos*), was a compound verb formed of the verbs *teo,* meaning 'to work' and *wáac,* meaning 'to come together to do an activity.' In 'coming together to work,' as when girls accompanied and helped their mothers, girls were not only learning how to work and cooperate with others, but they were also developing a 'beautiful' (*tɨ́ini*), calm and industrious disposition, key to 'living well.' By contrast, anger and disobedience were not conducive to learning how to work or cooperating with others, and as such were not conducive to 'living well.'

When you find a husband, you will suffer.

Felicia's position in Wacará gave her some perspective regarding young unmarried women (*jáap wili*) and women's work. At times she expressed sympathy towards young women, as she recalled how difficult it had been for her when she first began to do women's work alone. On other occasions, she expressed frustration that girls, who had lived in Wacará their whole lives, did not know how to work, and spent all day in their hammocks, refusing to help their mothers. Felicia insisted that as a young woman, she had never refused to help her mother during the school holidays, with backchat that her mother should do all the work herself.

When Felicia listed all the work that she had to do in the swidden field one morning, she noted that there was always a lot of work, especially when married. She elaborated that a girl helped her mother while growing up but did not realise how hard it was until she was married with children, when she must do everything herself. She told me that the elders say that girls are getting husbands very young nowadays. Felicia then chuckled softly as she told me that when a couple gets together, it is not for cuddling in the hammock, there is a lot of work to do, adding once more, 'that's what the elders say.'

Regarding the hard work in store for women at this stage of life, twenty-one-year-old Candela once noted, 'My mother told me, when you find a husband, you will suffer.'

She was squatting down, chopping at a thick branch of a fallen tree with her machete, having taken me to a recently felled swidden field at the edge of the forest to help me collect firewood. Candela continued to rant as she chopped, 'You have to chop firewood, go to the swidden field, pull up bitter manioc, grate bitter manioc. My mother gave me a lot of advice.'

‘When?’ I asked, referring to when her mother had given her this advice.

‘When I was single,’ she replied.

The activity in which Candela was engaged, prompted her to reflect on the transition between life as a ‘young single woman’ (*jáap wili*) and a ‘mature woman’ with a husband and children (*beh wili*). The activities she listed, including chopping firewood, were all a necessary part of manioc production, ‘women’s work,’ core to everyday family life. As finding a husband was key to the transition through which girls went from helping others (usually their mothers) to working by themselves in order to sustain their own children, women associated their heavy workload at this stage of life with suffering.

I visited Candela a couple of days later to take her a block of panela and some of the fish she had smoked for me after we had collected firewood together. Following our previous conversation, I asked Candela how her and her husband had met, to which she responded, ‘my mother gave me when I was just fifteen.’ Now, she had two children aged six and two. I asked Candela whether she would like to have more children. She responded with a firm, ‘No.’ When I asked why, she explained, ‘Children really make you suffer. When you want to go to the swidden field, they cry. They don’t let you work. When it is sunny, they cry. When they want to bathe, they cry and at night too.’

When young women first became independent from their parents and had to work to sustain their own individual household, their workload became much heavier. As Candela described, having a baby made it even harder to accomplish all the work a woman had to do and as Felicia noted, this was the hardest time in a woman’s life. This was the hardship for which young women (*jáap wili*) were preparing as they learnt to work by accompanying and helping their mothers when they were single. It was also the reason for which women encouraged their daughters not to ‘bother’ men while they were still girls and did not know how to work, stressing that they would suffer when they found a husband.

At least find a man who works!

While I have mainly focused on women’s work in manioc production, men’s work played a vital role in this process. The repercussions of men not working, particularly when it came to felling the swidden field in time, were that women could not cultivate bitter manioc to make manioc bread and toasted manioc flour, which made up a core part of Cacua people’s diet.

In many instances, Cacua people criticised young men for not working, as I have noted for their female counterparts. As one young woman said, scolding her younger sister on discovering that she was seeing a lazy young man, ‘At least find a man who works!’ I had first learnt about this young couple when the young man’s older sister passed Felicia and I as we were washing and peeling some manioc we had been soaking in water alongside a path near her house. She spoke to us with some irritation, noting that she was sick of hearing her brother with the young woman every night in their hammock. It was because the young man and his

sister's parents had passed away some years previously, that he was living in her and her husband's household, having split from another young woman, who had just become pregnant with his child. As he was now with a different young woman, his sister had been to ask the young woman's parents if her brother could live with them instead.

The young woman's parents agreed so long as the young man worked, suggesting that he weaved basketry items. While such items were necessary for everyday domestic use, Cacua people often made them to sell and generate some monetary income for the household. As it transpired, the young man refused to work. He eventually moved in with his new parents-in-law anyway, though it was widely known in the community that they did not like him because he did not work. The parents had told their daughter to stop seeing the young man, but as people in the community noted, she did not listen to them.

Just as girls were supposed to know women's work before finding a husband, boys were supposed to know men's work before finding a wife. It was in this regard that Faber, for instance, told me how he had advised his eldest son when he was 'single' (*soltero* in Spanish).

'I said, "son, you have to work. I see that you are now talking to girls and girls are talking to you. One of these days… it's time to work. We will fell a swidden field, plant bananas, sugarcane, yams, pineapples, everything."

He said to me, "ayyy papá, I have to work?"

I said, "I am giving you advice son. Heed my words."

"Will you help me?"

"Of course, even with the felling."

We made a swidden field. The following year we went on a trip, and he met a girl, who came back with him like a shot. As we arrived home, I said to him, "son, I was right. There is your swidden field, take things from there for the two of you."'

In this case Faber made sure that his son was well set up with his own swidden field by the time he found a wife. This was unusual because new wives usually began working alongside their mothers-in-law rather than in their own swidden field. Nonetheless, Faber had a large family of six children, four of which were girls, so encouraging his son and the new wife to be independent sooner made sense in their case. While the couple had their own swidden field, they continued to live in Faber's household, attending the secondary school in Wacará and focusing on their formal education, rather than setting up their own independent household.

It was the combination of a husband and wife doing their own complementary work as a couple and having and raising children that they moved from the status of 'young' (*jáap*) people to 'mature' (*beh*). To give an example, in Antonella's case as a widowed *beh wili*, she

relied on her two unmarried sons to undertake the complementary work of men. As they did not have wives for whom to fell swidden fields, they did so for their widowed mother and consumed the manioc-based products she made. Despite the age of Antonella's unmarried sons at over thirty-years-old, because of their unmarried and childless status, she referred to them as *jáap* (immature/ new/ young). She referred to the younger of the two as *jáap behe* (*behe* means maturing/ growing up, rather than mature/ grown up) and the elder as *jáap máa* (*máa* means boss, though in this case, eldest).

The reason Antonella had joined Yair and Felicia in their swidden field on the occasion I referenced at the beginning of this chapter, indicates issues of breakdown between the complementary roles of men (her unmarried sons) and women within her own household. When Antonella and I arrived at Felicia and Yair's swidden field on the morning I had helped her harvest bitter manioc to carry home, we sat together upon a tree trunk lying across the ground. 'I'm hungry,' Antonella told me as she bit into a piece of papaya, 'There is no manioc bread.' *N~~u~~ng~~u~~p t~~u~~bna. Ch~~u~~i wihcan.*

'There is no bitter manioc?' I enquired. *Tõi wihcan?*

'Adam does not work the swidden field. I suffer,' Antonella explained, referring to her youngest son, who was unmarried and therefore responsible for felling a swidden field for her to grow bitter manioc. *Adam wápchi teocan*. *Weem moj yee.*

'Julio does not work the swidden field either?' I asked, naming her second eldest son, who was also unmarried and usually helped her in the swidden field. *Julio b~~u~~t wápchi teocan*.

'J~~ũ~~j~~u~~h,' Antonella murmured softly in confirmation.

As a girl, Antonella had not known how to work, having been taken away from her parents and married to an older man before she had learnt. Now as a mature woman and widow, she knew how to work, but without her unmarried sons fulfilling their roles by undertaking men's work, she could not undertake her work as part of an independent household. This points to the fact that both men and women need to work and know how to work to achieve the goal of self-sufficiency, but also that age is less of an indication of maturity than one's marital status and having children. These two points go hand in hand as a person's knowledge and skills along with the knowledge and skills of their partner, enables them to work and thus sustain their family in a self-sufficient household.

The Centrality of Helping in Family Life

On the occasions I popped by the home of Salome and Jacobo, a couple in their forties with five unmarried daughters aged five to eighteen, there was almost always activity going on in the kitchen. Their eldest daughters often emerged to greet me with stains of starchy manioc up their arms and on their clothes if their mother was not home when I came to visit.

When I asked Salome to tell me what her children were like, she responded,

> 'They "help" (*teo wáac*) me, grating bitter manioc, making manioc bread, they help. They are "good" (*túi*). With me, they live happily. I make them work when they are lazy. I make them work so that they won't be lazy and will be good workers.'

Our exchange took place within the context of a short interview that I conducted with her and her husband in Cacua about family life. The following week Salome listened back to the interview with me and checked my attempt to transcribe and translate it. She translated the Cacua word *túi,* which she had used to describe her daughters, as 'good, beautiful,' before adding, 'this means to say without problems, judicious.' Salome's response suggests that she recognised the act of working as a way to dispel the vice of laziness and that she consciously encouraged this by making her daughters work. This is an example of the way Cacua people spoke of laziness as a temporary, rather than permanent state. While they clearly categorised work as positive and laziness as negative, as Salome's comment suggests, both of these tendencies fluctuated within a person and even at different periods throughout a person's life. The notion of 'lazy' as the opposite of 'work' reflects a distinctly protestant ethic (see ch2), revealing missionary influence on parental advice to children and notions of work. This was especially true for Salome, who strongly identified as an evangelical Christian, never failing to miss church, where she would play the tambourine and to which she always carried her bible, which she was sometimes called upon to read aloud for the congregation.

While Jacobo answered the same question similarly to his wife, as I transcribed the response with Salome, I found his choice of words in part of his answer to reveal something interesting about the way women and their unmarried daughters worked together. For example, a phrase that Salome loosely translated as 'they help their mother,' translated more directly as 'they help the "mature woman" (*beh wili*).' Though Jacobo had been referring to Salome, his daughters' mother, in his answer, it is significant that he used the Cacua term, *beh wili,* meaning 'mature female' rather than the Cacua term for mother. As the anthropologist Silverwood-Cope notes of the Cacua living near the Papurí River,

> 'It is older men and women, conventionally *behnít*[15], who possess and manipulate the various kinds of knowledge appropriate to their sex, and it is from them that *jáapata*[16] are expected to learn. A man learns from his father, elder brothers, and wife's father; a woman learns from her mother, elder sisters, and husband's mother' (1972: 164).

In this way, Jacobo's choice of words as he spoke to me in Cacua, highlights the implicit understanding among Cacua people that 'young and immature' (*jáap* in Cacua) daughters are

[15] To keep the spelling consistent throughout, I use the spelling of the SIL missionaries. Silverwood-Cope uses a different phonetic system for this term.
[16] Silverwood-Cope spells this as *hapwa*. This term is not used by the Cacua of Wacará. His spelling hap is jáap for the Cacua of Wacará, wa or wã signifies plural.

learning from mature women, knowledgeable in such tasks, when they help their mothers. Like Salome, Jacobo also gave examples of grating bitter manioc and making manioc bread as 'women's work' (*yáadih ĩib tewat*) with which his daughters helped their mother. Salome explained that there was a Cacua term in Jacobo's response, *wu̱h,* following the expressions 'grating manioc' (e.g., *tõi jiít wu̱h*) and 'making manioc bread' (e.g., *chuí jweij wu̱h*). The term indicated that her daughters undertook these activities while she was busy with something else, such as when she was in the forest with her husband while her daughters were at home. Young children were not expected to undertake such tasks completely by themselves, though some girls of ten-years-old sometimes made manioc bread without adult assistance. All the same younger girls were more likely to make mistakes. Felicia, for example, told me that her sister's twelve-year-old daughter had cracked the clay griddle when she tried to make manioc bread while her mother was in the swidden field, which was why Felicia's mother and sisters now had to resort to using Felicia's clay griddle for making bread instead.

The first time I spent any substantial time with Salome and Jacobo was after greeting Salome one early morning by asking if she was going to the swidden field. As this was the dominant activity that women undertook most mornings, I had assumed that she would be going and was planning to ask her if I could join. As such, I was surprised when she responded with a curt, 'No.' My mouth must have been hanging open, ready to make my request as I realised that this would no longer be possible. Salome quickly filled my stunned silence by explaining that she was going to help her husband, who was going to build them a manioc kitchen. She wanted to help him carry palm leaves from the forest for the roof. When I asked if I could join, she told me that they would be leaving the house in a couple of hours. Before I left, I noticed one of their daughters sat by the cooking fire in the gloom of the kitchen, stirring a pot of manioc gruel. Salome gave me a cup of the warm drink when I returned later that morning.

Jacobo walked ahead with his machete in hand as I filed out of the house with Salome and their two eldest daughters. We had not walked far into the forest when Jacobo stopped to cut the palm leaves that we were going to carry home for the roof of their future manioc kitchen. Back at the house, Salome lent me a spade to help her and her daughters to level what was to be the earth floor of the kitchen. When we stopped for a break to eat a large juicy fruit that Jacobo had picked for us, Salome asked me whether I had a boyfriend. I admitted that I did not and used the opportunity to ask how people got boyfriends in Wacará. Salome's eldest daughter replied, 'I don't know. Others have boyfriends, I don't.'

Following this interjection, Salome was quick to air her grievances about young people today, expressing her discontent towards the way they got boyfriends without permission from their families. Salome spoke of her own family as she told me, 'As Cacua, we must work, go to the swidden field, make manioc bread and weave baskets.' She uttered the phrase, 'como Cacua' ('as Cacua' in Spanish) several times during her outburst, indicating that work was part of what it meant to be Cacua. She noted that her daughter was 'tranquila, sin molestar a otro joven,' which is to say that she was of a calm, tranquil disposition and did not 'bother' or

chase after young men. Salome then insisted that the family had to be well organised, before commenting, 'I don't know how other families are,' to make the point that she was speaking of her own household and not criticising others. I asked Salome how she and her husband had met. She told me that when she had been living with her family in *Bird Stream*, Jacobo's parents went to speak to her parents and after agreeing that their children would marry, Jacobo's parents took Salome back with them to *Sloth Stream.* As Salome recounted this, she told me that it had been hard leaving behind her family and moving to *Sloth Stream* alone.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that learning to work through helping one's family with work is key to young people becoming mature, an adult with a spouse and children, independent and self-sufficient in their own household. To make the relevance of this point explicit, I have argued against Riviere's stance that women's work in manioc production serves as a cultural mechanism to bolster the community's control over female resources and as such, he claims, men's control over women. I have argued against this position on two counts, firstly by drawing on Overing's counterargument to the assumption that men and their work are universally considered superior to women and theirs. My second counterpoint to Riviere's stance was that among the Cacua, learning to work is above all a relational process of maturing for both men and women, rather than one of dominance and subordination.

From this position, I have highlighted how parents support their children in achieving valued forms of independence by giving them advice about the work and hardship to come and by encouraging them to help by working alongside them. Afterall, it is in this way that the 'young and immature' (*jáap*) are expected to learn from the 'mature' (*beh*), experienced and knowledgeable in the tasks associated with their sex. On the other hand, I have also noted some of the problems that young people encounter by getting a spouse before knowing how to work, including parents forbidding relationships or otherwise expressing discontent for sons- and daughters-in-law who do not work. In other cases, family members scolded young people with partners, who they considered unsuitable because they did not work. The anecdotes I have drawn on in this chapter are not exceptions to a prescriptive process of 'maturing' (*behe*) into adulthood, but rather examples of how dynamic this process can be, in spite of idealised notions about what becoming an adult should entail.

As part of learning to work, I have highlighted the dispositions that young people are expected to develop which are conducive to working. Most importantly, a *tʉ́i* or *tʉ́ini* (good or beautiful) disposition, which encapsulates a notion of calm, tranquillity, and clear-headedness, is conducive to work, while 'anger' (*íij*), hot-headedness, and not thinking clearly as well as laziness or lethargy are not. While the ideal scenario is for young men and women to work and help their parents more, the more they grow up, it is from a much earlier age that Cacua children first begin to help their families with work. I will explore this in the following chapter,

to investigate how the youngest members of Cacua families began to develop the skills and dispositions required for learning to work in the subsistence economy.

Chapter 4. Young Children & the Subsistence Economy

As established in the previous chapter, while children and young people 'mature' (*behe* in Cacua, verb form) through learning to work, they cannot be fully 'mature' (*beh* in Cacua, noun form) until finding a spouse, having children, and forming an independent household. It is through work, specifically the respective complementary work of men and women in a spousal relationship, that enables the latter part of this process to unfold. In making this point, I am of course restating the well-documented notion in regional literature of men and women's complementary roles in the subsistence economy. Yet, in order to dig deeper into the subsistence economy and understand its inextricable relation to the moral economy, I propose the importance of paying close attention to the learning process of children.

Regional Literature and the Virtues of Living Well

Regional literature has much to say about the virtues of 'living well' and the role that work plays in achieving this (e.g., Descola, 1994; Griffiths, 2001; Overing, 1989), but little with regards to the way in which children cultivate such virtues or learn to work. Overing's (1989) influential approach to studying social life in Amazonia, famously coined the 'moral economy of intimacy' (Viveros de Castro, 1996: 188-89), emphasises the importance of the everyday living through production, sharing, mutuality and conviviality. However, when it comes to Piaroa children learning to work and cultivating the virtue of living tranquilly with others, Overing's analysis centres on adult folk theories about children (e.g., 1988).

According to Piaroa folk theories for example, children do not possess the will, responsibility, or personal autonomy required for leading a tranquil life and are therefore unable to participate in any domestic tasks (Overing, 1988: 178, 180). At around the age of six or seven, children receive 'moral lessons' from the community's leading wizard to teach them what is known in Western philosophy as 'other-regarding virtues.' These include 'the virtue of living tranquilly with others' by taking responsibility for one's actions towards others (*ibid*: 177-8). To incorporate these moral lessons into the children, the leading wizard chants to the celestial Gods and seeks to enhance teachings by recounting myths of moral exemplars and characters with exaggerated undesirable traits (*ibid*: 179). While children's moral lessons include teachings of 'the good life,' the teacher does not order them to live in this way. The Piaroa's regard for personal autonomy, contributes to their belief that children must decide for themselves which virtues to cultivate (*ibid*: 180). But exactly how children cultivate these virtues, Overing does not explain.

There are no formalised 'moral lessons' among the Cacua as described by Overing, but as Walker describes of the Urarina, children's 'moral lessons' took place informally through their participation in activities of everyday life from a young age. Among the Urarina, Walker

describes how mothers cooking would give their infants a knife to chop vegetable peels and once able to walk, children would follow their mothers about the garden, helping them to weed and plant crops. Rather than learning to cook or garden, these lessons taught children the concept of contributing to the household (Walker, 2012: 99). In this way, as Urarina children learnt to work, they were also learning to help others and put the needs of others before their own. Everyday activities are a form of embodied learning, encouraging children to cultivate the virtues of hard work and generosity from a young age (Walker, 2012: 100). Prevalent in Walker's research is close attention to child raising practices among the Urarina and how these play into Urarina conceptions of work and living well. Walker explains for instance that work is a key factor for living well because people work to meet the needs of those they love, who love and respect them in return because of their hard work to ensure the family's wellbeing (2015: 193).

In this chapter, I aim to contribute to such discussions on the cultivation of virtues, everyday practices of raising children and living well while living with others by exploring the role of perception, action, and interaction in children's learning. By comparison to the pressure on young people among the Cacua to 'learn how to work' before finding a spouse as outlined in the previous chapter, children tended to have great fun in the swidden field, spending most of their time playing and picking fruit to eat. Drawing on Gibson's (1979) notion of 'affordance,' as adopted by Ingold (2000), enables a closer reading of this, an investigation into what children's surroundings afford them and children's active role in discovering this. At the same time, children's participation in everyday activities from an early age, not only provides them with 'affordances' to learn technical skills, but also with 'ethical affordances' (see Keane, 2015: 30) to evaluate their own actions and those of others.

As a counterpoint to my argument for the need to include children as active participants in analyses of the subsistence economy, I will also draw on Gow's (1989) adult-centred analysis of 'what children do in the subsistence economy' in his classic account of 'the perverse child.' Here, for instance, Gow notes that Piro adults ridicule children and order them around but stop once they become adolescents (*ibid*: 578). Nonetheless, Gow neither pays attention to the process through which children arrive at the point of adolescence, nor what they might be learning as they undertake tasks that he refers to as 'simply an adjunct to adult activity' (*ibid*). In my own analysis, I instead emphasise children's participation in the subsistence economy as an active process of learning, affording them opportunities to develop both technical skills and foundations for ethical life (see Keane, 2015). In this way, I make a case for including children in models of the subsistence and by extension, moral economy.

Children's Active Perceptual Engagement in the Swidden Field

Fernanda built a small bonfire on arriving at the swidden field next to her house on the edge of the forest, collecting twigs and sticks to get it going. Her three youngest daughters nine-year-old Celeste, five-year-old Esteffi, and two-and-a-half-year-old Esme had joined her, the

eldest two running off and returning with sticks. 'Ma,' they called, alerting Fernanda as they placed the sticks on the ground next to her. Meanwhile Fernanda's youngest daughter, Esme, occupied herself by wandering around, dragging a machete along the ground behind her.

Celeste began helping her mother to weed, but soon ran off with her younger sister, Esteffi. They returned a while later with another girl, seven-year-old Amy from next door. Celeste now wore an oversized silky nightie over her orange t-shirt and shorts. She was holding the hem of the nightie in her hands and carrying a *lulo* fruit in the pocket this created. Meanwhile her younger sister reappeared holding two blankets. The girls made themselves comfortable amongst the manioc plants and sat eating the *lulo* together, as Fernanda continued to weed. Once Fernanda began to pull up the manioc, there was a burst of activity among the three older girls who sprang to their feet and started pulling up manioc plants too, snapping off the tubers at the end of their stalks and shoving the rootless manioc sticks back into the earth.

Esteffi snapped off some of the thinner branches from the top of the manioc plants and stuck four of them in the ground like four corners of a square, draping the two blankets she had brought with her over the top. The girls sat in the den for a short while, huddled together, before the structure fell apart. Amy and Esteffi went to pull up more manioc plants together, while two-and-a-half-year-old Esme sat by herself with the machete, slowly scraping its blade along one of the earth-covered manioc roots surrounding her on the ground. When the girls returned to the dismounted den, Amy was balancing a large petal she had filled with earth and crumbled leaves, on top of several sticks. As Esteffi began to re-erect the den, Amy left her own game to help. They ended up reconstructing the den around Esme.

Once we had harvested sufficient manioc, Celeste took her mother's basket to fill with the manioc she had pulled up in a different part of the swidden field and returned to empty the basket atop the pile of manioc that her mother had already collected. Esteffi and Amy ran off at this point. I sat with Fernanda to cut off the tough tops of the tubers with our machetes and scrape off the dirt before tossing them all back into the basket. Celeste sat with us and used her hands to peel some of the manioc. Back at the house, we washed our hands in a pot of water on the ground outside the kitchen entrance. As Fernanda and I sat in the kitchen to peel the manioc, I looked up at one point to see Esme stood before Fernanda nursing from her breast. Fernanda paid her little mind and continued peeling the manioc. When Esme finished, Fernanda asked me how old I was, noting that her eldest daughter was fifteen and had been sleeping when we left for the swidden field that morning. Fernanda added that her eldest daughter did not accompany her to the swidden field, that she did not help.

The above snapshot highlights the sporadic and self-directed way in which children worked alongside their mothers in the swidden field. Fernanda's calm and steady, ceaseless rhythm of work was quite unlike that of the children accompanying her. While the older girls undertook each of the tasks Fernanda did, they did so through brief bursts of activity that

intermittently punctuated their play. Their approach to work falls into what Lancy calls 'the helper stage,' in which children are 'less competent, less responsible, and more play-oriented,' deciding for themselves whether, when and to what extent to undertake simple and undemanding tasks (2018: 4-5). Fernanda seemed content to get on with her work without intervening in the children's activities, without issuing them instructions, demands or reprimands. When the children briefly helped Fernanda with the tasks she undertook, they did so of their own accord, without receiving verbal recognition, thanks, or praise.

As adults in Wacará rarely exerted themselves to accommodate their children's needs, children did not expect them to and quickly learnt to become self-sufficient while also recognising the needs of others, such as getting on with work. This was even the case with breastfeeding as children in Wacará tended to feed from their mother's breast until around three-years-old. By this time, like Esme, children would feed themselves by lifting up their mother's t-shirt and suckling. Mothers paid their children little mind when they did this and continued with whatever activity they had been doing beforehand. Comparative research can be helpful for understanding the significance of this. Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), for instance, investigated child-socialisation among middle-class North Americans, and found parents to adopt a 'highly child-centric and accommodating' style.

Among examples of this were teaching children 'games step-by-step,' intervening when children faced difficulties, and anticipating 'possible harm through elaborate safety devices and placing dangerous objects out of reach' (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009: 398; also see Ochs & Schieffelin 1984, 1995). Adults not only provided children with significant amounts of help to undertake tasks, but also praised and overly acknowledged children's role in completing them (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009: 399). This style of parenting reflects a relatively recent widespread perception of children as 'innocent and fragile cherubs, needing protection from adult society, including the world of work' (Lancy, 2008: 13-14)[17].

By contrast, Fernanda's laissez-faire approach to parenting was common among families in Wacará. It was common, for instance, to see toddlers dragging a machete around the garden while their parents were not using it. When Fernanda's youngest daughter sat by herself, using the machete blade to scrape dirt from the manioc tubers that Fernanda had harvested, she was undertaking a task that women usually did with their older daughters before packing the manioc into a basket to carry home. As with most aspects of work in the swidden field and production of manioc, this task was repetitive, one that children observed their mothers performing every time they went with them to the swidden field.

[17] Scholars have traced this notion of childhood and its wide acceptance in popular culture today as universal and timeless, as historically rooted in Europe and North America in response to industrialisation and consequential child exploitation (Boyden, 1997: 189). Boyden argues that the idea of a universal childhood was first exported to other parts of the world through colonialisation and particularly through the role of missionaries (1997: 199).

This is not to say that Cacua parents left their toddlers to wander about with machetes and copy what they were doing without any further guidance for developing skills required for subsistence living. Ingold (2000: 353) draws on Gibson's (1979) approach to perception in making a case for how the novice learns from the skilled practitioner and eventually comes to adopt their fluid movements and rhythm in undertaking. In this way, it is through children's 'active, perceptual engagement with [their] surroundings' (Ingold, 2000: 353) in the swidden field as they play, weed, collect firewood, build shelters, and eat fruit that they observe their mothers working. In imitating their mother (the skilled practitioner), a child (novice) aligns their own bodily movements with those of the practitioner and through repeated practice, directed by their attention to others, develops the skill to execute tasks smoothly.

Ingold describes this learning process as taking place through an 'education of attention' (Gibson 1979: 254) whereby 'novices are instructed to feel this, taste that, or watch out for the other thing' depending on the specific situation they are in (Ingold, 2000: 22). The above vignette offers little to draw on in this regard, but on the occasions that I accompanied mothers without their older children to keep an eye on younger siblings, I observed the subtle cues that mothers gave their young children to help and to which young children responded. While women did not verbally instruct their children to feel different objects or taste different fruits in the swidden field, they tossed or passed the tubers they had harvested and weeds they had pulled up their way. They also picked edible berries to give toddlers on the way to the swidden field and cut sugarcane for them to suck when taking a break from work. While children cut sugarcane for themselves and younger siblings from around the age of nine, borrowing a machete while their parents were not using it, children began picking and eating berries from shrubs lining the forest paths to the swidden field from a much younger age.

When parents warned children to 'watch out,' the most common phrase I heard was 'b~~uú~~gnachah' (you might fall), whether to an older child climbing a tall tree or a toddler running about the manioc kitchen. Once I heard a mother utter this phrase several times to her eighteen-month-old daughter as she teetered about the manioc plants in the swidden field. The mother continued to weed as she kept an eye on her daughter but made no attempt to physically prevent the girl from wandering about. Mezzenzana has made similar observations among the Runa, noting that their hands-off approach reflects both their understanding of young children's capability in undertaking most daily tasks and more generally, to the importance they attribute to individual autonomy and freedom (2020: 543). While there was an extent to which parents in Wacará adopted a hands-off approach to their children's learning, mothers (or older siblings, if they were around) offered children gentle encouragement to help in the swidden from around the time they begin to walk unassisted.

To give an example, on the occasions I went to the swidden field with women whose older children were at school, I noticed that as they began to weed and throw the weeds into the

small bonfire, they occasionally passed a handful of weeds to their accompanying toddler. In each case I witnessed this, the toddler responded by tottering slowly towards to bonfire and throwing the weeds into it as their mother had been doing. No praise passed from mother to child, other than a warm smile of encouragement. As well as observing this kind of interaction between a mother and young child in the swidden field, I had also been subjected to it myself when I joined twelve-year-old Lina and her eighteen-year-old sister, Sindi. The incident bears reflecting on as I was the one cast in the role of the child learning.

Lina had been sitting in the shade, taking care of her eighteen-year-old sister's one-year-old daughter as Sindi and I set to work weeding and throwing the weeds into the bonfire. When Sindi's daughter stirred, Lina appeared holding the girl around the side of her waist and carried her to Sindi for breastfeeding. After lifting the girl back around her waist so that Sindi could continue working, Lina joined us weeding, balancing her niece around her middle. Instead of throwing the weeds directly into the bonfire, Lina passed them to me to throw into the fire. It crossed my mind at the time that this could be something people did with children, was Lina treating me as a child? Whether or not this was the case, Lina was initiating a game, one that made her laugh and smile as the two of us formed a chain, picking, passing, and throwing the weeds, while Sindi's daughter dipped up and down with Lina's movements.

In the same way, when toddlers undertook practical tasks alongside their parents in the swidden field these tasks were enjoyable, much like a game, even for the parents judging by their smiles. By Esme's age of two-and-a-half, she was able to handle her mother's machete and use it in the way her mother did when scraping dirt from the manioc tubers before packing them into her basket to carry home. Consider the kinds of opportunities for active, engagement she would have encountered in the swidden field up to this point. For instance, as one of the women I accompanied to the swidden field sat to scrape the clumps of dirt from the manioc tubers she had just harvested and chop off their tops, she also hacked a vertical line into every few tubers, shallow enough to break the tough peel. She then passed the tubers with broken peel to her eighteen-month-old daughter sat next to her. The girl peeled the tough manioc skin with her hands, as her mother continued chopping off the manioc tops. While this activity served to occupy the girl as her mother continued to work, it also served as 'education of attention' (Gibson, 1979: 254)

Figure 3 - Mother in swidden field, chopping off manioc tops with machete, while eighteen-month-old daughter uses her hands to peel the manioc her mother has scored for her. Photograph by author.

Figure 2 - Two-and-a-half-year-old Esme in swidden field with machete, scraping dirt off recently harvested bitter manioc. Photograph by author.

Placing the above photographs together highlights Esme's handling of the machete in the same way as women who perform the same task. In both photographs the machete handle on the ground and top of the machete blade in one hand in order to scrape dirt from the manioc tuber in the other hand. The eighteen-month-old girl in the left photograph is performing a different task from her mother, but like her mother, she is handling manioc tubers. She is also able to observe her mother as she works, watching how she performs this other task using the machete. Invitations from women for children to help them in the swidden field by throwing weeds into the bonfire, peeling the tough skin of manioc tubers, or placing yams into a basket (see opening vignette introduction) were also invitations for children to fine-tune perceptual skills (see Ingold, 2000: 22).

By taking children to the swidden field, parents introduced them into a context that 'afford[s] selected opportunities for perception and action' (Ingold, 2000: 353). Gibson's notion of 'affordance' (1979: 127– 43) enables us to consider, for example, that manioc sticks afford pulling out of the ground to harvest manioc tubers, but also building a play-shelter with a blanket draped over the top. From this perspective, what women are doing when they pass their children a manioc tuber or a handful of weeds in the swidden field, is 'providing the scaffolding that enables them to make use of these affordances' (Ingold, 2000: 354).

At the same time, such interactions require children to seek the intentions of others in order to help them. Throwing weeds onto the bonfire is only helpful because the child has recognised that this is what their mother wants them to do when she passes them a handful of weeds. Throwing the weeds back at their mother or throwing manioc sticks or the machete into the fire instead of the weeds, for instance, would not be helpful. It is on this premise Keane suggests that intention-seeking can create what he calls 'ethical affordances' (2015: 30). Rather than the affordances of physical objects, like weeds, manioc sticks or machetes,

which can be held, thrown, or manipulated in other ways, ethical affordances refer to 'any aspects of people's experiences and perceptions that they might draw on in the process of making ethical evaluations and decisions, whether consciously or not' (Keane, 2015: 27). When a child seeks to understand their mother's intention as she passes them a handful of weeds, this can create an ethical affordance, affording the child the opportunity to evaluate whether to help.

Older Siblings as the More Experienced Practitioners

This snapshot from another family in their swidden field further highlights how children of different ages interacted with one another in these spaces, balancing the activities of work, play and childcare. I walked ahead with Mady as she carried her two-year-old daughter along the forest path. Mady's husband followed behind with their daughters aged nine and thirteen, their four-year-old son and the dog. It took us an hour to arrive, and parts of the walk were strenuous for their son, who complained about climbing over logs to avoid boggy parts of the path. 'Ñap,' (jump) Mady called at him as she continued walking without adjusting her speed or turning to look at him. At four-years-old, he was too old to be carried. At one point, the boy attempted to walk along a tree trunk to cross the boggy ground below and slipped off. He cried as he fell into the shallow muddy water, but this did not deter Mady from the pace she had set, nor inspire words or actions of comfort from anyone.

When we reached the swidden field, Mady indicated to me in Spanish the part in which we would be working, setting down her basket, before lighting a small bonfire. Everyone began weeding, even the two-year-old girl squatted down to pull up a weed, as well as her four-year-old brother. When the youngest started to wander and climb over a small tree trunk lying across the ground, her nine-year-old sister, Nicol, went and carried her back to where we were weeding. Nicol took her little sister's hand and enclosed it around a weed in the ground and tightening her little sister's grip around the weed, guided her in pulling it up.

While we all began weeding in the same part of the swidden field together, Mady's husband soon left to weed a different part of the field, ripping weeds from the ground with his hands, before using his machete on the tougher weeds. While the eldest daughter of thirteen years, and I stayed with Mady to weed, the three younger children went to join their father. The boy soon called to his mother and when she replied, he ran over to her and held out his hand. Mady gave him her machete, which he took to join his father chopping at weeds. The three youngest children returned to help us weed at random intervals before running off to play and pick small *lulos*. The two youngest children also picked flowers off the manioc plants and ate them, while Nicol picked mushrooms off some of the plants and gave them to the youngest girl to hold and play with.

At one point, the youngest girl called out, having wandered off alone and getting separated from the rest of us. Mady called back but did not go to the girl. Instead, she instructed her son

to get her. I followed him as he went off through the manioc plants to locate his little sister. She was not far from us, but from where she was stood, she could not see us, nor us her. When Mady, her thirteen-year-old daughter and I were weeding in the last part that Mady had previously indicated, before pulling up manioc, the three youngest children came to join us once more. The youngest girl began crying and rather than attempting to comfort her, Mady said something that I did not catch to Nicol. Nicol responded by squatting down with her back facing her little sister, who then wrapped her arms around Nicol's neck. Nicol stood up with her little sister hanging off her back. Nicol only walked a little way before her little sister stopped crying. Her little brother followed.

After hours of weeding, Mady pulled up a manioc plant and using her machete to chop the tuber from the root of the plant, threw the manioc onto the ground and passed the machete to her thirteen-year-old daughter. As they only had one machete between them, Mady's daughter used the machete to chop the tops off the manioc and scrape along the tough skin to remove most of the earth, while Mady continued to weed among various manioc plants. Once Mady deemed that we had enough manioc, she finished the task that her daughter had started. Mady and her daughter piled the manioc into the basket, before Mady's daughter lifted the basket and held it in place against her mother's back, aiding her as she fixed the basket strap across the top of her forehead. We left the swidden field for the nearby house of Mady's parents-in-law, where Mady's other three children were waiting for us.

This vignette demonstrates something quite different from the instances I have highlighted of mothers who were alone with their youngest children of around two-years old and under, in the swidden field. When women had their older children with them, they tended to hand childcare responsibilities to them, enabling women to get on with their work more quickly. In the above vignette, for instance, nine-year-old Nicol watched out for her younger sister while her mother and big sister worked. In this role, Nicol acted towards her little sister as the more experienced practitioner towards the novice, directing her little sister's attention to her surroundings, from physically guiding her hands when weeding to giving her *lulos* to eat and mushrooms with which to play. However, the other side to children building self-reliance through responsibilities in childcare or else learning from older siblings, is the tendency of adults to actively ignore children's calls for attention and reassurance.

As I accompanied Mady, this first became apparent to me when she ignored her sons cries on our way to the swidden field. While she eventually responded by instructing him with practical advice to 'jump' (over the boggy parts of the path), she did not physically help him cross or comfort him when he struggled to do so. Mezzenzana has highlighted similar instances among the Runa of the Ecuadorian Amazon, where she emphasises that adults do not centre their efforts on accommodating children's will (2020: 542). They make this explicit both by deliberately withdrawing their attention from demanding children and by prompting older siblings to respond to younger ones (2020: 542, 549). There were several instances of this in Mady's swidden field, such as when she sent her four-year-old son to fetch her youngest

daughter, who had got separated from the group amongst the manioc plants or when she told Nicol to take the youngest girl back to their grandparents kitchen when she started crying.

As noted in the previous chapter, parents expected their 'adolescent' children (*jáapata*) to work rather than play as their 'children' (*wébít*) did. Mady would not have expected her thirteen-year-old daughter to run off with her younger siblings to play and collect fruit for example. Nonetheless, it was through such experiences of work interlaced with play that children joined their families in work at all, before gradually taking on a more reliable role once they reached preadolescence and then as 'young people' (jáapata), in ensuring that the work got done. When I had joined Fernanda in the swidden field, she told me that her fifteen-year-old daughter did not help, though this was precisely the age at which her daughter was supposed to work more seriously alongside her mother, until she knew how to work for herself. Mady's thirteen-year-old daughter undertook work in the swidden field alongside her mother much more efficiently and continuously than her younger siblings, who worked sporadically as they played and picked fruit. Nicol's participation over the course of the day, however, pointed to a transition taking place from helper to worker (see Lancy, 2018: 5, 36). While Nicol had spent much of her time running around and playing with her younger siblings in the swidden field, helping only sporadically, she was later left to peel the basket of bitter manioc with her big sister. Nicol was gradually taking on more responsibility for chores while still spending much of her time engaged in play.

While Nicol and her big sister peeled the bitter manioc, her parents went with the two youngest children to a small dug out pool of water in which days previously they had left several sacks of manioc to soak. The parents peeled the hard skin from the sodden manioc flesh as their youngest children splashed about in the water behind them. The parents did not watch their children as they played in the water though Mady called something to them without turning around. When I asked what she had said, she told me, 'Be careful, you might drown.' Mezzenzana mentions similar expressions used among the Runa, which as in Mady's case, were not accompanied by any action to prevent or assist children in what they were doing (2020: 543). Mezzenzana suggests that like parents' refusal to respond to children's demands for their attention, such instances of hands-off approaches to parenting, is yet another technique to encourage children's self-reliance and independence.

When Nicol and her big sister arrived at the pool, Nicol stripped off and lay naked in the shallow water with her younger siblings, while her big sister spoke to her mother before returning. Playing when there was still work to be done was for 'children' (*wébít*) only, Nicol's big sister was now a *jáap wili* and did not engage in these frivolous endeavours. It was only after a day's work that adults and adolescents would play[18], and this took place in the form of football matches and volleyball in the late afternoons.

[18] As in Spanish and English, the Cacua term for 'play' (*tíoh*) was used to refer both to children playing, running around, playing catch, or simply messing about and for playing sport (e.g., *fútbol tíoh* in Cacua, means 'playing football').

Cultivating Virtues through Work

Cacua elders impressed upon the younger generation the importance of taking their children to the swidden field from an early age. In the vignette I used to open this thesis (see introduction), I described how Paula had told me that many *señoritas* (unmarried young women) did not know how to work because they had not helped their mothers in the swidden field when they were children. Her own mother, who she remembered helping in the swidden field with her siblings as child, had told her this. As mentioned in the previous chapter, young people who did not know how to work were criticised by other members of the household and in some cases, wider community, for being lazy. In general, people in the community associated work with being 'beautiful' (*tʉ́ini* in Cacua) and good (*tʉ́i* in Cacua). As such, the difficulty young people experienced when they did not 'know how to work' was not only a consequence of lacking the appropriate technical skills, but also desirable virtues.

Building on the notions of affordance and perceptual attention to others, which I discussed in the previous section, Ochs and Izquierdo have argued that 'much more than practical competence and social responsibility are afforded by children's assistance in tasks' (2009: 391). In making this claim, they attempt to draw together ethnographic accounts of children undertaking responsibility in everyday family life and philosophical notions of morality as established through attention practices and visual access to everyday activities (*ibid*: 392). Taking inspiration from Aristotle's notion that virtue is imbedded in habit and must be actively produced, Ochs and Izquierdo argue that children's participation in household tasks from an early age is key to their development of moral responsibility. They state that this not only promotes independence and self-assurance in children from a young age, but also their social awareness of and responsiveness to others and their needs (*ibid*: 391).

This suggests that when Cacua parents regularly allow and gently encourage their children to work alongside and help them from an early age, they are also encouraging them to cultivate other-regarding virtues. While Cacua parents did not express the kinds of dispositions that working might encourage their youngest children to adopt, they explicitly said this about their older children as noted in the previous chapter. This is different from the above vignette in which Fernanda left her children to do what they wanted. While children as young as toddlers would pitch in with work and parents would allow them to, parents never made or 'ordered' (*wʉ̄h* in Cacua) very young children work. They appreciated and gently encouraged it but did not order it. This changed as children got older when parents explicitly told them to undertake certain tasks. While parents might say that their toddler or young child 'likes working,' 'helps' them or 'sees and copies' what they do, with no more than a smile to indicate their approval of this, parents did not explicitly express the virtues associated with younger children working.

On the occasions I stopped by Salome's house, if she was making manioc bread, her five-year-old daughter, Gracie was usually with her in the kitchen. As I often saw with young children, Gracie would rush to break up the dry cylinder-shaped clumps of manioc flour once her mother had pulled them out of the *mai pii* (literally meaning 'long snake'), a tube intricately woven from fibres used to strain grated manioc. Gracie used both hands in the rapid alternating semi-circular motions that women used to sieve manioc flour. While Gracie readily joined in with this part of manioc production, she also ran off to play whenever she got bored or distracted, a key feature of 'the helper stage' (Lancy, 2018: 5).

When I asked Gracie's parents what she was like, her father, Jacobo, told me,

> 'Gracie often "helps" (*teo wáacna*) the "mature female" (*behwili*, a term by which he refers to his wife, Gracie's mother) making manioc bread. She likes to "hold" (teo) the starch and sieve it. She "sees-and-copies" (*en yacna*) what the "mature one" (*behnit*) does.'

While Salome translated *teo* as 'pick up' (*coger* in Spanish) in the context of what her husband told me, *teo* also means work. The pleasurable aspect of handling or working manioc from a young age, points to the affective aspect of learning more generally, as well as working manioc more specifically. Salome also noted the element of play in Gracie's work, telling me, 'She "helps" (*teo wáac*), sieving in order to eat manioc bread. She likes "playing" (*tío̱hna)* with the manioc starch.' The kind of play to which Salome refers here are the physical sensations of manioc production, at least for children, as they play (tío̱h) with and handle (*teo*) manioc. Alongside play, the notion that Gracie helps her mother by seeing and copying what she does reflects my description of toddlers as drawing on their active perceptual engagement within their surroundings (see Ingold, 2000: 353) as they help their mothers in the swidden field.

It is significant that Jacobo referred to Salome as *behwili* (mature woman) when he spoke to me about Gracie helping her. As noted in the previous chapter, the term *behwili* (mature woman) refers to a woman with a partner and children, who by this stage of life *knows how to work*. Jacobo also used the term to refer to Salome when speaking of his daughters more generally, stating, '*teo wáacna beé behwilidih'* (they help the mature woman). In conveying Salome's stage of life rather than her kin relation to her daughters who help her, the term *behwili* emphasises that adults expect the 'immature' (*jáap*) to learn from the 'mature' (*beh*). Jacobo did not explicitly refer to Gracie copying anything other than the physical tasks she saw her mother do as she made manioc bread. Nonetheless, other parents made comments about their children seeing and copying not only the physical actions they performed, but also the way in which they performed them, expressing concern about providing a good example.

I conducted the same style of short interview about family life in Cacua with Sergio, who lived with his wife and their three children aged three to seven only a few doors along from Jacobo, his older brother. As in the interview with Salome and Jacobo, I did not ask about work in any

of my questions, which I purposefully designed to be general and open. Nonetheless, I soon learnt that as work simply is part of everyday family life, parents spoke about it in response to my questions. As with Salome, I met Sergio around a week after our interview to transcribe and translate what he had said in Cacua, which also gave him the chance to elaborate on his initial responses. For example, in the interview he told me,

> 'We show by good example, so they live well in the future. For a child to be obedient, we must lead them well. When we are angry, they don't obey and if we order them, "you work," they won't. However, we [should] just say nicely, "you work" and work well [ourselves], leading them.'

Sergio elaborated on this answer as we listened back to the recording together, with reference to his seven-year-old son. Sergio explained,

> 'When the father corrects with anger and the child does not want to listen, the child yells back. If I say to my son, "go collect firewood," he says, "no, you go." If I say, "sweep the patio," he says, "no, you go." If we order him to work, he says no. But, if the dad works well, the child works well.'

Sergio referred to this in his interview as *teo waoh* (*teo* - work; *waoh* - lead), which he explained meant that when he works well, he is guiding his son, who 'sees and follows' (*enpée* in Cacua, en – look; pée – follow). The way Sergio described the relationship between a father and his son as they work together is like that of Ingold's 'skilled practitioner' and 'novice.' Sergio 'leads' (*waoh*) and his son 'follows' (*pée*). Sergio 'shows' (*jú~~u~~tat*) and his son 'sees' (*en*). Following Gibson's (1979) approach to perception, Ingold explains that showing someone something is to cause them to see (feel, hear, taste, touch or otherwise experience) it (2000: 21-22), to give them an 'education of attention' (Gibson, 1979: 254). As Sergio's answer highlights, this is not only a case of showing physical aspects of the environment or the technical skills of work, but also showing one's children the kinds of dispositions that are conducive to working well. At the same time, Sergio's response points to the ethical affordances (see Keane, 2015: 30) that working alongside others might provide not only for his son but also for himself. Sergio draws on experiences of ordering his son to work and evaluates his own actions as well as those of his son, deciding the best way for them to work together through practical judgement.

As young Cacua children grow up, their attention to the actions of more mature others is paramount to learning to work through helping others, a process that entails 'seeing and copying' (*en yac* in Cacua), responding to subtle cues, and embodied action. Parents demonstrated concern that through their actions and temperament, they are informally educating their children about how to live (see chapter 8). The examples parents use when discussing their children seeing and copying them, also highlights how children's moral

learning is a mundane affair, involving children's observations of the people in their everyday surroundings and through helping others to work.

The Subsistence Economy and Couvade Practices

My emphasis on children's work in the subsistence economy in this chapter and what it affords them in terms of developing both technical skills and virtues for living well, highlights an important aspect of the moral economy, which is often ignored in regional literature. As a counterpoint to my claim for the importance of including children's learning through work as part of analyses of the moral economy, I will now draw on Gow's (1989) analysis of the subsistence economy among the Piro, what children do in it, and the 'perverse child.' Gow's overall argument centres on the subsistence economy as based on men and women's desire, both their sexual appetite for one another and their appetite for the food that each provides for the other. While men provide women with meat and fish, women provide men with manioc beer. Nonetheless, this analytical framing leaves little space for children, other than as the products of desire and as interruptions from it, given that couvade practices prohibit sexual activity, work in the swidden field, hunting, and fishing (see e.g., *ibid*: 577).

By contrast to Gow, who describes children as 'the passive recipients of the products of adult labour' (1989: 579), I show that paying attention to children as active learners can enrich analyses of the subsistence and moral economy. In stating that 'children are at a serious disadvantage in this subsistence economy. Unlike adults, they are not independent producers' (*ibid*), Gow neglects to acknowledge that adults are not independent producers as individuals either. As Gow mentions himself, only adults in spousal relations produce food and even then, their children help them (see e.g., *ibid*: 570). Among the Cacua, children learn to work by helping others and when they grow up, find a spouse, and form their own household, their own children will help them with work from around the time they can walk. The goal is not one of individual independence but the independence of the household, which includes parents and children, and interdependence within it.

Gow mentions that 'sub-adolescent' Piro children help their parents undertake chores, but attributes little importance to this in his analysis, referring to such tasks as 'simply an adjunct to adult activity' (*ibid:* 578). While I could say the same of Cacua children, in paying close attention to the way they perform such 'adjuncts to adult activity' from an early age, I have been able to highlight the process through which skills and values, core to communal living, pass from generation to generation. The birth of a child among the Piro entails the observation of couvade practices, which prevent couples from working, hunting, fishing, and having sexual relations. Through Gow's analysis of the subsistence economy of desire, he argues that in disrupting marital relations between parents, the birth of a child also transforms relations between desires for sex and food (*ibid*: 577). For the Piro, when a couple feeds their child, the act of satisfying their child's desire for food evokes love in the child as

well as the respect that underlies kinship ties. To feed one's child is to fill the child with blood, making them strong while strengthening ties of kinship (*ibid:* 579).

By contrast, Piro adults view children's attempts to satisfy their desire for oral satisfaction through their own means by eating earth, as deeply disturbing. While Gow notes that children probably do this because of intestinal worms or simply from curiosity, for the Piro, to eat earth is to act outside of the subsistence economy which gives life, generates blood, and strengthens kinship ties (*ibid:* 579). The Piro refer to children who they believe to eat earth as *viciosos,* a Spanish term which Gow literally translates as 'vicious ones' (*ibid:* 578). While Gow prefers to translate this term as 'perverts' (*ibid:* 579), it is interesting to note that the root word of 'vicious' (*vicioso* in Spanish) is 'vice' (*vicio* in Spanish) and as such, to be vicious is to be full of vice. The Piro understand children who they believe to eat earth as full of vice, perverse, corrupting the subsistence economy and destroying bonds of kindship by thinking only of satisfying themselves (see Gow, 1989: 579, 581). What Gow is describing is a concern that the Piro have for those, in this case children, who do not possess the virtues required for living well with others or working with others to produce and distribute food. This is why I argue that attention to the virtues children can develop through learning to work as they help their parents from as early as they can toddle, is valuable to analyses of the moral economy.

Like the Piro, Cacua people also have couvade restrictions preventing them from working in the swidden field or using a machete, hunting, fishing, or having sexual relations. However, unlike Gow, I find merit in including children as active learners rather than passive recipients in my analysis. I first learnt about Cacua beliefs regarding newborns when I asked Felicia and Yair to confirm whether I had correctly understood who the father was, of a woman with whom I had recently conducted a household survey. While I knew everyone in the community by their registered Spanish names, which was how they had introduced themselves to me, the Cacua knew, referred to and addressed one another by funny nicknames.

'Nóop,' Yair said after I had asked about the woman by her Spanish name. Yair and Felicia chuckled, before confirming that I had correctly understood who her father was.

'Is that her nickname?' I enquired, curious to know what it meant and why it was funny.

On confirming that it was, Felicia went quiet and told me that Yair would explain.

I wondered if it was a rude word and asked if people called her this to her face.

'She responds to it,' Felicia said, 'Everyone has called her that since she was a little girl.'

As Yair was not forthcoming, Felicia proceeded to explain that when *Nóop* was little, her parents had not taken care of her and because of this, her belly button had stuck out.

‘Like Yamile’s,’ Felicia explained, referring to a seven-year-old girl in the community, ‘Have you seen Yamile’s belly button? It’s like a ball.’

As Felicia seemed to have anticipated, her explanation provoked many questions on my part, starting with, ‘so *nóop*’ means belly button?’

‘Something to do with the belly button,’ Felicia replied.

‘And how was it that *Nóop*’s parents did not take care of her and how did that make her belly button stick out?’ I asked.

Felicia explained that after the birth of a child, anything the father did affected the baby’s body. If the father physically exerted himself, the baby would feel it. Felicia gave the example of a father felling trees with a machete, which might cause his newborn baby to stretch, wriggle or cry because of feeling the work the father was doing. As well as work, physical exertion included playing football and any other strenuous task. Felicia noted that her youngest child had always wriggled a lot and people had commented that his belly button would stick out. Felicia noted that this was not because of her husband’s doing and that in any case, their son’s belly button did not stick out despite his wriggling.

I asked how long the father should cease from working. After conferring with Yair, Felicia said, one to two weeks. She then noted that if the father had to work, he first needed to show the baby what he would be doing. For instance, before using the machete, he first had to show the baby the machete. If he wanted to go fishing, he had to first show the baby the fishing rod. I asked about playing football, ‘would you show the football to the baby before playing?’

Yair demonstrated, kicking out his leg as if kicking a ball, ‘you do this in front of the baby.’

‘You imagine the baby is a football and kick,’ Felicia said, before quickly adding, ‘from a distance.’

I asked Felicia and Yair if they had done this with their children and they told me that they had. Yair’s mother had been particularly insistent about this when they had their first child, saying, ‘this is your first child, you have to take good care of him, look after him.’

In this sense, what taking care of one’s newborn meant for the Cacua was abiding by certain restrictions to one’s activities that might otherwise cause the baby harm through its incorporeal connection to its parents during this early stage of life. In literature, such practices are referred to as the ‘couvade’ (see e.g., Rival, 1998; Rivière, 1974). Felicia’s mother-in-law, for example, had told her and her husband not to blow on the embers of the fire when their

first child was born as this would cause the baby to develop red blotches. Felicia also told me that the elders said couples should not have sexual relations until their child was six months to one year old, as sperm could pass into the mother's milk and give the child diarrhoea. Such limitations on parents' work, relations, and other activities in order to care for and protect their newborn child, meant that children began life by interrupting everyday patterns of work and other activities required for household production.

I learned more about such practices of care during a conversation with Faber, which according to my fieldnotes, took place a year after my initial conversation with Felicia and Yair about newborns and the abstinence of parents from work. Just like Felicia and Yair, Faber told me that men must not work when they had a newborn, explaining that if the father worked, he was not taking care of his child. He also said that in such cases, the child's belly button would stick out, like a ball. He told me that while the father could go fishing, the first time he went, he had to show the child the fishhook and the worm. Otherwise, the child's tongue would hang out as a worm's tongue does. Another requisite for the father was to not touch the *pilón*, a wooden bludgeon used to grind animal meat, until his baby had reached the age of one year. Faber explained that the bludgeon was too heavy for the baby to endure, as the father's actions, pounding the meat, would transfer to his baby.

Faber then noted that fathers only had to take such precautions for their sons, as girls' bodies were affected by their mothers, who had different work to men. Shortly after my conversation with Faber, I asked Felicia about this gendered aspect of parental practices of care as she and Yair had not previously mentioned it to me. Felicia's response highlighted the discrepancies between various households regarding their beliefs and the practices they followed. She believed for instance, that it was '*machista'* ('sexist' in Spanish) to only observe this practice for sons, as one should treat one's children the same regardless of gender. Otherwise, Felicia explained, it was as if the girl was not important, so the father did not have to take care of her. Yair had done the same for their daughter as for sons, in terms of abstaining from work as a practice of care. Felicia admitted that it depended on the parents, but her mother had said that fathers should observe the same restrictions for both their sons and daughters.

The significance of couvade practices when it comes to work is two-fold. Firstly, such practices highlight work as a form of care for others. In the case of the couvade, the active practice of *not* working is a form of care for one's newborn and conversely, working is associated with *not* caring for them. This reflects how Cacua interlocutors spoke to me of this process, using a very particular understanding of the notion of work. That is, work as a form of manual labour, requiring physical exertion, often with tools like machetes, axes or spades. This was the kind of work that was perceived as dangerous for newborns, and thus not permitted as part of couvade practices. As such, Cacua explanations about 'not working' with regards to the process of caring for newborns, does not fit with the kind of work involved in couvade practices as described in literature. Rival, for instance, describes the couvade as a 'rite of co-

parenthood' (1998: 631) in which 'the father and the mother have *worked* and made the baby together' (*ibid*: 633, emphasis my own). From a Cacua perspective, it is once the child has passed this early phase of life that their parents return to work as normal. At this point, it is instead through actively working that parents care for their children and for one another. Secondly, the practice of men miming for their newborn any strenuous activities they are about to undertake and showing the newborn the tools that they will use to do so, demonstrates how parents encourage their children's attention to the actions of others from birth. In this latter case, might couvade practices indicate Cacua people's recognition of children's 'active, perceptual engagement' in their surroundings (see Ingold, 2000: 23) before they can physically engage in everyday activities in their surroundings?

According to couvade practices, the first time a mother undertook any journey with her newborn, she had to leave a trail of knotted leaves for the baby's 'spirit' (*caoli*) or 'thoughts' (*jenah joyat*) to follow back home. If she did not, the child's spirit could get lost. If the mother did not float a leaf in the water when crossing a river, the baby's spirit would not be able to cross and the next time the baby fell asleep, it would awaken gasping for air because its spirit was drowning. In such cases, the parents had to call on someone to utter a shamanic prayer, so that the child's spirit could find its way back to the child. Similarly, if a mother did not leave a trail of knotted leaves on her way to the swidden field the first time she took her child there, the child's spirit would stay behind playing in the fruit trees until after the mother had carried the child home. If the baby's spirit did not have knotted leaves to follow home and return to the baby, when the baby arrived home, they would cry, grow skinny and fall ill. This suggests that according to Cacua beliefs, in the early stages of life children experienced and perceived their environment through their spirit before they were physically able to make use of the affordances that the space had to offer.

During my conversation with Faber, he told me that his parents had been away when his wife gave birth to their first son. On their return a day or so later, Faber's father asked him if he had picked up the baby. On responding that he had not, Faber's father praised him, advising, 'Good, you must not pick up the baby'. Faber attempted to explain his father's comment to me by stating that men were 'very heavy,' meaning as he later noted, that men were strong, fast, and mature. As such, if a man were to hold a baby, his 'heaviness' could transfer to the baby and harm it, potentially stunting the child's growth, causing the child to grow slowly and be skinny. Faber gave the example of a plant without fertiliser, which would grow, but slowly. He also noted that if a man held a newborn, the man's strength and thoughts would pass to the child, which could make the child go crazy. As such, the father of a newborn had to be calm, which included not laughing hard, so as to not harm the baby. When I asked Faber what men's thoughts were, he told me, shamanic prayers, hunting, work, and dance.

I then asked when a man had these thoughts, to which Faber said, 'once he is mature,' and estimated this to be around the age of twenty or more, adding, 'once he had started to work.'

Cacua people often described such work as *heavy* (*pesado* in Spanish) and while adults could withstand 'heavy' work and other activities, requiring them to handle heavy instruments, this was too much for newborns, who could become ill if the heaviness of their parents' work or other activities of physical exertion transferred to them. As noted in the previous chapter, learning to work and eventually *knowing how* to work was part of the process of maturing that a person underwent throughout their lifetime. The Cacua term *behnít* literally means 'mature one' and refers to adults with a spouse and children, who by this stage in their life should *know* how to work. It is *not* having worked or not *knowing* how to work, in the case of single people of marriageable age referred to as *jáapata,* that indicates immaturity. For newborns, their immaturity is so acute that the intensity of mature people's actions, which included work and other physically exerting activities, could transfer to them and cause harm.

To avoid harming young children, Faber stipulated that men should not hold them until they were crawling. However, there were discrepancies when it came to such beliefs. When I recounted this part of my conversation with Faber to Felicia the following day, she was not impressed, noting that by the time the baby was crawling, it was easier for a woman to work in the company of her child. It was when a woman had to carry her baby while doing all her work, that things were hard. For Felicia, when men did not hold their baby, it meant that their wives ended up doing all the work, while they did nothing. While Felicia acknowledged that the elders said men must not hold babies, she told me that her husband had helped her, especially with their youngest, to whom she had given birth by caesarean section in hospital. While she had been recovering from the procedure, her husband had carried their son to her for breastfeeding. Felicia told me that some people were very strict and insisted that the father must not carry the baby. In her own case, her husband had carried all their children as newborns, and nothing bad had happened to them. She declared, 'Seeing this, that the children do not get ill, one knows that the man can help. Some understand that it is to help.'

I had noticed that men did not tend to hold their babies and had witnessed occasions when a mother passed her baby daughter to her six-year-old daughter instead of the father who was also sat close by and unoccupied. Felicia nodded when I shared this observation with her, confirming that this was because they thought that the husband would harm to the baby by holding it. Felicia then noted that a girl, whose mother had given birth just several days previously, had not attended school that day because she went with her mother to the swidden field instead, to hold her baby sister while her mother worked.

Work is an important aspect of Cacua children's lives from the moment they are born when their fathers must undertake certain practices regarding work in order to care for them and throughout their lives, as they accompany their families to the swidden field. Including children in an analysis of the moral economy, not as 'passive recipients of the products of adult labour' (Gow, 1989: 579) or as undertaking tasks that are 'simply an adjunct to adult activity' (*ibid*: 578), but as active learners contributing to social life, uncovers the ways in

which skills and values for living well pass from one generation to the next. In the following chapter, I will explore how older children brought up the theme of work and helping their parents in the swidden field and at home during the activity session I ran with them. I will also highlight the ethical affordances of which they made use during situations that arose as they undertook such activities, prompting them to evaluate their own and one another's actions.

Chapter 5. Children's Perspectives on Work and Thinking Well

Where do you like being?

'Show where you like being,' my assistant, Felicia, instructed nine-year-old Nicol in Cacua as we stood over the map that she and two boys had drawn of Wacará.

'The swidden field,' nine-year-old Nicol responded, as she pointed to it on the map.

'What do you do there?' Felicia asked.

'Work bitter manioc,' Nicol said. *Tōi teo.*

It was the second activity session I was running with Felicia in Wacará. Only a few days previously we had run the first session, in which we had divided the children into groups of about two or three to draw a map of the community. I noticed that at least one child in each group had included their family's swidden field on their map, locating it at the edge of the map, indicating its position outside of the village, a little way (and sometimes a long way) into the forest. As part of the second activity session, Felicia asked the children to mark the places where they felt happy in the community on their maps with green stickers. In each of the maps, children marked the swidden fields they had drawn with a green sticker and when asked what they did there, they all mentioned 'working' (*teo*) or 'helping' (*teo wáac*).

Nicol's older brother showed Felicia and I several places where he liked being on the map of the community, which he had drawn with another thirteen-year-old boy. 'Here is another one, our house,' he said pointing to another place on his map that he had marked as somewhere he liked being with a sticker, 'When we dig up bitter manioc, we bring it home afterwards and peel it.' Once he had shown us some more places on the map where he liked being, I asked him about the swidden field, having seen that it was also marked as somewhere he liked being. 'The swidden field is there,' he said indicating its position on the map, 'I help our mother pull up bitter manioc in the part where she weeds.'

I began our sessions with the activities described above, asking the children to draw maps of the community, to indicate the places where they liked spending time on their maps and what they did in those places. At this point, I had not prepared any questions to ask children about work; such comments from the children arose from their responses to more general questions. Like Nicol and her older brother, many of the children had drawn their homes and families' swidden field on the map, and when Felicia asked what they did there in Cacua, they said that they 'work' (*teo*) and 'help' (*teo wáac*, literally meaning 'to come together to work') their parents. In cases where the children specified which activities they were referring to,

they mentioned different aspects of working in the swidden field and processing bitter manioc.

How do you usually help your parents?

Given that the children had mentioned that they work (*teo*) and help (*teo wáac*) during the first activity sessions, I decided to design some sessions to learn more about which activities they considered as *teo* and *teo wáac*. On one such occasion, I set up an audio recording device and carefully read a question in Cacua from my notebook to initiate a mini group discussion.

'How do you usually help your parents?'

'Bitter manioc,' Colby immediately called out, which several younger children echoed.

'Get firewood,' another child called out, which several children also repeated.

'When they say, go get firewood to prepare *manicuera*[19]*,*' another child added.

'Help fetch water,' another child quickly added.

This was followed by a flurry of responses, which several different children called out in rapid succession, all related to manioc production. While I was familiar with most of the expressions, there were a couple of words that I did not understand, which Felicia, who had not been present during the session, explained to me when we listened to the recording.

'Prepare manioc bread and wait.' (*Ch~~ü~~ih jwej pāina.*)

Felicia translated the meaning of the first of these responses as, 'prepare manioc bread for when the parents arrive.' The word in the phrase I had not recognised, *pāina,* meant 'waiting,' though in this case it indicated 'waiting' for somebody (e.g., a child waiting for their parents) and having manioc bread ready for them. Felicia gave me the example of girls preparing manioc bread while their parents were not at home and having it ready for their return.

Following this, another child called out, 'prepare something to drink in the morning.'

Another called out, 'Wash bitter manioc.'

Then there were several responses, each including the Cacua verb *w~~ü~~h*, which Felicia explained as meaning, to do a task for someone when they are busy doing something else.

[19] Sweet tasting drink made from the liquid strained from grated bitter manioc, toxic to humans unless boiled and reduced. This process required lots of firewood, which parents often sent their children to fetch while they were busy with other activities.

She suggested that this might happen if a child's parents were occupied with tasks outside of the home and the child undertook the task of toasting manioc flour or making manioc bread while their parents were busy elsewhere. The children's responses included,

'Toast manioc flour.' (*Becchi ped wʉ̄hna.*)

'Make manioc bread.' (*Chʉ́h jwej wʉ̄hna.*)

'Press [the manioc pulp].' (*Bóina wʉ̄hna.*)

'Sieve [the manioc flour].' (*Yec wʉ̄hna.*)

The effect of studying the specific dialogue that developed on this day, rather than the results of participant observation alone (e.g., watching what children did in terms of working and helping), was that it highlighted some nuances of which I had not previously been aware. For instance, the difference between 'making manioc bread and waiting' (children having it ready for their parents' return home) and 'making manioc bread' (while the parents were not at home to undertake the task). The above flurry of responses also highlights the point that children began to take on more responsibility as they grew up. They might start by taking responsibility for one very simple task as part of manioc production, such as sieving the pressed manioc flour, which children commonly did from around the age of five, while their mothers were busy doing something else in the kitchen.

Another easy job for children to undertake was pressing the manioc pulp after it had been grated, by sitting on the wooden lever through the bottom of the stretchy tube-shaped manioc press while their mothers were busy perhaps lighting the fire beneath the manioc griddle. Eventually, when girls were no longer 'children' (*wébít* in Cacua), but *jáap wili,* they were able to take responsibility for undertaking the whole process of making manioc bread or toasting manioc flour when their mothers were away for the whole day[20]. This was the kind of task that girls tended to do once they were confident with all the steps of making manioc bread, from around the age of twelve. The number of different tasks with which children helped their parents and various nuances involved in the way they helped, indicates the importance of expanding typical analyses of men and women's complementary roles in the subsistence economy in Amazonia (e.g., Gow, 1989; Siskind, 1973) to include children.

Following the children's responses about how they helped with manioc production, Colby briefly diverted the conversation by adding, 'When they say wash the clothes, go and wash the clothes.' He added later, 'Go to school, when they say help, go to fetch firewood.' This

[20] Tasks such as collecting seasonal forest fruits, accompanying their husbands fishing or hunting, or going to the forest to get woody vines for weaving baskets, could take up a whole day for women, meaning that they would be unable to make manioc bread that day.

contribution refers to a task that children typically undertook to help their parents after finishing school in the early afternoon. By the time children had returned home from school, their mothers had usually returned from their swidden fields with a basket full of manioc and had set to work peeling and washing it. As such, children often helped their mothers by going to collect firewood from the edge of the forest so that their mothers would be able to bake the manioc bread and prepare other manioc-based products. School itself was not an activity that the Cacua referred to as 'work,' though the tasks that children often undertook to help their families after school, such as getting firewood, were locally categorised as work.

After Colby's contribution, Jana called out, 'When they say, let's go to the swidden field, go.'

Colby added, 'When they say, let's go to the swidden field, eat *lulos*, weed, "help" (teo wáac), pull up bitter manioc,' listing off the various activities he did in the swidden field.

Some of the children's responses, such as 'when they say, go get firewood' and 'when they say, let's go to the swidden field, go' also highlighted the point that they often undertook tasks when their parents issued them with instructions to do so. As discussed in chapter 4, parents began encouraging pre-verbal children to help them by passing them weeds to throw on the bonfire, yams to put into a basket and manioc tubers with their tough skin scored and ready to peel. As children grew up and became capable of taking on more complex tasks, the gentle wordless encouragement they had received as toddlers turned into direct commands with which their parents issued them, relying on their skills and ability to help in a more substantial way. At the same time, parents told me that they made their children work to prevent them from being lazy and so that they would 'live well' when they grew up, indicating both the moral and practical dimension of encouraging children to work and help.

When the children ran out of ideas in our group discussion, I set them up with colours, pencils, and paper, and asked them to draw pictures showing how they helped their families. When the children had finished, I asked them simple questions in Cacua about their drawings, such as 'who is that?' and 'what are they doing?' to establish what was happening in each picture. Colby drew a series of images of himself and his mother going to the swidden field together to pull up bitter manioc and returning home to process it. At the age of seven, Colby was the eldest of three siblings and as such he was very involved in helping his mother with work. While I heard many Cacua people refer to the tasks involved in producing bitter manioc as 'women's work,' both Colby and his four-year-old brother helped their mother in such tasks, as did their father. Each of Colby's drawings depict very common scenes of women's work, in which children regularly participated to help their mothers.

Figure 4 - Colby's Drawing: How do you usually help your parents?

‘Going to the swidden field, my mum and me.
Along the path, going to pull up bitter manioc.’

Wápchi bejna. Weém, wĭih naáhjī. Namáboó, tõi d~~ug~~udih bejna.

Colby had drawn his mother carrying an empty basket, handwoven from plant fibres with a strap fashioned from tree bark around her head, holding the basket in place. Colby walking behind her holding a machete.

‘Pulling up bitter manioc, my mum and me.’

Tõi d~~u~~gna. Wĭih naáh, weém.

‘Cutting off and discarding (bitter manioc) tops.’

Coóh bóod yohna.

‘Returning.’

Jw~~úu~~b jãóhna.

‘Me, grating bitter manioc.’

Weém tõi jiitna.

By contrast, nine-year-old Jana took on much less responsibility than her cousin Colby in helping her parents and her drawings reflected this. As the penultimate of five unmarried sisters, all living in their parents' household, Jana's parents did not rely on Jana's help as much as Colby's mother relied on his. While Jana contributed to aspects of everyday subsistence work, coordinating her actions with those of her sisters, she spent most of her time playing imaginary games with her little sister and other children in the community.

Figure 5 - Jana's Drawing: How do you usually help your parents?

'Collecting firewood (for parents while they are busy doing something else). Gracie (right). Me (left), stood looking.'

T~~uu~~ ~~ub~~ w~~u~~hna. Gracie. Weém, en ñuhna.

'Going to the swidden field. Bringing the basket. Dog. My mum. I am studying.'

Wápchi bejna. W~~u~~hdih ~~uu~~budih. M~~u~~jjio. Wíih naáh. Weém bohena.

'I (left) am pressing (the manioc pulp). When my mum says "sit," I sit. Ada (grating manioc).'

*Bóina. Wíih naáh*boo nep ch*~~uu~~d~~u~~m, ch*~~uu~~*d. *Ada.*

'Ada is baking the manioc bread.'

Ada ch~~u~~íh jwejna.

Using child-centred research methods, such as drawing, alongside more traditional methods of participant observation, gave children the opportunity to share their perspectives on aspects of their social worlds. I might speculate, for instance, that Colby and Janna's drawings above reflect the way they perceive their place in the family, in relation to other family members with whom they work and who they help. Colby has drawn himself with his mother in every picture, not including his two younger siblings. As the oldest, perhaps he views himself as the one who helps his mother the most. He once told me that his little sister (under two-years old) helped and that when they went to collect firewood, she carried home a stick. His mother, Paula, had also told me in the vignette with which I opened this thesis, that her daughter liked to work and that her sons had each planted banana trees in the swidden field. Though Paula told me that all of her children worked and helped, perhaps Colby's drawing was a way of giving himself extra recognition. At the same time, I had asked the children, 'what do you do to help your parents?' using 'you' in its singular form, which might also be why Colby's siblings do not feature in his drawings.

Jana, on the other hand, did not draw herself with her mother in any of the pictures, though we sense the presence of her mother in one of the pictures because of Jana's description, 'when my mum says sit, I sit.' Instead, Jana depicts herself with her sisters in the drawings. In her first drawing, she is with her youngest sister of five, Gracie, with whom I saw Jana spend more time than with her older sisters, usually playing. Collecting sticks for firewood was something that parents often sent younger children to do, as it did not involve chopping wood and as such the kind of task that Jana and Gracie may have gone off to do together. In another picture, Jana has drawn herself in the kitchen with one of her older sisters, Ada, showing how they are both undertaking different tasks. While Jana's big sister, sixteen-year-old Ada, is grating bitter manioc, nine-year-old Jana is sitting on the lever of the manioc press. She has drawn her mother alone in the swidden field while Jana says that she is at school. Her drawings suggests that she sees her role of helping and working as peripheral, by comparison to that of her older sister.

Though Jana could get away with helping less than other children her age did because she had three elder sisters, who helped their mother with 'women's work,' her family still expected her help as well. As Jana's father, Jacobo once told me about her, 'We have to order her to work. Even though she does not want to work, and she disobeys, she is learning to do it.' On another occasion, it was Jana's ten-year-old cousin, Yesenia who told me about Jana's lack of helping at home. One evening, I sat with Jana and her cousin, Yesenia on one of the benches nearest to the television in church to watch a film. 'She does not help her mother at all,' Yesenia suddenly told me in Spanish, flicking a stern look over at Jana, who was sat on the other side of me, apparently unconcerned by what Yesenia was saying. I asked Yesenia who had said this, wondering if she had heard this comment from someone else. She told me that she heard this from her aunt, who lived next door to Jana's family.

Part of what I gained from running activity sessions with the children that I would not have gained only from watching children work and help their parents, were the kinds of interactions that took place between the children as they answered my questions. As adults did not ask children the kinds of questions I asked in the activity sessions, I would never have heard how they answered or commented on and challenged one another's answers, sometimes even questioning one another's integrity. During one of our activity sessions, for instance, Yesenia made a sarcastic jibe at her younger brother, Lando, when he responded to my question about what the children did in the swidden field with their parents. The exchange took place in Cacua, so while I had been able detect that the siblings were bickering, I did not understand exactly what had been said until I listened back to the recording of the session with Felicia. Lando had been particularly enthusiastic answering my question and was listing all the activities that took place in the swidden field. Yesenia quickly cut in with a sarcastic comment, not quite under her breath, which she delivered while glaring fiercely at her brother, 'Lando is not lazy. I peel bitter manioc, he says, as if he were not lazy!' she hissed.

'And you!' Lando shot back grumpily.

'Am I the lazy one?' Yesenia challenged.

As highlighted in previous chapters, among the Cacua of Wacará, being lazy is viewed negatively and in opposition to working and helping. Yesenia's exchange with her younger brother during this activity session indicates the way children might start to assimilate and assert themselves through the valorisation of work, challenging peers who do not. Yesenia's criticism of other children as 'lazy' or 'not helping' their parents, might have also been a way for her to express her frustration at the amount of responsibility and work that she assumed in her household compared to other children, like her younger brother and cousin. At ten-years-old, Yesenia was the eldest of four children, with two younger brothers and a one-year-old sister, who she often looked after while her parents were occupied. Nonetheless, Yesenia's scolding of other children sometimes meant that she was left without playmates. Her cousins, Colby, Jana, and Nicol (their mothers were sisters) had told me that Yesenia was 'crazy' (*loca* in Spanish) and 'scolds a lot' (*regaña mucho* in Spanish). Colby had also referred to her as 'one who is angry' in Cacua (*íijnit*) when she was not around. The comments, descriptions, and brief disagreements that I have highlighted among the children during our activity sessions so far, highlight the prominence of 'work' and 'helping' in their everyday lives, as well as their disapproval of laziness, anger, and scolding.

In this first half of the chapter, I have shown how the theme of working and helping one's family arose in an early activity session I had designed on drawing a map of the community and asking the children where they liked being and what they did there. I have shown how I then began to design some of the following activity sessions around what children did to help their parents. I have highlighted the ways in which such exercises have enriched my use of more traditional methods of participant observation by allowing me an insight into children's

perspectives on their roles in the family. This offers sharp relief to the focus of many classical regional scholars on the complementary roles of men and women (husbands and wives) in the subsistence economy, which tend to ignore or belittle the role of children.

By contrast, the children's discussions and drawings in our activity sessions, highlight the prominence of children in the subsistence economy. In fact, there are no adults in Jana's drawings above, except one. While each of Colby's drawings above feature his mother, he appears at her side, accompanying and helping her in everything she does. Another advantage of these exercises was to encourage discussion among the children and in moments where they challenged one another, making evaluations of one another's actions or lack thereof, suggests the ways in which they too were coming to valorise work.

In the rest of this chapter, I will show how I designed another activity session based on a popular insult that I heard children in the community hurl at one another, *jenah joicanni* (one who does not think). I will then explore what it means among the Cacua of the wider community to think, the relation between thoughts, actions, and attentiveness to others as well as the development of good thoughts in children. I will draw from regional literature to examine this theme, pointing to where Cacua conceptions of thought and its development in children meet and diverge from such conceptions among others.

(Not) Thinking Well

Unlike the activity sessions I have mentioned so far, the session in which I asked children about what a child who 'thinks well' (*tʉ́i jenah joiní*) says and does versus a child who does 'not think well' (*tʉ́i jenah joicanni*), did not include any discussion of 'work' or 'helping.' I had designed the activity session after witnessing several instances of children around the community retorting, '*jenah joicanni'* (one who does not think), at another child who had just done something to irritate them. Instances I noted of children retaliating to another child's actions with this cutting remark, included a teenager snapping '*jenah joicanni'* at a child who purposefully tripped her up and in another case a girl shouting the phrase at a boy who was incessantly throwing pips at her after she had told him to stop several times.

During this activity session, the children had much more to say about the child 'who does not think well' (*tʉ́i jenah joicanni*) than the child 'who thinks well' (*tʉ́i jenah joiní*), excitedly speaking over one other to offer their examples of such behaviour. I had introduced the discussion by showing the children a paper cutout of a child and told them that this child did not think well (*tʉ́i jenah joicanni*). 'What is his name?' I asked the children, encouraging them to create a character for the paper cutout. I had intended for the task of giving the paper cut-out child a name to be a quick fun way of engaging the children in the activity, so that I could refer to the cut-out child by name, a name that they had chosen. For instance, 'this is [insert name chosen for paper cutout child]. [Name of paper cutout child] does not think well. Tell

me what kind of things [Name of paper cutout child], who does not think well, says, and does.' Nonetheless, choosing a name turned out to be a little trickier than that.

'Bryson,' Colby said, calling out the name of one of the boys present and thus indirectly labelling him as 'one who does not think well.' I had been worried that this might happen, causing upset for one of the children in the group. I tried to brush off Colby's suggestion, but several children began to echo Bryson's name. Bryson furrowed his brow in response, displaying his displeasure. 'Really?' I asked, laughing, pulling a funny face to make light of Colby's name suggestion, 'next [suggestion], what is his name?'

'Loco,' Colby shouted out another suggestion. *Crazy* in Spanish.

I repeated, 'Loco,' which made the children laugh, 'Is his name Loco?'

'No,' Jana called out over the laughter.

'Perezoso,' Colby suggested. *Lazy* in Spanish.

'Malo,' Bryson suggested, giggling afterwards. *Bad* in Spanish.

These name suggestions made the children laugh because Crazy, Lazy and Bad were not typical children's names. Although Colby's suggestions had made the children laugh, which I suspect was partly his intention, he was also describing the characteristics attributed to 'one who does not think well.' Yesenia, for example, had once told me of a girl with whom she was messing around at the river, 'She is crazy! She does not think!' Though the girls had been playing, and Yesenia had made the comment in jest, it indicated what the expression 'not thinking' meant for Cacua people, as had Colby and Bryson's suggestions of Lazy and Bad for the paper cutout child's name.

Finally, Yesenia suggested the kind of name that one might give a child, 'Yac.'

'Ok, Yac,' I agreed.

'Why is "the one who does not think well" Yac?' Colby asked, complaining about the name to his friends, most likely disappointed that I had not agreed to one of his suggestions instead.

Moving the discussion along, I began to ask questions about what a child 'who does not think well' (*tu̱i jenah joicanni*) says and does. The children answered that a child who does not think well hits others, scolds others, scratches, bites, does not invite others to eat chilli pot or drink with them, gets angry, hits others when angry making them fall over, and has angry thoughts.

By contrast, when I asked about a 'child who thinks well' (*tu̱i jenah joini wébít*), Colby immediately responded that they do 'not reprimand' (*ju̱ihcan*).

‘Just playing, running around, without reprimanding,’ Yesenia added.

‘As if they play without reprimanding,’ another child retorted.

When I asked what a child who thinks well says, the children responded as follows.

‘They say, “come on, let’s play.”’

‘After playing together, they go to bathe.’

‘Without getting angry, they just say, “let’s bathe.”’

‘Without getting angry, they just say, “let’s play.”’

‘They say, “let’s go eat chilli pot.”’

It was very typical for children to run around playing together in the community, before going to the river en masse and jumping in to continue playing games like catch, which involved swimming underwater and diving out of the way to avoid getting tagged. The importance placed on sociability was evident from the children’s responses in this activity session, such as playing without getting angry or scolding others, as well as offering and eating chilli pot and having drinks with other children. As the children’s responses showed, ‘not getting angry’ (*íijcan*) was a key part of what they understood it meant to think well.

This was likely influenced by the fact that the Cacua discouraged children from getting angry from a young age. One child told me that the stinging plant (*bringamosa* in Spanish) was used for ‘íijnit’ (those who get angry). I had seen parents threaten to use *bringamosa* when children threw tantrums, in which case parents told an older sibling to fetch the plant from wherever it was growing outside. I had seen a twelve-year-old girl lightly touch her two-year-old brother’s arms and legs with the stinging plant when he began to throw a tantrum while in her care. She had tried several other means of distracting him, such as squatting down for him to climb on her back and she had even tried to ignore him, but resorted to using *bringamosa* when these techniques did not work. While I never saw parents use *bringamosa* on their children, one mother told me that her three-year-old son had been crying so much the night before that the father had gone to get *bringamosa* and rubbed it in the child’s face. Such actions were not referred to as punishing children but correcting them. *Beh wili* (older women) were known to carry this stinging plant with them to the swidden field to rub on their knees when they were aching. The stinging plant was a remedy to soothe physical aches and pains, as people believed that it soothed children’s unwarranted anger.

Stories were another way to deter children from getting angry. One night Felicia’s three-year-old was following her around the kitchen crying and whingeing for no obvious reason as she heated the chili pot over the cooking fire before bed. Felicia’s voice suddenly turned to an

urgent whisper as she had told him that if he continued to cry, she would have to put him outside and remember what happened to the *íijnit* (one who gets angry), a girl whose parents put her outside when she wouldn't stop crying. She then recounted the well-known tale of the *íijnit*, a girl who was crying and crying while her parents were heating the chilli pot before bed. They put her outside to calm down while they finished cooking, but while she was alone outside, *nemep*[21] came to steal her away. When the parents came outside to fetch their daughter, she was gone. Felicia laughed as her six-year-old daughter moved right up close to her in the dark kitchen, teasing her daughter for getting scared. Whether Felicia's hushed whispers or the story itself had soothed (or scared) her previously whinging three-year-old, he was no longer crying by the time she had finished.

When children got older, parents reprimanded them more explicitly for getting angry, in the form of parental harangues. The negative imperative, 'íij ca bojoó' was one I often heard directed at the eight-year-old boy in the home of my host family, for example (see ch8). At around this age, I also noticed children remarking on one another's demeanour. As I noted in our activity session about children who 'think well' and 'do not think well,' the children recognised playing without scolding others (*jɨ̄ihcan*) or getting angry (*íijcan*) as an attribute of 'thinking well.' As such, playing can become a site for children to learn to adopt or challenge certain dispositions, mitigating those which are undesirable for playing together. On one occasion, for instance, I observed seven-year-old Yamile challenge ten-year-old Yesenia by calling her, *íijnit* (angry one) after she had snapped at another girl on their way to the river to play. By the time they reached the river and one of the children suggested playing 'Pinocchio,' a game of tag, Yesenia's mood quickly lifted as did the atmosphere between the children.

Thoughts, Actions & Social Responsiveness

It was not only children who accused one another of 'not thinking,' as in some of the examples I described above. Felicia once told me, for instance, 'people talk, they say that the president [of work] *no piensa* ('does not think' in Spanish).' She added some context to her comment by recounting that when the community had been hosting a sports event, she and her husband had been made responsible for preparing refreshments for everyone. There was another team, including the president of work and several others, who were responsible for preparing everyone lunch. When someone approached Felicia's husband to inform him that there was no water to cook with, he explained that this was an issue for the cooking team to address.

[21] *Nemep* is a trickster character that appears in many Cacua stories, he tricks and deceives humans, luring them away, kidnapping babies, children, and adults. The Cacua translate *nemep* as 'devil' or 'demon' in Spanish but explain that this is not the devil from hell as described in the bible, it is a creature that lives in the forest. In the stories, when *nemep* appears people feel tired and drowsy, often unable to move. As well as an archetype in Cacua stories, the Cacua believe that *nemep* is a real creature and some have seen him while out in the forest hunting. One man said that *nemep* came to him when he was about to fall asleep in his hammock, he tried to scream but could not, his body was paralysed. *Nemep* made a fire and cooked his food. The man fell asleep and does not know what happened next, but when he awoke, *nemep* was gone.

When the 'president of work' heard this response, he became angry and exclaimed that those who did not want to fetch water, were not hungry and did not want to eat. 'People did not like that,' Felicia told me, 'They were saying, he is a leader, he should not talk like that. He is not fit to be a leader.'

Part of the reason that the president's response was inappropriate was because giving food is such a central part of sociability in the community (see ch7) that whether people were hungry or wanted to eat was irrelevant. There was an unspoken norm, for example, that people should always give food or drink to those who popped by their house, whether to borrow something or share news. Likewise, those who were offered food or drink were expected to accept it and not doing so was offensive. If we consider what the children told me about a child who 'does not think well,' noting that they get angry, scold others, and do not invite others to eat with them, the president of work executed all of these (mild) violations by reacting in the way that he did. Leaders were often criticised for their behaviour, as people saw their role as guiding the community and therefore leading by example. As Santos Granero highlights with regards to a Yanesha community, 'commensality and cooperation enhanced the sense of conviviality, reinforcing communal solidarity' (2000: 274). Among the Cacua, such notions also played into the moral economy, as did certain mechanisms to keep said notions in place. In the case outlined above, people did not openly confront the president of work for his angry outburst but rather, expressed their displeasure through gossip, contempt, and not taking him seriously in his role as a leader (see Santos Granero, 2000: 272).

One interpretation of the incident is that the president's focus on the value of work and helping, to which he believed others were not adhering, obscured his own adherence to the value of sociability, which included giving food and not getting angry. The scenario also highlights that when people 'come together to work' (*teo wáac*, also translated as 'to help'), they may become subject to the evaluations of others. As there are more and less acceptable ways of critiquing the actions of others, those who criticise also have to tread a fine line. In this way, such incidences can provide people with what Keane calls 'ethical affordances,' or opportunities to draw on aspects of their experiences and perceptions as they make ethical evaluations and decisions (2015: 27). As a theoretical concept, ethical affordance builds on notions in Aristotelian ethics of *phronesis,* in that good judgement means assessing the situation in hand and acting accordingly, rather than adhering to abstract notions of what is right (see Lambek, 2010: 19). In the president of work's case, rather than judging the best course of action according to circumstances, he took the position that refusing to work, or help was categorically bad, and acted unsociably by getting angry in making this point.

As such, it was not precisely what the president had said that caused people to say that he 'does not think,' but his lack of judgement regarding how to act in that given situation. Mezzenzana explains that for the Runa, 'for a person to have "thought," they need to be self-sufficient and independent… Yet, independence is not a primary goal if such quality is not

deployed to meet the desires of others: an attentiveness toward others' also needs to be developed' (2020: 548). It was this 'attentiveness toward others' that Wacará's 'president of work' lacked causing comments that he 'does not think.' At the same time, the president's critique was that people were not working or helping when his cooking team needed water, which might also suggest other people's lack of attentiveness towards him and his team. In any case, there are two separate issues here. Firstly, the importance of helping and attending to others and secondly, the ways in which criticisms of others were made and evaluated. I will address this first issue below, with reference to discussions in regional literature about the development of thoughts/ thinking in relation to the development of responsiveness to others. I will address the second issue towards the end of the following section following a vignette that highlights the issue as it arises between children.

The importance of self-sufficiency and independence among the Cacua is most strongly expressed through their emphasis on young people needing to know how to work, before finding a spouse and having children (see ch3). As children came to develop self-sufficiency and independence through working alongside their parents and siblings, these traits developed alongside the development of attentiveness to others. While the children in the activity session did not mention that a child who thinks well, helps (*teo wáac*) or works (*teo*), Colby made a comment suggesting that a child who 'does not think well' is lazy, which implies that they do not work or help.

In regional literature, Gow notes that among the Piro, *nshinikanchi*, a term meaning 'thought, mind, memory, love and respect' governs relations between people and develops in children as they grow up and respond to others (2000: 59). Unlike the meaning conveyed by the words of the English translation, this Piro term does not refer to an internal state (*ibid*: 51). As such, people can easily discern another person's *nshinikanchi* (*ibid*). This is also the case among the Cacua, who perceived other people's *jenah joyat* (or lack thereof), which depending on the context translated as 'thoughts' or 'feelings.' To give an example, in response to my question about what a good father should do, in an interview I conducted about family life, Candela told me,

> 'A good father "feels love" (*oi jenah joi*) for his children. He, my husband, goes far in search of food, over there, deep in the forest. When he doesn't find anything, after coming back, he goes back to the river to fish, where he finds something. I see him when he comes back with something and cook it to eat together.'

Candela's response points to her husband's *jenah joyat* (thoughts and feelings) of love for his children as perceivable through his actions, going far in search of food, so that his family could eat together after preparing the meat or fish on his return. Another example of discerning a person's thoughts through their actions was in relation to gender specific activities and having thoughts of a man or woman. It was usually when a person regularly undertook tasks or acted

in ways associated with the opposite sex that people made this kind of comment about them. For example, an elderly man, who was reflecting on his childhood, told me,

> 'My grandmother and my mother, those two women raised me… My grandmother and mother had "men's thoughts" (*newe jenah joyat*). [My mother] went fishing, and when she wasn't fishing, she took the dogs hunting, killing small animals. She fed me the animals.'

The elderly man discerned his mother and grandmother's thoughts from their actions hunting and fishing. As men typically undertook these activities, he said that his mother and grandmother had 'men's thoughts.' While such comments suggest that the thoughts of others are discernible through their actions, it also suggests that it is through people's actions that these thoughts develop in the first place. As mentioned in chapter 4, when I asked Faber what 'men's thoughts' were, he said work among other activities and that a man has these thoughts, 'Once he is mature, once he had started to work.' This line of reasoning is somewhat circular and perhaps that is the point given that the Cacua do not consider a person's thoughts and feelings as separate from their actions. Faber, for example, told me that the children of shamans were born from their father's thoughts. He emphasised this point by recounting a story about Cubai, typically referred to in literature as the creator or 'cultural hero' of the Cubeo (see Goldman, 1963), but of whom the Cacua of Wacará also knew many stories. Below is a summary of the story he recounted:

There was a white anaconda, who had two daughters. There was a party, but the white anaconda did not want his daughters to see Cubai. He put them in a trunk and tied it up in the rafters of the maloca. Cubai arrived and opened the trunk. On seeing the two girls, he asked what they were doing there. They told him that their father did not want them to see him. 'Very well,' said Cubai. He got out his yuruparí (flute) and played. He closed the trunk and tied it back up in the rafters of the maloca. When the party ended, the white anaconda opened up the trunk and found both of his daughters pregnant. Cubai had impregnated them with his thoughts. Years later when the girls had given birth and their sons had grown up a little, there was another party. The girls sat at the edge of the room with their sons, holding them in their arms. The men danced in the middle of the room with their flutes and dancing staffs. The men danced around in a circle and each time Cubai passed, the boys wriggled in their mother's arms. What are the boys doing? The mothers wondered. And next time the boys wriggled, the mothers decided to let them go. The boys ran up to Cubai, who was unrecognisable in a feather crown and body paint, and the boys wrapped their arms around his legs. The boys recognised their father. Cubai looked at them both and held them under each arm, continuing to dance. Each time the dancers went around the circle, the boys grew a little more. They danced all night until dawn and by the end of the party, the two boys were as big and tall as Cubai. They looked identical to him. This was because they were his thoughts, his being.

After recounting the story, Faber noted that this was only the case for shamans, not for normal men, which was why fathers had to give their children advice. He remarked that from the age

of around three, parents could teach their children, 'bathe like this, walk like this.' From four or five-years-old, Faber noted that children 'more or less understood' and that parents could give advice little by little without scolding. The notion that parents must give their children advice so that they will think well was also apparent when I spoke to parents during the short interviews that I ran in Cacua about family life. As one father told me of his children,

> 'If we give good advice, they will live well in the future. When they are "adults" (*behnit*, literally meaning 'those who are mature') they will "think well" (*túi jenah joinít*, literally meaning 'those who think well') and they will live well.'

Similarly, Candela told me,

> 'If us parents, give good advice, our children will "think and grow up well" (*túi jenah joinit behna*).'

Some parents gave me examples of the advice they gave their children, which mostly came in the form of negative imperatives, such as 'do not hit' and 'do not steal,' but also the positive command to go to school and study. At the same time, Candela highlighted another relational aspect of 'thinking' with regards to children developing thoughts when she reflected on the things a mother should do to be a good mother. She noted that,

> 'To be a good mum, we look after our children beautifully, "not scolding" (*jɨ̄ihcan*) when looking after them. Our mother looks after us well, they say, and "grow up as one who thinks well" (*túi jenah joinít behna*).'

While the children at the activity session told me that a child who thinks well 'does not scold' (*jɨ̄ihcan*), what Candela's response suggests is that the way children learn this is through the actions of their own parents. For the Cacua, it was through children's actions and interactions, guided by their parents' advice and by seeing their parents and others acting and interacting well and 'beautifully' (this last point is addressed in ch8), that children developed good thoughts. This is different from conceptions about the way people develop thought in other parts of Amazonia. As I noted in chapter 4, among the Piaroa, this process is seen as taking place in reverse. For the Piaroa, children must first develop a 'life of thoughts' through the moral lessons they receive from the community's leading wizard (see ch4) before their parents consider them as social and therefore able to undertake any domestic chores.

Overing explains that in the first of these lessons, the wizard chants to the gods to give the children the knowledge and skills for gardening and gathering food from the forest (1988: 180). As Overing explains, learning cultural skills such as these are crucial for developing a 'life of thought,' but only in conjunction with learning responsibility and consciousness as well (*ibid*: 175). Therefore, it is only after receiving moral lessons along with the cultural knowledge and skills required to undertake certain tasks that the Piaroa expect children to become increasingly accountable for their actions and as such, to cooperate with those

around them in daily activities (*ibid*: 180). While beliefs about the process of developing thoughts and thinking well differ between the Cacua and the Piaroa, I would argue that Overing's point that for the Piaroa 'action, thought and affect must be constitutive of each other' (2003: 304) is also true for the Cacua of Wacará.

In briefly drawing on regional literature about the way children develop 'thoughts' as they learn responsiveness and attentiveness to others, I also want to highlight the way I build on these conversations in my analysis. I have used detailed ethnography to describe the way children (seven- to twelve-year-olds) spoke about helping their parents, particularly their mothers, and about thinking, hinting at a correlation between the two (e.g., a child who does not think well is lazy). While the children's responses tended to be quite normative in our activity sessions, it was still interesting for me to establish what these norms were and even more interesting to observe how children evaluated and criticised one another's actions with regards to these norms.

For example, while children told me that they helped their parents with certain activities, what happened when they did not? How did their peers or siblings respond to and evaluate their actions? Above, I mentioned that when Lando was enthusiastically telling me about all the things he did in the swidden field during an activity session, his big sister scowled at him, remarking sarcastically that he was not lazy at all. I will show in the following section that what children told me about 'thinking well' in our activity session, did not necessarily match up to their own way of acting as they evaluated and critiqued the actions of their peers, and were in turn subject to evaluations and critique. This kind of attention to children's everyday interactions is not prevalent in regional literature about thoughts and the way thoughts develop through attentiveness to others.

Outside of specifically regional literature[22], Ochs and Izquierdo take inspiration from the Aristotelian notion that it is through a combination of one's habits (*hexis*) and ability to judge the best course of action according to the circumstances, including what is culturally appropriate (*phronesis*), that one cultivates virtue. I build on this idea with regards to the Cacua notion of thought and thinking well and its relation to the value of 'work' (*teo*) and 'helping' (*teo wáac*) among Cacua families and the wider community. As well as Aristotle's notion of *phronesis,* I draw on Keane's notion of ethical affordance to demonstrate that children not only learn the technical skills required to work as they grow up helping their families, but also the social responsiveness toward others required of 'thinking well.'

Helping Yesenia

Ten-year-old Yesenia stood before me, long machete in hand and a strip of wooden vine twisted into a wide ring that she hung around her neck. 'What are you doing?' she enquired

[22] Though Ochs and Izquierdo (2009) do draw on a case study among the Matsigenka.

confidently, as I sat atop a large rock in the middle of the village attempting to sketch a map. Yesenia and her nine-year-old cousin, Jana, peered at my drawing with interest, along with their younger siblings, Ruben, and Gracie of about four and five years old. When I asked if they wanted to draw as well, Yesenia shook her head with a firm, 'no.' Jana explained that they were going to collect firewood for her aunt (Yesenia and Ruben's mother), who was making juice. The children allowed me to join them when I asked, but as I could not find my machete, I told them that I would just have to help by carrying firewood instead. When we reached a recently felled swidden field at the edge of the forest, Yesenia noted, 'My mum said to bring back loads,' before adding, 'me, not you lot.'

She was the only one with a machete and held it high above her head in one hand to bring down with force onto the narrow tree trunk that she had lifted from the ground with her other hand. She threw the piece of wood onto a pile once she had chopped it. Jana had no machete, but scrambled through the recently felled swidden field, looking for firewood. 'Sasha, this one for you,' she called, holding up one of the narrow tree trunks lying on to ground and passing it to me. 'I'm going to carry this,' little Ruben told me, when I left it on the ground to collect later, which made me smile as it was clearly too heavy for his small frame. Jana climbed over the fallen trees around us, while Gracie followed her, tripping over the branches and twigs, and laughing hard, before picking herself up to continue. Jana collected branches of around an inch thick, snapping sticks off them with her fingers and then breaking the branches down to size over her head. She soon had a large bundle in her arms and passed me the thicker, heavier sticks that she had found.

Before crossing the bridge back home after leaving the swidden field, Yesenia and Jana placed their firewood down to look for vine to tie it together more securely. Jana pulled a long piece of vine (different from the woody vine Yesenia had been wearing around her neck) from a weed it was wrapped around. She ran her hand along the vine in one swift movement, removing all its leaves and passed it to me. As I often felt when spending time with the children in this way, I was under their charge and in their care rather than the other way around. They were still learning, but knew much better than me, a 'young woman' (*jáap wili*), how to work, how to find, chop and gather firewood, where to find vine and how to strip it of leaves to tie up their bundles to carry safely home over the bridge, waterlogged path, and knobby tree trunk. 'Coming together to work' (*teo wáac*) involved looking out for one another by responding to each other's needs.

I often found that the children acted towards me as an elder sibling or parent would towards a young child or in Ingold's terms, as the more experienced who direct the attention of the novice (see Ingold, 2000: 22). The children had encouraged me to participate by handing me logs that I had not spotted myself and by giving me vine to tie up my pile of firewood to make it easier to carry. They also kept an eye on me to check that I was ok, verbally checking in with me at several points and warning me of potential hazards. Five-year-old Gracie directed my

attention to the *bepe,* deep mud running alongside the knobbly tree trunk we were walking over on our way to the swidden field. Conversely, the children did not accept my help when I offered to carry the firewood that they complained was heavy. In this way, learning to work in Wacará took place through helping others, a process bound up in enskillment and care, through which children also had opportunities to develop the ability to 'think well.'

After making my way across the football pitch, I smiled at one of my teenage neighbours, who was sitting outside the house with her sister-in-law. I took the opportunity to turn and check if Jana and Yesenia were still behind me, hesitating until I could see them. I was still in earshot as my neighbour's sister-in-law giggled, 'she doesn't know' (*Jéihcan*). Her criticism, which I do not think she realised I could understand, was an indication that *knowing* (jéih) how to do certain things, sometimes referred to for my sake as 'work of the indigenous,' which included carrying firewood, was an important part of growing up. By highlighting that I did 'not know' (*jéihcan*) how to carry firewood or perhaps more generally, to do indigenous work properly, the sister-in-law was emphasising my non-indigenous status and immaturity in Cacua terms.

As explored in chapter 4, only once a woman *knows* how to do 'indigenous work' can she marry and form a family, and only after this is she considered mature, an adult. It was through many instances of collecting and carrying firewood, having previously accompanied and watched others do so, that I had been able to carry the large bundle of firewood to Yesenia's house, navigating the high rickety bridge, slippery steps onto the muddy waterlogged path and knobby horizontal tree trunk, without falling, dropping the firewood, or hurting myself. While I had noted much improvement in my capabilities as I joined the children, I too was still learning, as the woman's comment that I did '*not know'* reminded me.

When we reached Yesenia's house, I hung back while Yesenia entered with a large bundle of firewood atop her head. The door swung shut behind her. Ruben went through and then opened the door for me. Their mother was massaging yam pulp in water through a handwoven colander, atop a wooden tripod, firmly running her hands from the edge of the colander to its centre, so that a purple liquid dripped through the bottom into a pot beneath. 'Yeseniadih teo wáacna,' I called, attempting to explain my appearance. *I am helping Yesenia.* I walked through into the back room and propped the firewood against the back wall, next to Yesenia's bundle, calling, 'Bejna ca,' with a smile, before slipping out. *I'm going.* Yesenia's mother smiled slightly in response. I left quickly, wary of overstaying my welcome.

After leaving, Yesenia told me to come to her house at five o'clock for juice. 'My mum said so,' she explained, 'She said, Sasha helped.' The transactional nature of the invitation surprised me, and I wondered if Yesenia's mother had interpreted my declaration that I was 'helping Yesenia' as a demand for recognition. On the one hand, while people sometimes asked for help with work from adult kin and gave them a meal of meat or fish with manioc bread afterwards, I was not kin and had helped of my own accord, so felt a little embarrassed

that Yesenia's mother may have felt obliged to give me some juice. On the other hand, by telling Yesenia to invite me back to the house to have juice later that day because I had helped, Yesenia's mother was also impressing the value of helping and giving to others on her daughter. After all, it was largely from helping their parents that children gained recognition within the family, which was in turn a key motivator for them to help.

At around five in the afternoon, Jana and her cousin Nicol called on me at my host family's house. The eight-year-old son of my host family, Beny, also joined us on our way to Yesenia's house. As we approached, we ran into Yesenia on her way home from the river. 'They didn't help,' Yesenia whispered to me sharply, glancing at Beny and Nicol. Her displeasure with Beny and Nicol's uninvited arrival was clear. We followed Yesenia to her house and waited outside while she went to bring us some juice. Before entering the kitchen, she said within earshot of Beny and Nicol that the juice was just for me and Jana because we had helped carry the firewood. She flicked a harsh look over at Nicol and Beny before slipping into the house, the door closing behind her. Jana and I squatted with our backs to the outside of the kitchen, next to the door. Beny wandered around on the periphery of this slightly tense gathering, now that he and Nicol were aware that they were not allowed any juice. Nicol also moved away from me and Jana to stand against the family's clothesline.

Yesenia reappeared from the kitchen with a medium-sized plastic bowl, filled to the top with purple coloured yam juice. She passed me the bowl first. I drank some of the deliciously sweet and filling juice, before passing it to Jana, hoping that she would then pass it to Beny, so that I would not be the one to disobey Yesenia. However, Jana passed the bowl back to me once she had drunk from it. I drank again and then looked at Yesenia, before quietly asking if I should pass it to Beny. 'Baini jeh,' she said sternly. *Just a little.*

'Beny,' I called. He came to me, a little wary of Yesenia and took the bowl.

'Baini jeh,' Yesenia reminded him forcefully, watching him closely as he drank.

'Baini jeh,' called out little Ruben as Beny drank.

Beny just had a little and then passed the bowl to Nicol, who took her turn to drink from the bowl, stopping suddenly when Yesenia and Ruben called, 'Baini jeh'.

Nicol passed the bowl back to Yesenia, who gave it back Jana and so we continued. When I drank from the bowl a third time, Yesenia caught my eye and cocked her head towards Beny. I called him over again and offered him the drink, which he sipped tentatively. He gave it back to me, so I offered it to Nicol, who shook her head.

'You don't want it?' I asked.

Nicol shook her head again without speaking.

‘She is scolding,’ Yesenia told me.

‘Who?’ I asked.

‘Me,’ Yesenia answered, ‘us.’

This exchange outside Yesenia’s kitchen illustrates the tension that can arise between the different social values that the children are learning to navigate. Yesenia, for example, appeared to be upholding the notion that those who helped carry firewood for her mother to make the juice, which required boiling and cooling before serving, were invited to drink. She was not happy when Nicol and Beny, who had not helped gather firewood, arrived at her house with me and Jana. However, this was hardly Beny and Nicol’s fault as they had not had the opportunity to help, like I had when I saw Yesenia and Jana enroute and asked to join. Yesenia and Nicol expressed their dissatisfaction with one another in different ways, both of which went against the core value of sociability. Nicol’s reaction to Yesenia and her little brother’s reprimands was to withdraw from the group and refuse the juice when offered a little. While Yesenia had been focused on the idea that only those who helped, could drink the juice that been made from their work, Nicol responded to Yesenia’s actions by scolding her for breaking the core value of sociability.

In Yesenia’s case, her refusal to offer other children juice meant that she was going against the important value of giving people something to eat or drink when they visited. By snapping and glaring at her friends, she was also exhibiting anger, which was heavily disapproved of in the community. I had heard children calling Yesenia ‘íijnit’ (one who is angry) to her face after witnessing her scold another child, but in this case no one dared. In Nicol’s case, she exhibited anger through refusing to look at or speak to Yesenia after she had shouted, ‘baini jeh’ (just a little), when Nicol was drinking. Refusing to drink or eat when offered was also offensive, which is why Yesenia interpreted Nicol’s refusal to drink more as ‘scolding’ (*jɨ̄ih* in Cacua).

This point had been particularly pressed on me when a woman told me that when she had stayed with a family outside of Wacará, the wife had refused to come and eat when the husband called her that the food was ready. The woman recounting this anecdote said to me, ‘I don’t know about you, but in our culture refusing to eat with others is very bad.’ Even during our activity sessions, the children had mentioned giving food and drink as something that good people and children ‘who think well’ do. By contrast, they had noted that not giving food or drink to others was something that children ‘who do not think well’ do. In another activity session, when I had asked what people do when they feel angry or sad, the children told me that when people felt sad or angry, they did not give food or drink to others, and that when others offered them food or drink, they refused. As these examples indicate, commensality holds an important role in the moral economy.

Each of the girls made use of the ethical affordances available to them, drawing on the experience to evaluate one another's actions as well as their own. Both of the girls adapted to the circumstances by shifting from their initial position. While Yesenia had begun by stating that only those who had helped, Jana and I, could have the juice, she then allowed Nicol and Beny to have some as well, but 'just a little.' Nicol had initially come to Yesenia's house with her cousin and close friend, Jana. They had been playing and laughing on their way to the house, having stopped to pick me up from where I was living. Once Yesenia began making comments that only Jana and I would be allowed to have the juice, Nicol's playful mood changed to one of seriousness and annoyance. Instead of laughing and playing with Jana, as she had been just moments previously, she moved away from her and the rest of the group, to stand alone at the edge of the gathering. Her stance became one of power when she refused to drink more juice, as Yesenia recognised it as scolding.

Conclusion

As children grow up helping their families with work, they not only learn the technical skills required to work, but also the social responsiveness toward others required of 'thinking well.' Children must learn how to navigate values of sociability, such as not getting angry or scolding others, as they come to recognise the value of work and impress this upon their peers, challenging those who do not help and those who they deem as lazy. In turn, children either call out their peers who 'do not think' (*jenah joicanni*) and get angry (*íijnit*, meaning 'one who does not think') or indicate their displeasure non-verbally, by refusing to share food or play.

The fact that children become subject to the evaluations of other children and their parents is key to the process of learning to work and think well. In the same vein, thinking well is also crucial for issuing critiques in acceptable ways. I have highlighted the kinds of opportunities children have to draw on ethical affordance and develop Aristotle's meta-virtue of *phronesis,* the ability to judge the best course of action according to the circumstances through ordinary instances in their everyday lives. In this way, children encourage the cultivation of practical wisdom in one another through the positive cycle of playing together, offering food and drink to one another, and helping each other with work. They also scold one another, sometimes unfairly, evaluating one another's actions in line with social values, but also with regards to conflicting social values. Work and helping in line with the ability to think well is key to living well with others, another meta-virtue crucial for community life.

Chapter 6. The Problem of Theft

As children learnt, interpreted, and applied social values core to communal living in everyday life and as such, acceptable ways of judging how to best act according to circumstances, they were also learning how best to navigate their actions within the community's moral economy. In this chapter, I will explore important aspects of this moral economy in reference to a speech one of the community leaders, Faber, delivered to community members about working (in the swidden field) to provide food for one's family rather than stealing it. In Faber's speech, his categorisation of work as the solution and moral opposite of theft is not to be taken for granted. By categorising work in terms of 'progress' and cohesion of the community in contrast to theft as representing separation and regression in the community, Faber's speech indicates socially valued forms of living together. This includes the value of autonomy and self-sufficiency, as previously highlighted, but also the importance of requesting rather than stealing food from others in cases of lack, which points to valued forms of interdependence.

Following the emphatic message Faber delivered in his speech, regarding theft in the community and work as the solution, I investigate everyday instances of theft and requests for manioc in the community by drawing on ethnographic data. While such instances took place among adults, an instance in one of the activity sessions I ran with a group of children, revealed that they also paid attention to such happenings and evaluated people's actions in the community as good and bad accordingly.

Faber's Speech: Work as the Solution

There was much anticipation for the arrival of the indigenous organisation that legally represented the community of Wacará (and several other indigenous communities of the area). Representatives of the organisation, including its president, were coming to run a workshop on Customary Justice in Wacará. Juan, who had been liaising with the leaders of the organisation in Mitú, had returned to Wacará several days previously to prepare everyone for the big event. He had created a programme for the day, beginning with a wakeup time of four in the morning for women to start preparing manioc bread for the communal breakfast to welcome the visitors. On the morning that the workshop was to take place, Juan blasted pop music through his speakers, which he carried around the community, calling through a megaphone to wake everyone.

Juan had urged members of the community that their presence at this event would be obligatory, though in reality there was no way of enforcing this. Leaders had a mildly invested interest in ensuring that community events with outsiders were well attended, as it reflected badly on their leadership skills if they were not. Nonetheless, I had witnessed several occasions when very few community members had attended workshops run by various

visiting organisations. A friend of mine working at an NGO in Mitú told me that Wacará was not a 'well organised' community, which he and some of his colleagues attributed to the fact that its leaders were often away and were therefore either difficult to contact or were not necessarily able to inform members of the community about upcoming visits. Given that Juan had been spending more and more time in Mitú over the last year and was beginning to get involved in local politics, running for a position in the upcoming local elections of Mitú, I suspected he might want to impress the visiting indigenous organisation.

Once the visitors arrived, there was a series of lively introductions from the representatives of the organisation, followed by presentations on Customary Justice, the theme of the workshop. One of the representatives then divided everyone attending the workshop into groups, issuing each with a different activity, providing them with an A3 sheet of paper and board pens, as well as assigning a leader of the community to facilitate each task. Faber was assigned to a group charged with defining problems in the community, discussing solutions, and recording both upon their A3 sheet divided into two columns, marked conflict on one side and solution on the other. While I did not witness how Faber and his group undertook this task, what struck me was Faber's assertion of the importance of work as a solution to certain problems in the community, when acting as spokesperson for his group.

Standing at the front of the church where the workshop was being held, Faber projected his voice clearly, switching between Spanish and Cacua to translate short phrases or strings of sentences, ensuring that both Cacua and non-Cacua speakers in the audience could listen. Among the non-Cacua speakers were the visitors from the indigenous organisation running the workshop, who had been addressing the community in Spanish. I audio-recorded Faber speaking at the workshop, which he kindly agreed to listen back to with me to roughly translate into Spanish what he had said in Cacua, endeavouring to provide me with context for some of the comments he had made during his speech.

He began addressing the problems and solutions recorded as part of the group task he had been overseeing by waving at the poster, which two representatives of the indigenous organisation running the workshop were holding up behind him,

First point, conflict, resolution: stealing when no one is looking.

It is beautiful to work. It is beautiful to make everything beautiful, bananas, yams, sugarcane, pineapples. When one sows fruits and puts down fertiliser, something beautiful always grows. This is what a leader does, or a Captain. If one works with the community, this is what one must think. One works for everyone, and this encourages all families of the community. This is what is beautiful. But, cheating and stealing is what holds us back, it separates us, it slows us down. If I don't steal from you, I can be good with you for a long time. If I steal your things, I cannot carry on like before, I will have to be a little separate.

If you are a worker, there is always land to work, we will let you work. If a person is a thief, we will say, 'You stole, do not do it again. If you steal, we will not accept you here.'

If you want some things, we speak, we ask, 'Could you give me something? May I take this?' First, like this, without touching anything. If someone is a thief, we must say, 'do not steal, work for your family.' That is how we can solve our problem. Let's all work together.

No stealing and no lying… I am not preaching, but our celestial Father gave us hands so that we can work, so that we can collaborate with other people. What if God had made thieves without hands? Much better! Let us not steal, brothers, sisters, boys, girls, everyone. Everyone eats… I am not rebuking everyone, but rather I am announcing what will happen, what it is we must do. Every day, we must always work daily to have something to eat daily. If we sow manioc, corn, yams, pineapples, every day, we will have breakfast, lunch, dinner, everything. We must work. We must work to supplement our family, to have food daily. Let's all work.

It is obligatory for a person who has a partner to work, so that they do not steal things from another person. For those who have children, it is obligatory to work, it is even more obligatory to work. Why? Because they will never steal things from another person.

Now, what shall we do? Many women are saying that there are many thieves.

Those who steal, when we go to work, they do not go. Today we are all here, but those who steal are not here. This is the moment that they take advantage because no one is taking care of the swidden field or home or many other things.

Faber turned to his group's poster to read out the proposed solution to this problem,

First point, dialogue with the people involved, the captain and *fiscal* of the community.

He continued in his own words,

Speaking to each other. Let's speak to my daughter, to my wife, to my brother, to my uncle, to my grandfather, to whomever. Let's speak. We will not rebuke. 'Do not steal again, work,' we have to say to this person.

We must work united and united we must contribute to dinner, breakfast, or lunch, it could be toasted manioc flour or manioc bread, or fruit juice. All this. And in this way, we must work more…

So, what is it that we are missing? What is our mistake? We need to increase work so that we can live better. We cannot steal, hear me?

He turned back to the poster to read from the solution column,

Next point, if they do not work in the swidden field, if they steal again and do not comply, call a meeting with members of the community.

Faber switched to speaking in Cacua and elaborated on this point,

What will happen to a person who is a thief if they continue living with us? I think, if they do not collaborate with us, it will not go well for them. I am not rebuking. If a person does not accept, it is impossible to kill them, but from where you came, return. One can see how it ends. If a person does not want to leave, traditionally, they sent them bad spirits, they cursed them. This is what we no longer do.

Or a fight will come. An example, I am always hard, but I do not want my people to fight with machetes because of theft or shooting one another because of stealing manioc. This is what they are doing in other communities. They shot and killed a thief in another community. That is why I am giving you advice, so that this does not happen to us. We will not do that.

If a person does not accept and does not work, they must pack up and go, goodbye, send them back to where they came from. Traditionally, culturally, they would not have sent people away, but instead they would have said, 'come and eat' and they would have offered cursed food and they would have finished right there. The next day they would feel bad, their eyes would pop out and they would be dead. That is how they used to do things. Why? Because people did not take heed. They gave advice twice and the third time, they had to kill them or finish with them. Now we do the opposite, we always give advice, we do not kill people. We give advice, work! If not, that is as far as you will get, leave!

We must be awake. If a person is a thief, that is as far as he will get. If he worked, he can be included in the census so that he can build a house, a kitchen. Why? Because he is a good person. In Wacará, we need good people, not bad people, thieves, liars, or murderers. We need good people because we are few and we want to live in a good way and live the best in life while we are alive. On this point, we need to take care.

Faber then mentioned his brother-in-law, who had moved to live in Wacará from another community when his children were young,

He makes his craftwork and sells it. He has land where he grows bananas and manioc. No one can steal from him, it's his. He is on the census. He has everything there. We are the ones who steal from him because I have heard that someone stole a large bunch of bananas from him. There you have it; rumours are that people bother him. We will not do this. People who come from far, and who work, we will not bother them because these things are theirs. It is obligatory. Remember this year, 2019. This year we will work. There is land. This is my last piece of advice, we will work, we will work…We must sow, we must work… That is why we have hands. Let's work! Working is our salvation!

Faber ended his speech, which had lasted half an hour and covered three problems, theft, fights, and single mothers, by returning to the importance of work.

'Jwiítdih teo wáaca,' he stated in Cacua, before roughly translating the phrase into Spanish, 'Let's work (trabajemos), let's collaborate (colaboremos), let's help (ayudemos).'

Unpicking Faber's Speech

There are many points to unpick from Faber's public speech, centring on his emphasis of work. He began by describing the work of growing crops in the swidden field as beautiful. While he stated this part of his speech in Spanish, it is worth noting that the term 'beautiful' in Cacua, *tʉ́ini*, stems from *tʉ́i*, meaning 'good.' By stating that 'it is beautiful to work,' he was referring to work, in terms of growing crops in the swidden field, as a morally good activity. I have consciously employed the direct translation of this phrase in Faber's speech to reflect Overing's point regarding the Piaroa, that beauty is a moral notion, and that ethics and aesthetics are not separate in Amazonian thought, as in Western philosophy (1989: 159). While creating visually beautiful fields was important to some indigenous groups (see e.g., Ewart, 2013), this was not the case for Cacua people.

For the Cacua of Wacará, it was the act of working one's swidden field to produce food for one's family that they valued as good and beautiful. The swidden field provided the most stable source of food for household consumption and as Faber stressed in his public speech, that meant work. At several points during Faber's speech, he noted that he was 'not rebuking' (*jʉ́ihcan*, in Cacua), but giving advice that people work. As highlighted by the anecdote in ch5, 'rebuking' (*jʉ́ih*, in Cacua) was highly disregarded among the Cacua, and attributed to 'not thinking,' a trait that made people unworthy of roles in leadership. As such, leading the community required a careful balance between giving advice, which was positively valued, but not scolding, which was negatively valued.

Though people in the community of Wacará did not typically speak of work as explicitly as Faber in his public speech, the value they placed on work and helping other members of the household (or receiving it) was clear from their pattern of daily work. Ideally, every household of the community would have their own swidden field to work, enabling them to produce enough food for the consumption of their household, and all members of the household would help to make this happen. The ability to do this enabled 'beautiful living' (*tʉ́ini jʉ́mat* in Cacua) or 'living well' (*tʉ́i jʉ́mat*), which was also characterised by an absence of 'problems.'

In some cases, manioc was in short supply as the men of the household had not felled a new swidden field in time for the women to sow crops. If this happened, as Faber stated in his speech, people had to ask another household if they could take some manioc from their field.

In a few cases, women asked this of Felicia, who allowed them to accompany her to her swidden field and spend the morning helping her to weed it before digging up enough bitter manioc to carry home for their own households. It was unusual, for instance, for Antonella to join her son, Yair, and his wife in their swidden field. The reason she had joined them on the occasion I referenced in chapter three, highlights the issues of breakdown between the complementary roles of men (Antonella's unmarried sons) and women's work within a household. After a couple of hours of weeding in Yair and Felicia's swidden field, Felica and I helped Antonella to harvest bitter manioc to take home with her. Yair sat and chatted to us as we pulled up the manioc, cut it from the manioc stick, and filled Antonella's basket.

'It's like paying her,' Yair said laughing.

Though he was making the comment in gest, he was also speaking the truth. Yair and Felicia had not simply brought manioc back from the swidden field to give, Antonella, she had had to 'work' for it by helping them to weed the swidden field before harvesting a basket's worth of manioc to take home. If a window's unmarried sons did not undertake the task of clearing a site for her swidden field, not only was she unable to cultivate bitter manioc, but also forced to request manioc and manioc products from other kin. Given the importance of autonomy in maintaining one's own household, asking for manioc from others and thus demonstrating one's inability to work with the complementary efforts of other members of one's household, is not ideal. It can also leave members of such households open to criticism for being lazy.

As there was a point in time when Felicia appeared to have lots of manioc, while other households were running low for various reasons, several women approached her and asked if they could have some. She obliged each time and allowed the women to harvest her manioc, in some cases on the agreement that they joined her in the swidden field for a morning of weeding beforehand. Nonetheless, she privately told me that such families seemed to think of others as having a lot of manioc, as if it had appeared from nowhere. She then uttered that this was not the case, as those who had manioc, had it because they had suffered. She reminded me of her relentless trips to the swidden field to sow the manioc that others were now harvesting, six months previously.

Felicia told one of the women, who approached her for manioc, that she could take some of the sweet manioc growing next to her house. The woman pulled up a basketful and took some manioc sticks to plant next to her own house. The woman told Felicia that she had been harvesting her sister-in-law's manioc, but her sister-in-law had scolded her, saying that she was like a 'newcomer.' The inference was that newcomers to the community had to ask people (usually kin) from other households for manioc as they did not yet have their own swidden field for cultivating crops. When Felicia asked why the woman had no manioc, the woman told her that the man who usually felled her swidden field had refused, expressing that he was not married, so why should he. Felicia was unimpressed and responded by asserting, 'that's why he is living with you, to help. You have to make him work.'

It was the husband who usually felled the swidden field for his wife, but in this scenario, as the woman's husband spent long periods living away from the community, he had arranged for this other man to live with his wife and teenage daughter. The idea was that the man would fell the swidden field for them, hunt and fish, while the husband was away. Felicia referred to the man as the husband's servant and then seemed to correct herself by referring to him as a 'helper.' This 'helper' was a Cacua man from Nuevo Pueblo and had been in hospital in Mitú when the woman's husband met him. The woman's husband suggested that the man lived in his household when he was released. The arrangement had been in place for years and was intended to benefit both parties. As Felicia explained to me regarding the situation, if you are not family but live with a family, you should work and help, felling the swidden field for instance, without the family needing to ask you. Before the man had moved into the household, Felicia's stepfather had grown up there and said that he had always helped the family, felling their swidden field, when he lived with them.

This was the only family I knew of in the community to have a 'servant' or 'helper.' Nonetheless, the position that this man held in the household, was very similar to that of any other member of a household. The key difference was that the 'servant' was neither kin, nor an affine, but just the same as kin or an affine, he had to work and help in order to incorporate himself into the household in which he was living. Men's work was key to the success of a household's autonomy. In the examples I have shared above, the men in question were not husbands responding to the needs of their wives, but still in positions where their work was necessary to complement and enable a woman's work, providing sustenance for the household without needing to 'bother' others. While asking others for manioc was not ideal, in Faber's speech, he encouraged asking others for food, rather than taking it *without* asking.

As I shall describe below, there were specific couples accused of theft and who people had even sighted stealing from other people's swidden fields, who had not grown up in Wacará as permanent residents. This is what Faber had been referring to in his speech, when he said that thieves would need to leave the community and go back to where they came from if they continued to steal after community leaders had advised them to stop and work instead. The reason newcomers were more likely to thieve from others, was because they had not yet established themselves in the community with a swidden field and did not necessarily have kin in the community with whom they could work to sow and harvest crops. Furthermore, newcomers could cause anxiety among residents, as they often moved to escape problems and disputes with people from the previous communities in which they lived.

Newcomers in Wacará tended to have family connections in the community and thus a household in which they could initially stay while they set themselves up. As was also the case for visitors, newcomers were allowed to accompany their hosts to their swidden fields, to help them weed and work. In such cases, women were allowed to carry home their own basketful of manioc to make manioc bread at home and contribute to mealtimes. As making manioc

bread and toasted manioc flour was of the woman's arena, men tended to go hunting or fishing to contribute food to the household hosting them. Male newcomers also helped the men of the household with their work, such as felling their swidden field, house building and chopping firewood. If the newcomers received permission from the captain, the men of their hosting household would also help the male newcomer to make a separate swidden field for his family and to build a home. Rather than being a burden, people expected newcomers to contribute to the household hosting them, eventually establishing a separate household.

Juan told me this of his father-in-law, a Wanano man who had moved to Wacará with his Cacua wife and their children, after their eldest daughter had moved to the community to live with Juan. As Juan told me during the household survey I ran with him, he and his father-in-law helped one another and he had since asked his father-in-law to be on the community census, to which he had agreed. This same man was Faber's brother-in-law, to whom he had referred in the speech I outline at the beginning of this chapter. What Faber had been emphasising was that a good person was someone who worked and was therefore encouraged to stay in the community, made official by the community census. Including someone on the census, who had moved to Wacará from elsewhere, gave them the right to access certain resources, such as materials for building a house. Only the Captain could give people permission to live in the community permanently though he had to discuss the matter with the other leaders, who formed the community's committee. The secretary of the committee was responsible for filling out the community census for one of the more prominent community leaders to take to the notary in Mitú. In this way, the number of households and people living in the community could be accounted for in applications for funding and development projects.

In his speech, Faber not only spoke about work as the solution to problems of theft, but also the problems that theft represented and caused, that of separation as opposed to cohesion in the community. In contrast to theft, work represented people coming together because as I have described in previous chapters, people in Wacará did not tend to conceive of work in terms of personal gain or endeavour, but rather in terms of helping others. For instance, one collected for firewood for one's mother or aunt, who was cooking; one felled a swidden field for one's wife or widowed mother to sow bitter manioc; one went to the swidden field and made manioc bread for one's children and husband to eat with the meat or fish he was due to bring home. In the case of leaders, they worked for the community, attending meetings, and undertaking bureaucratic procedures (see ch2), a point that Faber alluded to in his speech by comparing work in the swidden field to the work of a leader.

Faber presented work in binary opposition to stealing in the same way as good was the binary opposite of bad. This aligned with a traditionally Tukanoan perspective, as outlined in chapter two, whereby sedentary riverine peoples highly valued work in terms of working the land to grow manioc and other crops for household consumption. Their view of 'Makú,' a term which they also attributed to the Cacua, was that they did not work (did not make their own swidden

fields or grow their own crops) and therefore stole crops from swidden fields of their Tukanoan neighbours. Key to understanding why work is an important category for Cacua people today, is their incorporation of the negative perceptions other indigenous groups have of them, into fashioning a new identity for themselves as hardworking. Faber stated that the community needed good people who worked (rather than bad people who did not).

In this juxtaposition between work and stealing, autonomy played an important role in explaining a moral polarity. Work was good because it reflected socially valued and valuable forms of autonomy, crucial for building a solidary community, formed of autonomous (family) units. Theft did the opposite, undermining the notion of helping others by instead stealing from others. By highlighting that those who stole, did not attend communal events, such as community workshops, including the workshop at which Faber made his speech, or days of communal work, Faber obliquely villainised those unvested in community life.

Public Accusations of Theft

Six months prior to the workshop described above at which Faber made his speech, he spoke at another community gathering, where he named the specific households accused of theft. This previous occasion took place following the selection of the new committee of Wacará when members of the community voted for the people who they wanted to be their new leaders. After a long day, everyone gathered in the church when the generator sounded up in the evening, bringing with them large metal pots and plastic buckets full of *pupuña* juice, as Juan, who had played a large role in organising the day, had instructed of them.

Pupuña was in season and the delicious juice that people made from its pulp after cooking it in boiling water was in abundance in the community at that time. Families had previously been to collect the fruit from trees they cultivated in their swidden fields, especially for the occasion. Juan blasted lively Christian songs through his speakers as members of the community arrived at the church, placing their contribution of *pupuña* juice on the table at the entrance, before making their way to the benches lining the edge of the room. This new setup was especially designed for the occasion that evening, as the benches usually stood in rows with an aisle running through the middle of them, as in traditional church style.

Juan turned the music off before stepping into the middle of the room to address all those present. He then announced that Faber, who earlier that day had been [re]selected as president of conflict and resolution, would speak. Faber took his cue and confidently strode into the middle of the room, a big empty space, and filled it with his presence. He projected his voice loudly for all to hear, speaking predominantly in Cacua with the odd smattering of Spanish words and phrases, as was common when leaders addressed the community at gatherings. Though I did not understand much of this public speech, what particularly caught my attention was when Faber walked straight towards a man sat at the back of the room and

stood directly before him. He lowered his voice slightly as he addressed the man, but not enough to prevent everyone in the room from hearing the exchange.

The man in question was Myles, a Cubeo man who had moved to the community several months previously with his Cacua wife, her sister, the sister's Cubeo husband and the children of both couples. They had all previously been living in a predominantly Cubeo community, with people of other non-Cacua indigenous groups as well, located a short distance along the main road from Mitú. As they had no living kin in Wacará, the Captain had permitted them to stay in the maloca, which had fallen into disrepair over the years since being built. I knew that Myles had a habit of requesting things in exchange for meat or fish but failed to produce the goods on return from his apparently unsuccessful hunting and fishing trips. Yair had once urged me to give Myles two boxes of matches before he went fishing, explaining that he would bring me fish on his return. When this did not happen, Felicia told me that Myles had done the same to the schoolteachers, who had given him salt from the school kitchen in promise of fish but received none. The school cook had told Felicia that after giving him the benefit of the doubt several times, they were now refusing to give him anything from the kitchen.

When Faber had finished what looked like publicly rebuking the man, Myles leapt up from his seat and stood firmly in his wellington boots, feet just over hip width apart. Myles puffed out his chest and spoke loudly and abruptly in response. I learned later that Faber had been telling Myles that he had spoken to people from the community in which Myles had previously lived. They had told Faber that Myles was a liar and had been stealing from people's swidden fields there, so he would likely do the same in Wacará. When Faber accused Myles of such, Myles responded by saying that this was all lies and that he was a hard worker. Following this exchange, Faber returned to the centre of the room and called out in Spanish, 'Los perezosos no tienen que comer, los trabajadores, sí, tienen que comer'. *Lazy people, they do not have to eat. Workers, yes, they must eat.* He was referring to the point that stealing crops is easy and lazy, as it does not require all the necessary work to grow one's own food.

This exchange prompted me to ask my host family what Faber had said that evening, as I had only been able to follow loosely from the odd word or phrase he had said in Spanish. They filled me in by explaining that before berating Myles, Faber had reported on a couple who were not present, Rocco and Sol. People had reported the couple to Faber for stealing pineapples and manioc from their swidden fields at night. When Faber went to speak to Rocco about the matter in hand, he responded that he had only done so three times, and each time had offered the families meat in return. Faber told those gathered at the meeting that he did not know if this was true, but it was what Rocco had told him.

Rocco and Sol had moved to Wacará several years previously from Nuevo Pueblo, where they had fallen out with Sol's family. They moved after one of Rocco's younger brothers had moved to Wacará, joining Captain Arturo and a group of young people from Wacará who had gone to

Nuevo Pueblo on a missionary trip, on their return journey. This younger brother found a wife in Wacará and persuaded his parents to return to the community, as it was where his mother had grown up. After the parents moved to Wacará with their two youngest children, adolescents at that time, Rocco moved to Wacará with his wife and children, to join them. Nonetheless, Rocco and Sol did not tend to spend long stretches of time in the community.

When school started up for the new academic year, for example, the teachers noted the absence of several students, including Rocco and Sol's children. Yair told me that Rocco and Sol were staying along the Querarí river and had taken their children with them, adding, 'They are not from here. They are like *tigres*[23], they go where there are animals, they go where there are fish. When the animals run out, they leave.'

Felicia chipped in explaining, 'they like to be in the jungle, they are nomads.'

While these comments did not come across as derogative to me at the time, I later realised that they mirrored the negative association that Eastern Tukanoan groups historically perceived between Makú groups and animality. In this light, the comments made by Yair and Felicia were indeed derogatory, indicating disregard towards former ways of living associated with negative perceptions of Cacua people as Makú. This particularly regards practices of hunting in the forest rather than working to make swidden fields and harvest the produce. As Rocco, Sol and their children frequently left the community to visit and stay in other places or else to go on long hunting trips, they did not spend time tending to their own swidden field in Wacará. Yair's reference to their being like *tigres*, substantiates how Cacua self-consciousness and self-awareness about their former lowly status plays into their current ideas about work.

Yair and Felicia were among those who suspected Rocco's family of stealing pineapples from their swidden field, which was only a little way along the path into the forest from the family's house. On one occasion, Felicia told me that she had heard some thieves in her swidden field but assuming it was her mother, called out to ask if she was there. This served to warn the thieves, who had escaped before she found the remanence of the pineapples they had been eating. When she called for Yair, he was so angry that he fired his shotgun into the air to scare the thieves. The couple went to speak to the families neighbouring their swidden field to ask if they knew anything of what had happened but learned nothing.

Having provided some background information on the two couples that Faber publicly exposed during the community meeting following the selection of the new committee, I shall

[23] In the Amazonian context, *tigre* does not translate as 'tiger' but rather refers to large Amazonian cats such as jaguars or pumas.

now recount some related events from that following week. I returned to my host family's house one early evening, after having run an activity session with a small group of children, with which Felicia had assisted me, before leaving part way through. When I arrived home, she was in the kitchen boiling toucan meat in salted water, which Yair had shot earlier that day. I sat with her in the kitchen as the light grew dim. Yair's mother, Antonella, soon appeared from outside, pressing her face up against one of the gaps between the wooden slats of the kitchen wall. I later learned that she had come to recount some news.

Felicia, who had been stood by the fire, tending to the pot as she listened to Antonella's tale, told me what had been said once Antonella left. A woman in the community had told Antonella that she had seen Myles and his wife pulling up manioc from her daughter's swidden field, before carrying home two baskets full of manioc. The woman asked if Antonella had given them permission. As Antonella's daughter was living in Mitú, Antonella was taking care of the swidden field in her absence. She had not known anything about the incident and set off to find Myles and his wife to tell them not to take the manioc again. She went to the maloca where they were residing but could not find them. As Myles's sister-in-law was there Antonella spoke to her instead, asking that she relay the message.

As Felicia retold the story, I was surprised that Myles and his wife had taken manioc from someone else's swidden field so soon after having been publicly reprimanded for stealing and denying that this was the case. What's more, I was struck by the resemblance of Antonella's tale and a drawing by one of the children in the activity session from which I had only recently returned home. I asked Felicia if she had seen Nicol's drawing of a 'bad person' and paused before laughing in disbelief, 'It was someone pulling up and stealing manioc.'

Felicia, who had not seen the drawing, responded without laughing, 'Yes, the children know. They know it's the bad ones who steal manioc.'

What do bad people do?

It was not immediately obvious to me why the figure in Nicol's drawing was doing something bad. When Felicia had asked the children at the beginning of the activity session to tell us what things bad people usually did, the children had responded by saying that they hit people, killed people, and cursed people with black magic. Following this group discussion, which Felicia guided with several additional questions, she instructed the children to draw pictures related to these questions, and as such told one child to draw a 'good person' and another to draw a 'bad person.' I had been expecting a reflection in Nicol's drawing of the kinds of images that the children had previously mentioned, but when the children took it in turns to ask Nicol about her drawing, she explained that the figure in it was stealing.

Figure 6 - Nine-year-old Nicol's drawing of a 'bad person.'

Nicol sat on the table next to her drawing, while Colby knelt on the table on the other side of it, ready to ask her some questions. Responding to the first question, Nicol told Colby that the two plants at the bottom of her picture were *lulo* plants. She then pointed to the basket in her drawing and added, 'she picked the fruit and put them here, in the basket.' *Lulos* were not cultivated, but rather sprang up as weeds in the swidden field, baring red fruit, which resembled cherry tomatoes. Children were particularly fond of these and having been to the swidden field with Nicol and her family before, I knew that her mother sometimes gave her and her siblings small baskets to wear around their heads, attached by a strap made from plant fibre, to collect *lulos* to carry home. I had also witnessed adults and children picking *lulos* from other people's swidden fields when passing through. I presume that because they were wild plants that this was not regarded as stealing.

Colby continued with his questions.

'What's this?' he asked, pointing to the plant in the woman's hand.

'Pulling up manioc'.

'And what's this?'

'A knife…'

An older boy of thirteen rushed over to the table, as Colby paused to think of his next question. 'What is she doing?' the boy asked, pointing at the woman in the drawing.

‘Pulling up manioc and stealing it,’ Nicol laughed.

‘Who?’ the boy asked, before suggesting someone’s name, which I did not catch.

Nicol responded with an affirmative, ‘j̲ű̲j̲u̲h,’ (yes) before bursting out laughing.

When I watched the recording back with Felicia the following day, who had not been present during this exchange, she also started to laugh when we reached this part of the video. I looked at her, without understanding the joke, hoping that she would shed some light on the boy’s quick-witted comment. She explained that he had uttered the nickname, by which everyone referred to Sol. Felicia noted, ‘they say that she steals other people’s manioc. The children know, they hear these things.’

In the following video, which one of the boys had filmed on my I-pad, I walked over to the table and pointed to the woman in the drawing, ‘Nicol, t̲ú̲ini yeejép?’ Is she good or bad?

Nicol, whose responses in previous activity sessions had been barely audible, seemed to be thoroughly enjoying herself and confidently called out, ‘Yeejép!’ Bad!

I later reflected on Nicol’s drawing in relation to Jana’s drawing of a good person, which following the activity session, I had showed to Felicia, admitting that I did not understand why the person in the drawing was good and wondered whether Jana had understood the task I had set her. ‘It’s just a normal person,’ Felicia noted, as confused as I was.

Figure 7 - Nine-year-old Jana's drawing of a 'good person.'

Colby repeatedly asked, 'Déde tií nin? Déde tií?' (What's this here? What's this?), as he pointed to different parts of Jana's drawing, while another child filmed them. By this point the children were comfortable asking simple questions to elicit descriptions from one another about their drawings. It was the first question I had learned to ask in Cacua, so they were used to hearing me say it during the activity sessions. Jana directly answered each of Colby's questions, starting with what the figure on the right-hand side of her drawing was doing, to which Jana responded, 'eating chilli pot.' She then labelled each of the items in that part of her drawing, to which Colby had pointed. The figure was stood behind a table, topped with manioc bread, drink, and chilli pot.

'Is she good?' Colby asked, pointing at the girl behind the table.

'Yes,' Jana replied.

She had drawn another table with the same items upon it in middle of her drawing as well. After pointing at the table and each of the items upon it to ask what they were, Colby encircled all of them with his finger and asked, 'what's going on?'

'Eating chilli pot after making it and arriving,' Jana responded.

She was referring to women heating chilli broth at home before taking it to the church for communal breakfast. This part of her drawing depicted the common scene of communal

breakfast, which took place at least once a week in the church every Sunday before the 9am church service began, as well as on mornings before communal work and on special days organised by the school, which they always began with communal breakfast. In the bottom left-hand corner, Jana had drawn people watching a film. This was also a common activity that took place in the church, though usually on special days, which therefore coincided with the days there was communal breakfast in the community.

When asked what the figure in the top-left hand corner of her drawing was doing, Jana said, 'stood looking, happy, stood looking.'

'Is she good or bad?' I asked Jana, when another child asked her about this same figure.

'Good,' Jana told me.

'Why?' I intended to ask, using the Cacua phrase 'depanihna?' which Felicia had assured me meant 'why?' Nonetheless, Jana hesitated, before another child sought to help her answer by repeating, 'happy stood watching.' Jana then also repeated, 'happy stood watching.'

On reflection, this is a person that takes part in communal life, sharing manioc bread, chilli broth, and something to drink, who goes to watch films with everyone in the evening. All these activities took place in the church, also referred to by the non-religious term, 'la caseta' (the hut). While it is possible that Jana associated the church with good people as her parents were Christian and always attended church services, which was not the case for all families, many of the activities that regularly took place in the church, which she had depicted in her drawing, were not religious, but social activities.

In the group discussion at the beginning of the activity session, Felicia had asked the children what good people usually do. After Nicol's initial contribution, 'teo wáacna' (help/ come together to work), which several children then echoed, others began to call out, 'Give food; give pineapple; give bananas/ plantain; after preparing a drink, give it; give something to drink; give *manicuera;* give gruel*;* give *pupuña* juice; give animal meat; when someone arrives at the house, give chilli broth.' There was a clear emphasis on giving food and drink to others as something that the children recognised as good, and that good people did.

Work in the swidden field was necessary to produce most of the food and drink that the children listed, such as pineapples, bananas/ plantain, and *pupuña,* which could also be cooked in water and pounded to make fruit juices. Gruel and *manicuera* were drinks made from bitter manioc, which was also cultivated in the swidden field and then prepared as part of a long process at home. Many of the children had told me in previous activity sessions that they liked being in the swidden field, where they had responded that they 'teo wáac' (help). In this way, 'helping' (*teo wáac*) and 'giving food' (*jeémát w~~u~~h*) were closely related activities.

One must work and help other members of the household to produce food and drink, which could then be offered to others who came to visit or taken to the *caseta* when everyone gathered to eat together before the Sunday morning church service or communal work.

Stealing was the opposite of what children said that good people do, that is giving food to others. Instead, stealing meant taking food from others without their permission and without helping them with their work, such as weeding and other tasks in the swidden field. Theft was also the opposite of what children had been informally learning to do from a young age and as they continued to grow up, that is working alongside and helping others. The subsistence economy was morally charged. 'It is beautiful to work' as Faber declared, but it was coming together to work' or 'helping' (*teo wáac*, in Cacua) others, as I have also highlighted in previous chapters, that was key to successfully cultivating crops and producing food. Theft negated the need to establish such social relations and networks that entailed helping others and being permitted to harvest their crops in return. Theft upset the ideal of 'living well as a community,' an ideal based on the value of working one's swidden field to feed one's family and solidarity in the community built on respecting the work and produce of others. Theft also angered those whose fields got pillaged, further destabilising the prospect of living well together. These were important lessons for children, who were often privy to adults' complaints, alongside their practical endeavours of learning to work by helping their families.

Nonetheless, the way children learnt to work, as a form of practical helping, was not quite the same as the way leaders espoused work as an explicit value. In the latter case, leaders stated that they wanted good people in their community, firmly expressing that this meant people who worked, who grew their own food, who provided for themselves and all those within their household, particularly if they had children. In here lies the pinnacle of valued independence of the household, whereby its members, including the children and particularly the unmarried youth, 'come together to work,' as the Cacua expression, *teo wáac*, indicates.

In the former case, children learnt to work, as a form of practical helping, 'seeing and copying' (*en yac*) what their parents did and how they did it, not just in terms of technical skills but also in adopting the disposition most conductive to working, *tʉ́i* (good and beautiful, which also indicates level-headedness). The relationship between the individual household in which all of its members come together to work, and the wider community, is that when each household of the community is self-sufficient, harmony between them can ensue. This means that there is no need to 'bother' people from other households of the community, asking to borrow their things or take their food, or even worse, stealing from them. If the community is formed of good people and good workers, then it is through valued forms of interdependence, such as giving food, which I will explore in the following chapter, that positive relations between various households within the community endure.

The Household and the Community: Work, Helping and Stealing

To explain how working (*teo*) and helping (*teo wáac*) function both at the level of the individual household and at the level of the community, as does stealing, I will begin by drawing on my interview with Jacobo and Salome, which I also referenced in chapter three. One of the questions I wanted to ask parents in the short interviews that I conducted in Cacua, was 'how do you think a good child should behave?' However, the woman who translated the questions into Cacua for me, altered the meaning slightly in her translation, which came to mean, 'how do you think a child who listens well is?' It was in answer to this question, that Jacobo and Salome told me about that they did not want their children to steal or take other people's things and that they would not do this if they listened to their parents' advice.

Salome, for example, said,

> 'An obedient child means that if they are a "thief" (*nuumni*), one who "grabs" (teo) things and we say, 'do not grab things, do not do that,' being obedient, they will not do it again. So… being an obedient child means that, as parents, we feel happy when the child listens to us.'

Jacobo also drew on the subject of theft, by telling me,

> 'I think, looking at my daughters, I do not want them to "grab" (teo) or "steal" (*nuúm*) things from others or take things from other people's house. When I say this and they listen to me, I am happy. They are obeying me as a father. As in the house with me, they do not grab things when they go elsewhere with others. So, when they are adults and have husbands, they will not grab things. They will know how to get things for themselves.'

Salome speaks of stealing as something that parents must tell their children not to do, saying that she tells her children, 'Don't you grab' (*Ma teo caá bojoó* in Cacua). This also points to the various uses of the Cacua term, *teo*, which in this context, Salome translated as *coger* in Spanish, meaning 'grab,' or 'pick up.' *Teo* can mean hold, pick up and grab, as well as work. My enquiries into the various meanings of this term led someone to explain to me that *teo* can be used in the sense of taking something or picking it up for no reason, like picking up a piece of wood and do nothing with it. However, if someone picks up a piece of wood and nails it to something else, the term *teo* would instead mean 'work.' By using the additional terms, 'nuumní' (thief) and 'nuúm' (to steal) in their interviews, Salome and Jacobo made it clear that they did not want their children to grab other people's things in the sense of theft.

Jacobo's response pointed to the negative relationship between theft and work by noting that when his daughters were adults with husbands, 'they will not grab things. They will know how to get things for themselves.' As particularly highlighted in chapter three, learning and subsequently knowing how to work is imperative for women to set up and live in their own

independent household once they had found a husband, and visa-versa for men when they found a wife. This correlates with what Faber was saying in his speech about couples and those with children needing to work even more, so that they would never steal from others.

A key point that I have been returning to throughout this thesis is that as people grow up, they must learn the appropriate skills and social values that will enable them to undertake an active part in maintaining a self-sufficient household. This relies on very member of the household using what they know to secure the needs of their family, helping one another. This came through very strongly when I spoke to Jacobo and Salome, along with the way that young people might also use their knowledge from learning at school to become the future leaders, teachers, and health assistants, working for and helping not just their families, but the community as a whole. When I asked Salome and Jacobo what they wanted for their children's future, they both mentioned their daughter's schooling and getting a job.

Salome responded,

> 'I think about the future of my daughters. I just think, I do not have studies, I do not know, I do not have "work" (tewat). So, I think about the future of my daughters. Later, they will have their studies so that they will have a good "job" (tewat) for the future.'

At the beginning of the interview with Salome, she spoke about her work (tewat) in the swidden field and weaving baskets (see ch3), whereas in the above response she said that she did not have work. When Cacua people spoke about work, they tended to use the Cacua verbs, *bohena,* which means *to learn* or in the context of school, *to study,* and *jéih,* which means *to know*. It also follows that different kinds of work require different kinds of learning and knowing, so it stands to reason that while a person may be knowledgeable and have work in one context, they might not in another. As such, it was when I asked Salome what she wanted for her children's future, that she spoke of herself as 'one who does not learn/ study' (bohé canní), 'one who does not know' (jéihcaaní), and as 'not having work' (tewat… bíbohcan) in contrast to her daughters and their formal schooling. Salome believed that finishing school would enable her daughters to get the kind of work (tewat) that she did not have herself, 'beautiful work' (tú̵ini tewat), which she translated as 'a good job' (*un buen trabajo* in Spanish). I heard the same expression when interviewing another parent, who gave an example of what he had meant by 'beautiful work' (*tú̵ini tewat*), elaborating that he had not meant just any job, but a *good* job, in an office or as a teacher.

As previously mentioned, Cacua people categorised the kind of work that they told me was 'of the indigenous' (*de los indígenas* in Spanish) differently from work which required qualifications from formal education. Regarding work 'of the indigenous,' the Cacua spoke of people 'learning' (*bohena*) through 'work' (*tewat*), and as a result, 'knowing' (*jéih*) how to do and get things for themselves and their family. As previously explored, children must learn to work by working alongside their parents as they grow up, which forms part of the process of

maturing into an adult. A Cacua person is neither considered to be 'one who is mature' (*behnit*), nor should they marry and form a family, until they know this kind of work.

In contrast to 'indigenous' work, Cacua people referred to the kind of learning and knowing that they associated with formal schooling, as being 'of white people' (*de los blancos* in Spanish). Instead of learning through their work, parents spoke of their children as going to school to 'learn/ study' (*bohena*) in order 'know' (*jéih*) and then get work, which they referred to as 'a good job' (*un bueno trabajo* in Spanish) or 'beautiful work' (*t~~ú~~ini tewat* in Cacua), when they finished their studies. As one of the leaders once told me, having returned to the community after attending a meeting with other indigenous leaders in Mitú, it is important to learn and know things of both indigenous and white people. He indicated that this largely referred to young people of the community, who would be the next leaders and would need to have studies (formal education) to fulfil such roles successfully.

In line with the different kinds of work that Salome and Jacobo spoke of in their interviews, they also spoke of different ways of helping one another within the household and Jacobo also mentioned his daughters helping the community once they finished their studies. In response to the earlier questions in their interviews, both Salome and Jacobo spoke of their daughters 'helping' (*teo wáac*) Salome to make manioc bread, including specific jobs, such as grating manioc or sieving the manioc flour (see ch3). In response to my question about what things a mother should do to be a good mother, Jacobo told me that Salome 'helps' (*teo wáac*) her children with what she 'knows' (*jéih*), to get them items like clothes, soap, and toothpaste.

Salome generated monetary income by weaving baskets to sell, this is the work she *knows,* as her husband expressed it. While Salome described basket weaving as her 'work' (*tewat*), Jacobo's comment contextualises this work as helping (*teo wáac*) their children. He also noted that their daughters were sometimes able to help Salome weave baskets. Jacobo also spoke about the things he must do to be a good father, which also included getting clothes for their daughters to wear. As Salome translated this part of Jacobo's interview, she explained that they might get money from selling baskets, other basketry craftwork, or meat from hunting, 'anything from his work,' she concluded (*cualquier cosa de su trabajo* in Spanish). She explained that when the captain went to Mitú, if they had money, they would give it to him with a small list of things to buy for their children.

When I asked Jacobo what he wanted for his children's future, he told me,

> 'They "know" (*jéih*) from being at school. When they finish their studies, they will "return to this community to help" (*nin comunidad jw~~ú~~ub teo wáac*). Study, then return to help.'

Here, the phrase 'help' (*teo waác* in Cacua*)* refers to something different from Jacobo and his wife's previous responses in the interview, in which *teo waác* referred to their daughters helping Salome to make manioc bread, a process through which they physically worked

together to produce something. What Jacobo meant by 'returning to the community to help' came through more explicitly when we chatted in Spanish after the interview. He told me that his idea was for his eldest daughter to study Grade 9 followed by a nursing diploma in Mitú when she finished her studies in Wacará, to become a health assistant in the community. 'Go to study and then return to the community,' he concluded.

Following our interview, Jacobo told me that he was planning to go to Mitú the following day to bring back his eldest daughter to help her mother. The more he explained the situation, the more apparent it became that the role of helping one another in the individual household was central to subsistence living. He explained that he needed to gather food, which was hard because his wife could not help him with this task, as she had to sow the swidden field. As such, they needed their eldest daughter to come home to help Salome with this task. If not, he explained that his eldest daughter could help her mother as she had suggested herself, by weaving baskets to sell in order to buy 'remesita' (shop-bought produce, such as rice, lentils, salt, soap, etc) for the family. Jacobo then pressed, 'her mother is waiting, but she never returned.' Instead, he said that that their daughter was in Mitú 'doing nothing.' By this he meant, as he later said, 'she does not have a job and she is not studying.' He also noted that he had heard that she had a soldier for a companion and that she was suffering from hunger and very skinny, but he could not help her while she was in Mitú, as that required money which he did not have. In the community, he told me that he could help her.

At the time of our interview, the school in Wacará had expanded to include Grades 7 and 8, but his eldest daughter was not attending. For her to study in Mitú, Jacobo said that he would need to buy shoes, books, a ruler, pencil, pen, and uniform, whereas at the school in Wacará, everything was free. He planned to speak to one of the teachers about whether registration would still be open for his daughter on her return. Nonetheless, Jacobo seemed more concerned that his daughter was doing nothing, neither helping her mother, nor in a place where he could help her, than the fact she was not attending school. This is because the value of work for Cacua people was that it enabled family members within a household to help one another.

In a similar vein, parents tended to express the importance that they attributed to their children studying to the work this would enable them to get in the future, which by extension, would put them in a position where they could help their parents and the community. Unlike 'helping' (*teo wáac*), 'doing nothing' indicated neither studying nor working. In this case, working refered to earning money by weaving and selling baskets, as well as the physical exertion involved in working the family's swidden field and producing manioc bread. By contrast, 'doing nothing' neither enabled people to help their families nor the community in the present (if working) or future (if studying). In this way, Jacobo's daughter was not enacting a valued form of independence as she was not using what she knew to help her family. By this I mean that she was neither using her knowledge and skills to weave baskets to sell and help

her family by buying them 'remesita,' nor was she using her studies to get a job, which would earn her money to help her family.

When Faber announced that theft was a problem and that work was the solution, this was what he meant, that when families worked together and helped one another, they would be able to produce enough food and never need to steal from others. Jacobo and Salome's responses during our interview about family life, pointed to the importance of parental advice alongside the practical help that children gave their parents. As well as telling their children not to steal, parents expected their children to help and told them to work if they did not, ensuring that when their children became adults with families of their own, they would not take from others, as they would know how to work to get what they needed. The idea that studying at school would give children different knowledge from their parents, knowledge that would enable them to secure a job or a position in leadership, and help the community, also upheld the value of work as form of helping others and maintaining independence, in this case, as a Cacua community. Nonetheless, it was not only working and helping that took place both at the level of the individual household and the community, but also stealing, which I will discuss in the following and final section of this chapter.

Working for the Community and Stealing from the Community

In Faber's speech, he focused on the problem of theft from swidden fields and how work (as outlined above) was the solution to this problem. What he did not address was the issue of leaders taking community funds for themselves, which also leads me to discuss the different sanctions for theft, implicit versus explicit. In Faber's case, when he had sold cattle belonging to the community and kept the funds for himself, he suffered much critique and bad talk. This led to him leaving his home, right near the 'caseta' come church, after a fall out with other leaders, to build his family a house right at the edge of the community next to the forest. Rather than receiving any explicit sanctions, the implicit sanctions of gossip and general mistrust from people of the community, drove Faber from the centre of community life in his previous role as captain to the edge of the community.

In another man's case, there were also explicit sanctions, when he was given access to a bank account in the name of the community on behalf of the captain to deposit money for a project to build a new bridge across the river but instead kept the money for himself. This was a serious matter and the man in question was exiled from the community and left with his wife and their son. The leaders told me that they had twice been to Mitú for the tribunal, but the man never turned up. The vice-captain told me in earnest that if this man did not turn up for the third tribunal, he would face imprisonment. Despite these explicit sanctions for this case of stealing from the community, none of them prevailed. Some months later, the man moved back to the community with his wife and son, as I learned that the captain had forgiven him.

The moral valence of working for the community as a leader is much more dubious than the value attributed to working the swidden field, growing, and producing sufficient food for one's family. When performed well, the work of leaders was valued for uniting the community. Nonetheless, people in the community often criticised the leaders for not guiding the community well or not providing a good example for others to live by. As Faber told me of his time as captain, 'although I was doing little things, people talk a lot,' brushing aside gossip that he used to drink and steal when he had been captain. As part of this role, he had had to go to Mitú for meetings and to collect monetary transfers for the community. Faber told me,

> 'When one is in town, what does one earn? Nothing. Well, one with their knowledge, with their work, always manages something to be able to live. That is why I was always fifteen days, twenty days, even there a month sometimes. If a job came up, I have to be working or transporting people, which is also a job to earn money to eat and to arrive with something for my family. That's it, trying to work.'

As with all kinds of work, people had to use what they knew to get what they needed. In Faber's case, he had to use his knowledge to get paid work while he was in Mitú doing unpaid work for the community as captain. Valued forms of independence and interdependence among the Cacua and within the community relied on each person's work and therefore the knowledge they had to do that work, meaning that no one should need to steal from anyone else. Those who stole from other people's swidden fields were referred to as lazy because they did not want to work. In Faber's speech with which I opened this chapter, he metaphorically spoke of a leader's work as sowing fruits and putting down fertiliser to make something beautiful grow. The value of work lies in bringing people together and creating solidarity, and this is what stealing undermined. If work is the 'solution,' in Faber's view, what is the problem? Diminishing solidarity, accompanied by diminishing self-sufficiency and autonomy, perhaps? Living together as Cacua has been made possible by work, working for the community on the part of leaders and working for the benefit of one's family, on the part of the individual household. When the Cacua lived apart from one another, they did not have their own swidden fields to work in, they used to work in the swidden fields of their Eastern Tukanoan neighbours in exchange for industrial goods that they could not make themselves (see ch2). Solidarity in work is solidarity as Cacua, as a community.

While leaders mobilised the concept of work as a way to promote community unity, this was different to the way that children and parents normally otherwise talked about the value of work. The notion of helping the community was initially heavily promoted by the evangelical missionaries based in Wacará from the mid 1960s, who funded the formal education of many of those who are today's leaders in the community. As described in chapter two, core to the missionaries' project of evangelicalising the Cacua was encouraging them to live together. Those who had received a formal education at the missionary base in Lomalinda, alongside attending church services, learning to play the guitar and sing hymns in Cacua, had been

charged with spreading God's word among the Cacua community. The notions of living together as Cacua and living together as (Evangelical) Christians were bound up together through the missionaries' encouragement of Cacua families joining together in a community.

As one of the leaders I quoted in chapter two told me, the missionaries had wanted the Cacua to live together in Wacará so that they could help one another both in the material sense and in the spiritual sense. While this notion of working for and helping the community can be pinpointed to a specific time in history, the notion of children helping their parents and learning to work by working alongside them from a young age has been a prominent feature of everyday life among the Cacua before the existence of their Cacua community. When parents reflected on their own childhoods, they often mentioned that they had helped their parents when they lived in much smaller familial groups as children.

As Peluso notes of her analytical focus on children's instrumentality, exploring theft and the way with which different instances are dealt, also exposes the underbelly of what it means to live well and strive for conviviality in Amazonia (2015: 55). In this sense, approaching the question of what it means to live well through examples of its opposite, focusing on theft in opposition to work in this chapter, not thinking well in the previous chapter and not living well in the final chapter, provides a different entry point to that of Overing & Passes' (2000) emphasis on conviviality (see Peluso, 2015: 55). I am also taking a different approach from Descola's portrayal of the good life as harmony within the home that provides respite from the ever-present conflict in the world outside (1994: 308; for critique of this approach, see Gonçalves, 2000). Examining the important role of economics and production in the good life, as highlighted in Descola's (1994) analysis among the Achuar, from an angle emphasising the 'problem' of theft, necessarily looks beyond the dynamics within the individual household to relations between them.

In this chapter, I have shown how valued forms of independence within each household, achieved by everyone in the household helping one another, extend to valued forms of interdependence between households, giving food and helping one another with work. In the following chapter, I will compare the way people circulated the food that they *worked* to cultivate, such as the crops Faber emphasised in his speech, to the wild food for which they searched and collected or killed. My focus on the moral economy will serve to highlight the way social values are realised through people's actions and relations to one another as part of the subsistence economy, exchanging, working, and searching for food, and what children learn through their participation in these networks of food exchange.

Chapter 7. Commensality & [Not] Giving Food

Independence of the Household: Commensality and Reciprocal Happiness

I set about making hot chocolate to take to Candela's house, leaving behind enough for the family with whom I lived. Candela had agreed to do a family interview with me, and as I approached her house, her two-year-old son stood in the doorway shouting my name with a big grin. Candela followed him out of the house, smiling, her hair pulled off her face into a loose low ponytail, doubled over. Her swollen belly was more noticeable now that her pregnancy was further along.

'I brought you this,' I told her, holding up the pot of hot chocolate.

She took it in her two hands, smiling. 'J~~uu~~ w~~uu~~,' Candela gestured into the house. *Come in.*

I followed Candela into her home, consisting of just one small room. Her husband, Joel, sat on a low wooden stool by a small fire on the earth floor by the back wall. Candela squatted on the other side of the fire, stirring a small pot of (powdered) milk for their son. Her legs were spread wide enough apart for her pregnant belly to protrude between them. There was a pot of meat in chilli broth set on the ground and a shallow bowl woven from plant fibres filled with manioc bread next to it. Candela passed me a plastic bowl with chunks of meat and told her husband to pass me the stool on which he was sat. I had squatted down on entering the house but was surreptitiously relieved to have a stool instead. Joel moved to sit in the hammock hanging across one side of the room.

'Here is the manioc bread,' Candela gestured.

I ripped off a little and ate a fatty piece of meat with it. Candela and Joel's son sat on a stool with a bowl of meat, by his father's hammock. He was still eating the sweet I had given him earlier. I spoke a little in Cacua as we ate together, asking what we were eating (spotted paca), and exclaiming how good it tasted. Their five-year-old daughter squatted by the fire, wrapping her arms around her naked body, drawing herself into a fetal position to dry off and keep warm after having returned to the house from bathing, soon after I arrived. The son called my name a couple of times during the interview, grinning at me as he waved around a fleshy paca leg complete with claw.

The house was cleaner than the first time I had visited, when Candela had been by herself and her husband off hunting. This time, there were no broken toys lining the ground, just one empty plastic pot. When I finished the meat, I washed the bowl in a bucket of water that Candela had set on the ground outside the entrance of the house. She then poured me a plastic cup of gruel from a steaming pot. I thanked her, wondering if Candela felt proud at

being able to demonstrate her family's ability to live well during the interview, especially as her husband had evidently returned from a successful hunt that morning.

Candela passed the children and her husband a cup of hot chocolate each from the pot I had brought with me, and I began the interview by asking Joel, who had agreed to answer my questions first, 'What is it usually like when you all get up in the morning?'

Joel responded,

> 'Us, we get up Chácha (Sasha), we get up well. Very happy with my children, happy getting up with my wife. We get up or if I go fishing, when I arrive home, we cook, we eat together with the children. That's what it is like when we get up well.'

This response reflected some important social values among Cacua people. For instance, the phrase Joel used to describe the way in which he and his family got up in the mornings, *tú́ini jeh*, literally translates as 'just beautiful' but generally indicates contentment, harmony, and good feeling. The expression *tú́ini jeh* reflects an ideal disposition that people should adopt in everyday life. 'Getting up well' as Felicia translated the Cacua phrase, *tú́ini jeh jáana*, which literally meant 'rising just beautiful' indicated that there was no bad feeling in the household, no arguing, fighting, feeling angry or sad. Joel emphasised this with his following comment, 'Very happy with my children, happy getting up with my wife' (*wã webít jīh tú́i míic wēina, wã jeéh bólijīh míic wēi jáana*). *Míic* was a verbal prefix that indicated a reciprocal or reflexive action, so the expression *míic wēi* indicated happiness as a reciprocal feeling that he, his wife and their children felt towards one another and in one another's presence.

Considering that we were sat together eating meat that Joel had brought home in the early hours of that very morning after a successful hunt, perhaps it is not surprising that when I asked what a good father should do, Candela and Joel both answered in reference to the husband bringing home food. 'He who wants to be a good father…' Joel began in answer to my question, before Candela interrupted him. She was stirring the pot hanging over the cooking fire, as she reiterated my question. '*Meem,*' she emphasised. *You* [singular] in Cacua.

'If *you* want to live well with your children, what do *you* as a father, have to do?' she asked.

Joel started again,

> 'If I do well, I go looking for animals, like we are eating now. I go to find animals to bring back for them to cook and eat together. When I go fishing, I bring it back for my children and we eat together. This is what we do with our children.'

In response to the same question, Candela told me,

> 'A good father feels love for his children, he, my husband, goes far in search of food, over there, deep in the forest. When he doesn't find anything, after coming back, he goes back to the river

to fish, where he finds something. I see him when he comes back with something, and I cook it to eat together.'

Their answers depicted hunting (*ñ~~u~~n~~u~~p bidna* – 'looking for animals' or *jeémat bidna* – 'searching for food' in Cacua) as an activity that Joel undertook for his children, so that they could eat together after preparing the meat or fish on his return. Candela described hunting as a pursuit of love that a father feels for his children and like Joel mentioned cooking the meat or fish before eating together.

Much of the discussion surrounding the process of hunting, bringing meat home, preparing a meal and eating together in regional literature, centres on the production of kinship. Fausto, for instance notes that, 'For humans to create human affects and dispositions and produce kinship among themselves, they need to hunt… Commensality and the sharing of meat not only characterise the relation between relatives but produce relatives' (2007: 502). Central to Fausto's analysis is the distinction between predation and commensality, the distinction between who one captures or eats (predation) and with whom one eats (commensality) as part of a dynamic process of producing people and sociality (*ibid*: 500). This entails the notion of 'familiarising predation,' which Fausto describes in terms of capturing people through warfare and spirits through shamanism as a means of transforming them into relatives (see Fausto, 1999; Fausto, 2007: 502). Through this notion, Fausto explains that 'Predation is thus intimately connected to the cosmic desire to produce kinship' (2007:502) and food consumption, 'a device for producing related bodies—literally, "bodies of a kind."' (*ibid*: 500)

Overing employs a similar expression when she describes the Piaroa as creating a 'community of similars' through the everyday process of living together, which involves preparing meals, eating and raising children together (2003: 299). She explains that people's actions and interactions with others are what determine their relations, rather than roles or status. Marriage, for instance, is marked by a young man bringing the meat he has hunted to a young woman to cook for him. In this way, everyday actions bear deep significance and transform those who are different, such as in-laws, into kin (2003: 300-1).

While the focus of this sub-section is on the reciprocal feeling of happiness (*míic wēi* in Cacua) produced through eating together rather than the production of kin through commensality, I certainly heard anecdotes suggesting that as recorded among many Amazonian peoples, the Cacua also conceived of commensality as producing kin. In one case, I learnt of a man who had been formally adopted by a couple in the community in his teens. He referred to the couple as his mum and dad. Prior to this he had spent some years living with a different couple and their children. The woman of the previous couple often said, 'he ate my manioc bread,' as if to assert their bonds of kinship through the food she made and gave him, now that he called the other couple his mum and dad instead. In another case, a woman told me that her father was a White man, who had been a teacher in a school where her mother had worked. The teacher did not realise that her mother had become pregnant, but years later learnt that

she had given birth to his child. He went to take his daughter when she was around two years old, but her uncles would not let him. 'You should have come when she was a baby,' they told him, 'Now she has eaten our food.'

These anecdotes both refer to the production of kinship through feeding a dependent. In Costa's analysis of kinship among the Kanamari, he explains that there is an important distinction between this form of distributing food and commensality. While the former refers to the 'unidirectional provisioning of food,' which entails having the means to produce or acquire food and 'the unilateral dependence of the fed person on the feeder,' the latter refers to 'food sharing between people who can produce food themselves' (2017: 4). The relation between a mother and child, for instance, begins as a relation epitomised by the dependency of the child on the mother. In this relation, the mother is the feeder and the child, the one who is fed. As children begin to grow up, they in turn develop relations in which they become the feeder of others, such as younger siblings and pets, for whom they provide a little food, like fish or forest fruits. For the Kanamari, to feed someone, whether a relation or a pet, is to be their owner and it is only through being someone's owner, that one matures and moves through the life cycle (*ibid*: 123). Commensality, on the other hand, is directly associated with the relation between spouses (*ibid*: 4). Costa draws on Gow to make the point that 'only married people control the crucial resources which make production possible' (Gow, 1989: 572; Costa, 2017: 4) and later cites him regarding children's passive role in the subsistence economy (Costa, 2017: 123; see Gow, 1989: 578).

In my own analysis (see ch4), rather than categorising children as those who are fed and parents as those who feed them, this thesis focuses on children's role in the production, preparation, consumption and distribution of food from an early age. I analyse children's active participation in such processes, which the Cacua conceptualise as *teo wáac* (literally, 'coming together to work,' also translated as 'helping'), as contributing to children's development of ethical life. This is not to discount Cacua understandings about the importance of feeding and production of kin, but to highlight that it would be misplaced to emphasise children's dependency on the adults who feed them in an analysis of kinship and food distribution among the Cacua. In Wacará, adults tended to emphasise their children's roles in food production by commenting on how they 'help' (using the Cacua term *teo wáac*) and by talking about their children's work. Generally, as I noted in chapter two, the Cacua did not speak of men's activities hunting and fishing as 'work' (*tewat*), but rather as 'searching for food' and 'looking for animals.' By contrast, they always referred to activities in the swidden field and producing bitter manioc as 'work' (*tewat*) and these were activities in which children participated. Joel for example referred to his five-year-old daughter's activities in swidden field and at home as she helped her mother, as 'her work' (*ãih tewat*).

He told me of his five-year-old,

> 'She goes with her mother to the swidden field. When they return, she "helps" (*teo wáac*) her mum. Sometimes she peels bitter manioc, finds sticks for firewood. That's her "work" (*tewat*)'

Proficiency in subsistence living, which includes sourcing or cultivating and preparing food from the forest, river, and swidden field to eat together as a family, sometimes with the addition of guests, was also a highly regarded practical aspect of living well in Wacará. It required cooperation from every member of the household and as I have noted many times, this included children from the age they could walk. For example, Joel and Candela's breakfast of meat in chilli broth with manioc bread and mugs of manioc gruel, demonstrated their successful ability to fulfil their complementary roles as husband and wife in the production of food. Candela, for instance, had been making manioc bread at her mother's house when I asked her about doing this interview the day before, while her husband was away hunting.

Sahlins describes 'cooperative food production' as one of the ordinary contexts of 'pooling' and that 'the everyday, workaday variety of redistribution is familial pooling of food' (2011 [1972]: 189). He notes that 'pooling stipulates a social centre where goods meet and thence flow outwards' (*ibid*). In the case of my interview with Candela and Joel, the familial pooling of food flowed outwards to me, their guest, interviewer, anthropologist, outsider. As a recipient of the meal, I was an outsider to the 'social boundary… within which persons… are cooperatively related' (*ibid*). As Sahlins explains, pooling is 'socially a *within* relation, the collective action of a group… the complement of social unity' (2011 [1972]: 188). This is what I refer to as the 'independence of the household.'

During Joel and Candela's interviews, they not only described ideal ways of being together in the general sense of their everyday lives, but also acted in accordance with these ideals during my visit. They treated me very well as a visitor in their home, which according to Cacua standards meant giving generous helpings of food and drink to guests when they arrived. The atmosphere in their home was happy and relaxed, they treated me with warmth, and their children were content with bowls of meat in broth and cups of gruel.

In Descola's description of the good life among the Achuara, he includes a small note on the affective aspect, 'that little something that makes a house a pleasant place that the ethnographer always leaves with a twinge of regret' (1994: 308-9). By contrast, he notes that where 'the atmosphere is morose, the exact opposite of the good life' prevails (*ibid*). The prominence of 'good feeling' in the good life is apparent in Descola's asides, though it is not the focus of his analysis. Among the Cacua, 'good feeling' is encapsulated by the expression *míic wēi*, a reciprocal feeling of happiness, which is core to what they refer to as 'living well' (*vivir bien* in Spanish; *túi j~~u~~mat* in Cacua). This state is often brought about by and described in relation to 'eating together' (*n~~u~~mah jeémp*) after the father returns home with meat or fish, which the mother and children gut, wash and cook in water with salt and chilli, to be accompanied by manioc bread.

The affective aspect of bringing home meat and fish to one's family, which was inextricably tied to the wife and children's complementary role in gutting and cooking it, came across in some of the other parental interviews I conducted. One of the fathers I interviewed, for instance, replied to my question about what he and his family did in the mornings, by relating his return home from fishing,

> 'In the morning, sometimes I go, and I am out all day, and I don't return until I catch fish. When I return from fishing, they [my children] meet me, happy. When I bring fish, they are happy. They gut the fish and take it home. Their mother cooks it, they eat. That is how they are.'

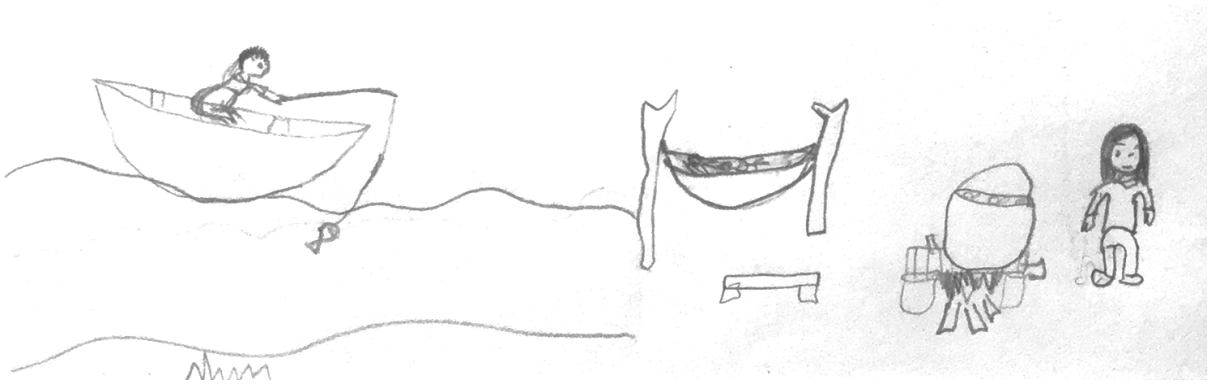

Figure 8 - Drawing of good father (tɨ́ini paáh) by ten-year-old Maite.

Daughter of the man interviewed above, produced this drawing in one of the children's activity sessions. In this session I had asked the children to draw what a good mother (tɨ́ini naáh), good father (tɨ́ini paáh) and good child (tɨ́ini wébít) do, folding the sheet into thirds. In the third dedicated for tɨ́ini paáh (a good father), the girl drew her father fishing in the first square and then her mother cooking the fish at home in the adjacent square. This drawing demonstrates the complementary role of husband and wife but is beautifully brought to life by her father's interview in which he speaks of the affective side of this scene.

The value attributed to the self-sufficiency of the individual household in the ability of its members to cooperate in procuring and producing food, which culminated in those members of the household eating together, was high among families in Wacará. As Walker notes, the affective side of sharing meals is often eschewed in regional literature, in favour of conceptual analyses about the production of kinship through consumption, commensality and shared bodily substance (2015: 189). His own focus on the affective side of food sharing among the Urarina stems from the independent responses of many of his interlocuters about a time when they felt happy. Many described the return of a hunter with a game animal, knowing that it would soon be time to eat with others. Walker contextualises this moment by highlighting the scarcity of food sources and that going hunting did not guarantee success or that anyone would eat. Within this context, he draws on Gow's analysis of the subsistence economy as one of satisfying the desire of others (Walker, 2015: 188; see Gow, 1991), such as a wife and children's desire to eat meat or fresh fish. Walker describes the sight of the returned hunter with game as at once alleviating the anxiety regarding food supply and as inducing anticipation for the shared pleasurable moment of satisfying the desire and need to

eat by sharing a meal with others (2015: 188). He explains that the joyous sight of the successful hunter's return epitomises a short-term form of happiness and 'good feeling' that forms part of a long-term form of happiness, living well (*ibid*: 190-1, 180).

As Walker notes of the Urarina, the Cacua also have different words and phrases that correspond to these long-term and short-term states of happiness. *Túi júmna* literally means 'to be well,' though Cacua people often translate this expression as 'to live well' and as I have described, it implies a general state of contentment and tranquillity with which people go about their daily activities and interactions with others. The short-term state of happiness associated with seeing one's husband or father returning home from hunting or fishing with meat or fish, followed by enjoying a delicious meal together, is encapsulated by the Cacua term *wēi*, which often preceded by the prefix *míic*, marking the reciprocity of this feeling. Walker draws on Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence to suggest how these two states of happiness might interrelate. He explains that shared heightened moments of joy strengthen social bonds and imbue shared moral values with affect, all of which feedback into the everyday (Walker, 2015: 179).

Nonetheless, the notion that everyone in the household rises feeling calm and content (*túini jeh*), with a reciprocal feeling of happiness towards one another (*míic wēi*) is an ideal rather than a guaranteed state of affairs. Children, for example, did not necessarily appreciate their parents' efforts to find and bring home food, and the complementary roles of husbands and wives did not always prevail. The man depicted fishing in his daughter's drawing, for example, told me that his five-year-old son did 'not like eating fish' (*queéj wēi jeémp canni* in Cacua). This highlights that there were discrepancies between idealised notions around bringing home food and eating together, and what actually transpired once fathers arrived home from hunting and fishing. On one occasion, for instance, Yair arrived home with fish in the early hours of the morning after a night spent on the river, and Felicia woke early to prepare the fish in time for their children to eat before school. Nonetheless, their eight-year-old son yelled in frustration that he did not want to eat fish, but rice, when he saw the fish in the morning.

Felicia first responded by ordering her son 'not to get angry' (*íij caá bojoó.*) Following this, rather than encouraging the son to appreciate his father's efforts at providing food for the family, Felicia pushed a different agenda. She implored that this was why her son needed to study, urging him that if he studied hard now, he would be able to get a job and buy whatever he wanted when he was older. This indicates that there were narratives including formal schooling, salaried jobs and buying one's food, alongside narratives of helping one's family to work, cultivating crops and producing manioc-based products, and finding food to bring home. As noted towards the end of the previous chapter, these narratives did not contradict one other for Cacua parents, so much as coincide with the notion of helping one's family.

Similarly, while Candela had told me that she prepared and cooked the food that her husband brought home, having searched for food out of love for his children, I also learnt that she once refused to cook the fish he had brought home as she had no manioc to make bread and gave the fish to her mother instead. This points to a breakdown in marital obligations, as men are required to fell swidden fields for their wives to cultivate manioc and other crops. Candela had been going to her mother's swidden field and sometimes to the swidden field of her classificatory aunt, who belonged to the same clan as her mother, to pull up manioc to make bread. She also exchanged meat that her husband brought home from hunting for toasted manioc flour with this aunt.

While Candela's lack of manioc in her own swidden field may have pointed to problems of maintaining an independent household, being able to rely on relations of interdependence within the community meant that she could still ensure that her family had sufficient food. Nonetheless, Candela's reliance on others had a knock-on effect, as her mother soon ran out of manioc as well and was one of the women who asked Felicia if she could take manioc from her swidden field (see ch6). Scott's metaphor of a 'social map' (1976: 166) is useful for understanding who people approach for help and what expectations they have of different members of the community when different family members of a household do not manage to coordinate their actions in such a way that ensures self-sufficiency. As Scott notes of the moral economy among peasants of Southeast Asia, guaranteeing subsistence for one's family takes place within a social and cultural context that provides the people born into it with certain ways of orienting themselves. This includes an orientation towards moral values and within a set of concrete social relationships (*ibid*).

I have begun this chapter by highlighting the value of self-sufficiency of the individual household through the complementary roles of its members in procuring and cultivating sufficient food to produce a meal to eat together with plenty to give visitors should they call. Candela's five-year-old daughter would accompany her in the swidden field and help her by peeling bitter manioc and collecting sticks for firewood, and Candela would make manioc bread, an accompaniment for any meat or fish that her husband fiound, killed, and brought home for them. At the same time, I have noted that idealised notions of happiness and tranquillity within the household could differ from the reality of everyday life when children were not necessarily grateful for their parents' provisions, complementary roles faltered, and interdependence between households was as crucial as the independence of the individual home.

Interdependence between Households: Conviviality and Exchange

Much of Overing's scholarship (1989, 1992, 2003) pays specific attention to 'production,' the procurement of food and the labour required to produce it within the intimate sphere of close relatives and the implication this has on conviviality. In their edited volume, Overing and

Passes highlight the importance that Amazonian peoples place on 'how to live well, happily, in community with others' and that 'their emphasis is upon achieving a comfortable affective life with those with whom they live, work, eat and raise children' (2000: 2). They take issue with Sahlins' estimation of the 'domestic mode of production' as only serving 'intimate and therefore ultimately selfish familial satisfactions, and not those of the wider whole' (Overing and Passes, 2000: 3; see Sahlins 1972: 86, 97-8).

While the independence of the individual household is an important value among the Cacua, as I will explore in the subsequent sections of this chapter, this exists within valued forms of interdependence between households. Procuring sufficient food for an individual household usually required more than the complementary roles of a husband and wife with their children's help, though this provided an important base. Utilising one's kinship and other social relations in the community was key to securing one's place in the networks of food-exchange. My own analysis also refutes Sahlin's interpretation of the 'domestic mode of production,' by emphasising that the independence of each household in Wacará is necessary for interdependence between different households within the wider community to take place.

In Belaunde's detailed account of commensality among the Airo Pai, she explains that when giving cooked meals or meat to those from other households, 'the stress is not put on the 'reciprocity' of the gifts, but on the mutuality of the acts of giving (we both give to each other, we both accept from each other)' (1992: 197). This is also true among the Cacua, who emphasised the giving, rather than the receiving aspect of this interaction, generally speaking of giving and not giving food to others and of others as giving or not giving food to them. Analytically speaking, however, the giving of food by one party does in fact entail the receiving of food by another, and as Mauss (1974 [1923]) famously states of the gift, the third aspect of this interaction is reciprocation. While the Cacua did not directly speak of the receiving and reciprocity involved in what they referred to as 'giving food' (*jeémát wɯ̄h* in Cacua), these aspects were key to forging and maintaining relations within the community. In this way, the Cacua turn of phrase, '[not] giving food' is also about 'exchange,' an analytical term I use throughout this chapter.

The procurement, preparation and giving of wild food, which were not tasks categorised as 'work,' were another way in which a husband and wife's roles complemented each other and through which their children also learnt the value of living well with others. For instance, couples often went to the forest to collect wild fruits together. The husband would either climb the tree and chop at the branches or chop down the whole tree with an axe, as his wife waited for him below. Once the fruits fell to the ground, the wife, and children, if accompanying, would collect the fruits into a large basket, which the wife would carry home, with the strap of the basket around her forehead and the basket full of fruits hanging down her back. On the way home, the husband might chop some wood for the fire and carry it back and once home, the wife would light the cooking fire and cook the fruits in water to soften

the pulp. Women usually went to bathe once the cooking was done, and then the couple set about giving portions to kin with whom they had long-term relations of food exchange or else inviting them to the house for juice, often sending children with bowls of fruit or messages.

'Killing fish' (*quej mão*) and 'killing animals' (*ñ~~u~~nu~~u~~p mão*), the Cacua phrase for fishing and hunting, usually took place under solitary conditions, and often at night. Men usually left the community when it was dark and travelled along the river in their canoes. As they fished, they kept an eye out for spotted pacas, who went to the river to drink, their eyes gleaming red in torchlight, making them easy to spot. Men went to the forest to hunt when they had seen or been told by others about animal tracks or about berries, which particular animals ate, coming into season and dropping to the ground. Much of hunting entailed finding the right place and position in which to keep still and wait, sometimes even mimicking the sound of the animals they were hunting. Agoutis sometimes ate the manioc tubers in swidden fields, which was another opportunity for men to hunt, but they had to stay hidden in their swidden field and keep still, waiting for the animal to show itself. Some people hunted with dogs, which would chase down prey and corner it.

In the instances of these solitary activities, the complementary role between men and women, lay in the woman's role of cooking what her husband brought home after gutting and washing the carcase together. Children helped with these tasks from around the age of five, while younger children often stood on the periphery to watch. Once the meal was cooked, children or their parents went to the house of their closet kin, living next door, to invite them to their home to eat the meal together. Following the shared meal, the woman of the house dished out portions of cooked food into bowls to give or send her children to give the food to other kin from a couple of other households in the community. Such practices formed part of an informal long-term exchange of wild food between close kin from different households across the community and demonstrates how households were at once independent and interdependent. As noted in the previous chapters regarding the value of work, children learnt the value of 'giving food' (*jeémát w~~u~~h* in Cacua) through their participation in these networks of exchange, from helping to gut, wash and cook meat and fish to taking portions of cooked food to other households or else inviting kin from other households to eat in their homes, on behalf of their parents.

Figure 9 - On his return from hunting, a man guts and cleans a caiman he has brought home for his family.

His six-year-old daughter sits on a low stool, peering at the animal's jaw, which she holds in her hands. The man's three-year-old son and niece of the same age, from the adjacent household, play together on the periphery. Photograph by author. [Above Left]

Figure 10 - Six-year-old girl using small blade to gut caiman while her three-year-old cousin stands over to watch. Photograph by author. [Above Right]

Figure 11 - An eight-year-old boy and his six-year-old sister carrying a toad to their grandmother's house, following their father's return from fishing, having caught several frogs, fish, and a toad. Photograph by author.

People did not give manioc, a staple cultivated crop, or manioc-based produce in the same way as they gave wild food. People did not, for example, send their children to give portions of toasted manioc flour and bread to other households. While manioc was considered crucial to meals, it was still an accompaniment to meat or fish, rather than a meal in itself. In fact, I noticed that women often took their own manioc bread when invited to eat meat or fish in chilli broth at another household. If someone from another household requested manioc because they had run out, people either gave that person permission to harvest a basket of

manioc from their swidden field or invited the person to join them in the swidden field to help with weeding beforehand (see ch6). In other cases, people offered wild foods in exchange for cultivated foods, including manioc-based products.

Food-giving was part of a broader set of exchange and social relationships within and beyond the community. The work it took to run and sustain the individual household and swidden fields belonging to it, also entailed relations between households that made up the community. Sahlins holds the notion of 'pooling' as analytically distinct from 'reciprocity,' the former 'socially a *within* relation' and the latter 'a *between* relation, the action and reaction of two parties' (2011 [1972]: 188). He breaks reciprocity into distinct categories of exchange, reflecting the immediacy and equivalency of returns, including 'generalised reciprocity' and 'balanced reciprocity' or direct exchange (*ibid*: 191-4).

As an example of generalised exchanges, with no expectation of anything directly in return, whenever Felicia's parents went hunting, fishing or to collect wild fruits, they invited Felicia, her husband, children, and me, to eat with them and often took a portion of the wild food to their house as well. Likewise, Felicia prepared a meal for her mother's household to eat with them whenever Yair returned from a successful hunt or fishing trip. In common cases of direct exchange, men asked to borrow shotguns from those who owned them, before going hunting or else a canoe or paddle before going fishing. The understanding was that people would give the 'owner' of the item they had borrowed, some meat, or fish on their return.

To similar ends, I always kept a stash of batteries in my room as people often needed them for their torches before fishing and hunting trips. While I gave the family I was living with as many batteries as they needed, people from other households offered me meat or fish on return from hunting and fishing trips in exchange for them. Felicia often requested batteries for her parents before they went hunting or fishing, though this form of exchange was separate from the generalised reciprocity that took place between Felicia's household (of which I formed part during fieldwork) and theirs. On one occasion, Felicia's niece brought me a portion of smoked fished from Felicia's parents, wrapped separately from the portion for Felicia's household. Yair made a point of telling me that I could eat my portion of fish whenever I wanted, and they could not say anything because it was mine. His point emphasised that this portion of fish was not for the general consumption of the household, unlike the food received through the general reciprocity that took place between the two households.

Overing's (1992) distinction between production and exchange designates food as belonging to the intimate sphere of production and objects produced by those foreign to such intimate social spheres as pertaining to networks of exchange. Nonetheless, the above examples suggest that intimate social spheres of production are deeply connected through the interdependence between various independent households of the community. What's more, in instances of packaged, shop-bought food, food itself is foreign to intimate social spheres of

production. Through state funding, for instance, the school in Wacará received shop-bought produce for its students' school lunches and for all of the teachers and boarding students' meals. The produce included packs of rice, kidney beans and lentils, salt and sugar, tins of tuna and sardines, powdered drink mixes, biscuits, and blocks of raw cane sugar.

While the teachers were not Cacua, they were also indigenous, and enjoyed fresh fish, meat, manioc bread and toasted manioc flour. They had no kin in Wacará and therefore as individuals were not part of any networks of generalised exchange. Nonetheless, through their status as teachers and access to shop-bought goods, they were able to engage in networks of food exchange in Wacará through 'balanced reciprocity,' direct exchange without delay (Sahlins, 2011 [1972]: 194). The teachers also gave the inhabitants of Wacará a cooked meal, made from shop-bought ingredients in exchange for carrying the school supplies from the Vaupés River through the forest to the community. These broader networks of exchange entailed relations of interdependency and thus formed an important part of the moral economy. Walker discusses the production of desire in the Urarina moral economy, explaining that attaining industrial goods in exchange for labour or forest goods enabled men to seduce potential marriage partners (2013: 54). Through this analysis, he explores commodities as socially productive in serving as 'vehicles of kinship' (*ibid*: 52)

As noted in chapter two, the Cacua of Wacará used to rely on relations of exchange with their Cubeo, Desano and Wanano neighbours, but within the Captain of Wacará's lifetime have ceased to engage in them. Today, the Cacua leaders of Wacará ran errands in the town of Mitú, liaising with those who could help them to access funding and facilities for their community, relations that enabled them to cut previous relations of exchange. The Cacua leaders of Wacará insisted that each household in the community had its own swidden field to produce its own manioc products. Cacua people of Wacará tended to buy any goods they could not make, in Mitú with money made from selling meat, fish and handcrafts, undertaking various forms of precarious labour and sometimes from employment with fixed-term contracts.

It was through wild food, rather than cultivated food that interdependence between households was valued. This was because people usually judged lack of sufficient cultivated food (unless in the case of newcomers) as a result of the negative disposition of laziness combined with 'not knowing' (*jéihcan* in Cacua) how to work. While some households gave cultivated crops to those without, not being able to cultivate sufficient crops by one's own means reflected badly on one's household, as all adults were expected to 'know' (*jéih* in Cacua) how to attain all they needed to live well. As such, while having sufficient cultivated food indicated the independence of individual households, having an abundance of wild food enabled households throughout the community to strengthen relations of interdependence.

Like work, food exchange formed an important part of people's ability to live well as part of a community. On the most basic level, people always gave visitors who stopped at the house for

various reasons something to drink and if they were eating themselves, something to eat, usually some manioc bread to dip in chilli broth, along with meat or fish if there was any. On days when the community leaders had arranged communal breakfast, the women of each household would take food to the *caseta*, either a quarter piece of manioc bread, a pot of chilli broth (without meat or fish) or a freshly prepared drink. As the older women criticised those who did not bring anything to the *caseta* behind their backs, women who had nothing to take on days of communal breakfast usually refrained from joining at all. While informal sanctions, such as light gossip and criticism concerning those [not] giving food, formed part of the moral economy, so did more vicious means aimed at successful hunters, who did not give meat to others, and thus risked provoking attacks of black magic.

The following vignettes highlight a variety of scenarios regarding the circulation of wild food, particularly meat, brought back to the community from the forest. While I have mainly focused on one family network, that of Yair and Felicia's household in conjunction with Felicia's parents' extended household next-door, such instances of food-giving and exchanges took place all around the community. Tracing the distribution of meat and other edible forest goods helps to reveal networks between kin, classificatory kin, and non-kin, and how their households are at once independent from and interdependent with others through giving food, sometimes in direct exchange for something else.

I like playing football, but I also like hunting.

'I don't know what to do,' Yair quietly admitted when a group of men had just passed the house and called to him to play football, 'I like playing football, but I also like hunting.'

Seeing as Yair had been telling me about his plans to hunt deer since I had woken at around half past six that morning, I was surprised at his sudden change of heart. He had told me about a spot where his father-in-law had seen some wild berries that the deer love to eat, which had fallen from the tree to the forest floor. Yair planned to go later in the morning to check for deer footprints and if he saw any, he would return in the afternoon when he hoped the deer would go to eat the berries. In the late morning, he went to the spot that his father-in-law had mentioned and had seen a deer footprint. He decided to return with his gun in the afternoon.

We had been eating very well in the last few days, as Yair had killed an agouti earlier that week and only the previous day, he had shot a boar. In both instances, anyone who came to the house for whatever reason, had been invited inside for a bowl of meat in chilli broth with a piece of manioc bread. The first to be invited to share the meat were Felicia's closest kin, who lived in the household across the patio. As soon as the boar had been prepared, Felicia's younger sister and her children, uncle, and little brother (her mother, stepfather, other sister and husband were away on a hunting trip) sat around the table with Felicia, Yair, their children

and me in the kitchen. Yair had placed a bowl of ground meat in the middle of the table next to the pot of broth, in which Felicia had cooked the boar with salt, coriander, and chillies.

Felicia and her sister both set manioc bread in the middle of the table, and we ate. Felicia dished out a separate bowl for her grandma, which she took her later. Yair also took a bowl of meat in broth to an elderly woman, who had seen him pass with the boar and asked him for some. She was a member of the same clan as Yair and therefore treated him as a brother in asking him for food, which he was obliged to give her. When her granddaughter returned the empty bowl, I asked her if she had tried some too and she told me that she had.

An old man of Yair's clan sat for a while in their patio. He asked the couple for nothing, but Felicia made him up a plate and told Yair to call him just as he was about to walk off. At six in the evening, Yair told me that he was going with his son, to take some boar meat to his older brother. When he returned, an uncle of Felicia's turned up at the house and Yair gave him meat in a bowl with manioc bread as well. Amid all this giving, there was one family that Yair had refused and that was when one of his neighbours asked to buy some meat. He had told her that it was not for sale. 'We're going to eat it,' he said.

Despite this, the following day Yair's youngest brother came to the house with a message from the school matron, who offered money or *mercado* (packaged shop bought produce) in exchange for the meat. Yair did not give his answer straight away, as he wanted to speak to his wife first. He gave his younger brother a bowl of meat in broth with some manioc bread and left to bathe. Felicia told Yair that they had nothing to drink, so he took a large leg of boar to the school kitchen and returned with three blocks of raw cane sugar, three pounds of rice, eight sachets of pineapple flavoured *frutiña* (powder with artificial flavourings to make squash) and a 500g packet of white sugar from the school matron. Yair's wife went to the school matron to ask for a bag of powdered milk as well and made us all panela in milk on the stove that afternoon. When Yair returned from the school kitchen, I asked him what he had decided, would he go hunting for deer or would he play football?

He carefully explained his thought process behind the dilemma, telling me that people get very angry if they see that someone is always bringing home meat from hunting, but not giving any to others. His brother-in-law (Felicia's thirteen-year-old brother) who had accompanied Yair on the day he shot the boar, told Yair that everyone in the community knew he had killed the boar. If people saw Yair going off with his gun to hunt this afternoon, it might provoke someone to attack him with *chondu*. Yair explained that such an attack was made by rubbing the *chondu* plant on one's hands, and then touching the person one wanted to attack, either by shaking the person's hand or touching them.

After rubbing *chondu* on the hunter, the hunter would just fall asleep in his hammock, becoming lazy and tired. The hunter would not feel like going hunting, but if he did, the

animals would not show themselves. Yair told me that women knew how to do this kind of *chondu* and that his brother-in-law had told him that a daughter of the neighbour, to whom he had refused to sell the boar, knew how to do this kind of *chondu*. She had rubbed *chondu* on her sister's husband when he had gone fishing. He had previously brought back lots of fish, so she had used *chondu* on him so that he would not catch so many in the future. Considering this, Yair declared that he was thinking of going hunting at night instead, though in the end, he waited until the following afternoon to hunt the deer. He returned from his excursion somewhat frustrated, as he had neither found deer, footprints, nor the wild berries, which had all been eaten by the time he arrived. 'I waited for nothing,' Yair told me.

Through tracing what happened to the meat with which Yair returned home from hunting on this occasion, it has been possible to highlight the specific relationships he had with those to whom him gave the meat. Sahlins' (1972) notions of reciprocity and kinship distance factor into the various ways Yair either exchanged or avoided exchanging the meat with others. As Sahlins notes, 'close kin tend to share, to enter into generalised exchanges, and distant and non-kin to deal in equivalents or in guile' (2011 [1972]: 196).

While Felicia and her husband's household was formed of a nuclear family when I moved in with them, they had previously slept in a hut next-door to her parents and shared their kitchen. This was how Felicia's two sisters were currently setup, one of which had a husband and baby daughter and the other who had three children and no husband. The brother of Felicia's stepfather also formed part of the household, having moved to live with his brother after separating from his wife in the other Cacua community. This paternal uncle slept in a separate hut next-door to the large kitchen, in which Felicia's parents and their unmarried son slept. The extent to which wild food circulated through the community usually took place among kin, who regularly gave one another food following hunting, fishing and wild fruit collecting trips. Yair usually took food to his elder brother and mother, who lived next door to one another, and they shared the food among the rest of their households, which included Yair's two unmarried brothers in his mother's case. Kin could request wild food, but non-kin could only offer to buy it with money or in exchange for some other product.

In the case of Yair's neighbours, the reason they offered to buy the meat was because they were not Yair's kin. Yair's household and theirs did not conduct any generalised exchange of food, so they did not give Yair food on returning from hunts and fishing trips nor visa-versa. The two households rarely interacted and as such, did not visit one another either. The social etiquette regarding visits to other households prevented just anyone in the community from visiting just anyone else. There was a shyness around visiting households with whom people did not have kin relations and by extension, while non-kin could offer to buy meat or fish from others, this could still cause embarrassment.

On one occasion, for instance, Yair's younger brother conducted his business entirely through Felicia when he wanted to buy fish from her mother. When Felicia told him that her parents were home and he could ask them directly, he responded, '*úu̶mna ca*,' a Cacua expression which Felicia later told me meant 'tengo miedo' (I am scared, in Spanish). She then added, 'le da pena,' a Colombian expression meaning, 'it makes him ashamed/ embarrassed/ shy.' This same Cacua expression, *úu̶mna,* also cropped up in one of the children's activity sessions when Yesenia was answering my questions in Cacua about a photograph she had taken of Joel and Candela's house. She had taken the photograph during the activity session when I asked the children to take photographs of the places they liked and did not like being in the community. In response to my questions, Yesenia told me that the photo was of Joel's house, that 'nothing' (*wihcan*) happened there, and the people who went there were the owners of the house. When I ask if she like or disliked this place, she told me that she did not because she was 'scared/ shy' (*úu̶m*) and when I ask why, she responded, '*jūihna*' (scolding).

While Yesenia did not specify who might scold her, when Felicia listened back to the recording with me, she explained that children's parents told them not to go to other people's houses in the community and scolded them if they found out that they had. While children often played with their cousins in their aunts, uncles and grandparents' homes and patios, they did not go to the houses of non-kin. As such, people grew up experiencing shyness and fear with regards to the households of non-kin and therefore people to whom their own household neither directly gave nor received food. On the other hand, children were used to visiting kin with their parents if invited to the house to drink juice when members of the household had returned from collecting wild fruit or to deliver bowls of cooked meat in broth or smoked fish. The reason Yair refused to sell meat to his neighbours, but later gave it to the school matron in exchange for shop bought products was likely because money was pretty useless in the community, whereas shop bought products were relatively hard to access unless one went to Mitú.

Finally, this vignette also highlights the concern of angering others by not 'giving' (*wu̶h* in Cacua). Anger is a dangerous emotion that can provoke people to attack those with whom they are angry with black magic. As such seeking to avoid angering others can influence people's actions, which in Yair's case meant that he decided not to go hunting so soon after having had two successful hunts and having refused to sell the meat to his neighbours. In this way, the positive value of giving food combined with the negative value of angering others, which might lead them to use black magic, encouraged people to be generous and humble, giving food to those they felt entitled to it, and not flaunting their successful hunts to others. In this way, black magic played an important role in the moral economy of food exchange. The risk of angering others by bringing home excessive quantities of meat and fish without giving any to others, discouraged people from doing so, and therefore prevented one household in the community from prospering over others.

Now he will say, “Yair does not want to give.”

Yair was speaking in hushed whispers to his son, as Felicia cooked the paca meat that Yair had brought home in the early hours of the morning, in a pot of water, flavoured with salt and chillies. ‘No hay. Mi papa no mató,’ (There is none. My dad did not kill), their eight-year-old son suddenly announced in broken Spanish. I turned to look at him inquisitively and Yair laughed, explaining that he had told his son not to mention the paca at school.

I went to the school shortly after Yair and Felicia’s children, as I had previously arranged with the headteacher to observe a class that morning. When I returned home a couple of hours later, Yair and Felicia were in the kitchen with Felicia’s family. The pot of paca meat in broth, along with a couple of quarters of manioc bread had been set on the table. Felicia’s youngest sister was sat on the bench just opposite the door with her baby daughter on her lap. Felicia’s uncle sat at the table and Felicia’s other younger sister was sat on the wooden floorboards with her toddler. Felicia passed me a bowl filled with pieces of paca meat. Yair asked if I wanted broth and soon poured some over the meat when I said that I did. Felicia’s nephew and niece arrived, sitting on the floor with their mother, forming a circle as they ate together.

Suddenly, Yair warned Felicia that one of the teachers was approaching and quickly mopped up the broth left in his bowl with manioc bread before practically throwing his empty bowl at her. She filled the bowl with paca meat and broth.

Once the teacher appeared at the door, Felicia was ready to receive him.

'Come in teacher,’ Felicia said warmly, handing him a bowl of paca meat.

'It’s opossum,’ Yair said grinning, as he often did, making it hard to know when he was joking.

While I had heard of opossums preying on chickens in the community, I had not heard of anyone killing them to eat and judging by the teacher’s expression, opossum did not make for a desirable meal. 'Sasha’s eating opossum?’ the teacher asked, looking at me with surprise. I also grinned, not saying anything as I neither wanted to lie, nor spoil Yair’s joke.

The teacher peered in the bowl and smiled. ‘It’s paca,’ he laughed, instantly relieved. The teacher then asked Felicia for a ‘piece’ (quarter) of manioc bread, which appeared to be the reason (or pretense) for his visit. She gave him two quarters of bread. The teacher then asked if Yair would sell him and the other teachers the paca.

'No, no, no, thank you,’ Yair quickly said, shaking his head, looking down at the table. Yair’s abrupt response seemed to surprise the teacher, who followed up by asking if Yair was selling the meat in Mitú, as if trying to understand why he had been refused.

Yair laughed and said that he had sold the paca to me.

'Really? Sasha bought it?' the teacher enquired, peering at me as if trying to decipher whether this was true. I just smiled, not knowing what to say and feeling uncomfortable at being embroiled in a lie.

'Tell him, yes,' Yair whispered urgently once the teacher had moved out of ear shot.

By this time, only Yair, the teacher and I were left in the kitchen as Felicia's younger sisters and their children had left almost as soon as the teacher arrived at the house and Felicia had slipped away after handing the teacher the manioc bread he had requested.

Before leaving, the teacher asked Yair what his wife wanted for the manioc bread.

'I don't know, ask her,' Yair replied good-naturedly, refusing to respond on his wife's behalf.

Once the teacher left, Yair leaned in to tell me, 'You can smell it all over the community.' He looked up at the smoke, seeping out of the gaps in the kitchen walls, 'and now he will tell others. He asked three times. Now he will say "Yair does not want to give".'

On leaving the kitchen, I asked Felicia what she had asked the teacher for in exchange for the manioc bread. She said that she had been teasing him by asking for a pound of rice and a box of raw cane sugar blocks, before adding with a note of seriousness, 'Whatever they give me [is fine]. I don't like telling them what to give me.'

This vignette reveals another aspect of food exchange networks, strategies to avoid entering into them in the first place. Even though Yair had ensured that he and his wife gave the teacher a bowl of meat to eat with manioc bread on his arrival at their home, Yair still worried that the teacher would regard him as someone who 'does not want to give' (*no quiere dar*, as Yair said in Spanish). Giving a meal to someone who visits one's home while one is eating with one's family, is different from giving someone a large portion of meat in direct exchange for something else. As Sahlins notes, 'food offered in a generalised way, notably as hospitality, is good relations… But then, a complementary negative principle is implied, that food not offered on the suitable occasion or not taken is bad relations' (2011 [1972]: 216). In other words, there is a social obligation to give food and drink (if available) to those who visit one in one's home, to not do so is considered extremely bad form. Likewise, when visiting someone in their home, there is a social obligation to accept any offers of food and drink.

There were certainly instances when Cacua people actively initiated exchanges of 'balanced reciprocity' with the teachers, seeking them out to give them fresh food in exchange for

packaged goods that were not otherwise available in the community. However, there were also instances when the teachers actively requested meat and fish or manioc. I once asked Felicia if she minded when the teachers asked her for food after a teacher had stopped at the house to ask her for sweet manioc, and she told me that if one can give, one gives and if one cannot, one feels bad. This language of '[not] giving' does not so much reflect the upper hand of those in a position to give, but rather the social pressure under which they come of those making requests of them. Meat and fish, which were a much less reliable source of food than manioc-based products, were also more highly valued (also see, C. Hugh-Jones, 1979: 171-3). Yair's attempt to keep the paca he had hunted secret, even prepping his son before school, suggests that families were not as keen to exchange meat for other goods as manioc.

Nonetheless, refusing offers to exchange meat or other forms of fresh food for either packaged goods from teachers or money from other non-kin meant refusing to give, an uncomfortable position to occupy. Yair resorted to lying about having sold the meat to me, which would have meant that he was no longer in a position to give rather than refusing the teacher's request. On reflection, I realised that I had been reluctant to play along with Yair's lie, as my position *within* Yair's household meant a lot to me. I contributed to the 'familial pooling of food' (Sahlins, 2011 [1972]: 189) by working alongside Felicia in the swidden field and manioc kitchen, gutting the fish and animals that Yair brought home, and bringing packets and tins of shop bought food to the kitchen when other food was scarce. Pretending to have bought the meat from Yair meant pretending that 'balanced reciprocation' took place *between* me and Yair's household, rather than indicating my social relation *within* the household. This would have implied a level of social distance between me and the family with whom I lived, potentially bolstering my position as an outsider.

Though Yair had given the meat he hunted to many people, he had been strategic with regards to how he gave it, to whom, how much and whether he wanted the meat for his family to eat or in exchange for something else. The nuances of [not] giving food are also prevalent in other indigenous communities of Amazonia, according to regional literature. Killick, for instance, notes that households among the Ashéninka are built away from main pathways and set up in a way that makes it difficult to observe comings and goings from the house, with several smaller paths leading to it. Killick highlights the ease with which men are able to conceal any game with which they return after hunting as a result of such household set ups. By continuation, their wives also endeavoured to conceal the game as they washed and prepared it (2009: 703-4).

Such practices were difficult to achieve among the Cacua of Wacará, whose community was setup in such a way that there was no forest cover for most of the houses, positioned in the middle of a large grassy clearing along wide paths of hard dry earth running from one end of the community to the other. Felicia once commented to me, 'it's like we are eating in public,' as a group of men off to play football walked along the path with a clear view into their kitchen

as we sat eating fish. Yair's eldest brother, who was with the men, called to him with a wide smile, to give him some fish later. The design of their kitchen, built and installed as part of a development project in the community, meant that the slats of wood intended to let out the smoke from cooking over an open fire, also gave passers by a clear view of our meals. Some weeks later, Yair boarded up several sections of the kitchen walls.

Aside from their household set ups, there are other ways in which the Ashéninka differed from the Cacua regarding the giving and receiving of food. Killick notes, for instance, that when offered food, people from other households 'make a show' of politely refusing. This is because whilst the Ashéninka value generosity, as a host's invitation to eat suggests, there is also an emphasis on the self-sufficiency of each household and as such, *not* needing to depend on the generosity of others. Following this logic, the Ashéninka did not send gifts of raw or cooked meat to other households either, including the households of their own married children (2009: 704). While both Ashéninka and Cacua people, valued the independence of the individual household and generosity (expressed by the Cacua as 'giving,' *w~~u~~h* in Cacua) between households, they enacted these values in different ways.

Other examples of food-giving within regional literature include Rival's discussion of demand sharing among the Huaorani, who have different living arrangements from either the Cacua or the Ashéninka. Rival describes life in the longhouse, in which all families live under one roof but around their own hearths. In this setup, it was common for various families to cook at their hearths simultaneously, while continuously transferring food back and forth between one another. In some cases, a member of one hearth group shared raw food, such as meat or fruit, with those of other hearth groups, before the sharing of cooked food took place. If someone felt entitled to a share of wild food which had been hunted or gathered, but had not been given any, they openly asked for some, and their request was granted. While people could redistribute the wild food that they brought back to the longhouse as they chose, they also had to respond to the demands of other members of the longhouse (Rival, 2002: 103).

Rival's (2002) ethnography of the Huaorani offers an interesting point of comparison to that of the Cacua, as despite differences between their spatial organisations and food giving styles, there were instances of demand sharing from members of different hearth groups (or households) in both cases. Cacua families tended to give portions of cooked meat, smoked fish, and cooked wild fruits to their kin (parents and adult siblings, especially those to whom they lived close) spontaneously and without prompting. Nonetheless, instances of demand sharing occurred in Wacará from people who were not as close to members of the household but felt entitled to ask for a share of wild food because of other kinship ties. For example, people of the same clan were classificatory kin, referred to as brothers and sisters or aunts and uncles, and could make demands on one another for portions of wild food. In the case I described above when an old man of Yair's clan sat on the bench outside his house, though he did not say anything to Yair or his family and eventually made to leave, Yair knew that he

must have heard about Yair's successful hunt and wanted some. Yair called the elderly man as he was about to leave and handed him a bowl of meat in chilli broth with a chunk of manioc bread.

Among the Cacua, the role of teasing and humour involved in food giving also functions as a strategy of evasion. For instance, when Yair told the teacher that he had sold the paca meat to me, which is why he could not sell it to him, both the teacher and I were unsure as to whether he was joking because he was grinning and laughing as he spoke. Only when Yair whispered to me to play along, did it become clear to me that he genuinely wanted the teacher to believe what he had said. Felicia also employed this style of humour by teasing the teacher that she wanted a whole box of raw cane sugar blocks, which was a lot more than her two quarter pieces of manioc bread would have been worth. Felicia's teasing also served to evade making demands on the teachers for specific products and therefore placing an exchange value on the bread she had made. Humour could also play a role in demand sharing, as when Yair's brother yelled with a wide grin and much bravado that Yair save some fish for him, when he passed the house and saw Yair eating with his family on his way to play football. As Yair did not live next to his brother, but rather next to Felicia's parents and siblings, they were the household that received unprompted giving after Yair's fishing and hunting trips, more than Yair's brother on the other side of the community.

The Circulation of Tapir Meat from a Hunt

Bringing home tapir

Felicia's parents, who lived next door, had been away on a hunting trip for over a week. We heard of their return when Felicia's brother-in-law ran past us holding a blow gun, several children chasing behind him, on our way home from the river after a morning's work at the swidden field. We soon discovered that he was running to meet his (and Yair's) in-laws, who were still around an hour from the community and needed help carrying home the two tapir's that Felicia's uncle (mother's brother) had shot. Felicia's mother had sent word for their two sons-in-law to help. Felicia's uncle had given her mother and stepfather one of the tapirs he shot and after Yair helped to carry it home, Felicia's mother sent her thirteen-year-old son to take a piece of tapir meat to Felicia and Yair's house. Over the week I observed the variety of ways in which the tapir meat circulated throughout the community, particularly offered as a meal by families who needed help with work in their swidden field, to those who helped them.

The following morning, for instance, Yair went to ask his eldest brother and nephew to help him fell a new swidden field. He also called on his elderly classificatory brother, who he affectionately referred to as *el viejito* ('the little old man' in Spanish). When the men returned from a long morning of felling the swidden field, they met in Yair and Felicia's kitchen. Yair had pulled back the bench from under the kitchen table to the other side of the room. He sat next

to his brother, who was looking at a video on Yair's phone. The brother's son arrived and lastly, the *viejito*, who brought his own bowl.

The men sat alongside one another on the bench, while Felicia filled their bowls high with rice from the pot on the table. She put a piece of tapir meat in each bowl, placing it down on the table along with a bowl of manioc bread. The men took their bowls of food and sat on the bench to eat, returning to the table every now and again to dip a piece of manioc bread in the broth in which the meat had been cooked. As the men ate, they laughed and joked, clearly in good humour. Yair did not finish his bowl of rice and tipped what was left into the *viejito*'s bowl. When Yair's brother and his son left, they took another bowl of food with them, which I imagine was to give the rest of their family at home.

It was typical for men to ask for help felling a swidden field as it was a big job, but they needed to give those helping them a meal of meat or fish with chilli broth and manioc bread afterwards. In Yair's case, he had been opportunistic in offering the meat from his father-in-law. However, this meant that he was not able to ask the men from his father-in-law's household to help him as that would mean offering them the meat that they had just given him. In any case, the amount of people he could invite to help him with work depended on how much meat he had to offer. In other instances, men went to hunt or fish especially for work parties that they were planning to host. If they invited everyone in the community to their work party, this meant they would have to supply a large amount of meat or fish and in cases where they had been unable to bring home enough, they cancelled the work party.

Giving iwapichuna

A couple of days later, I learnt that Felicia's parents and uncle had plans to continue circulating the tapir meat from their hunt in exchange for help working their swidden fields. Felicia's parents, one of her sisters and the sister's three children were stood outside their house waiting to see if it would rain before heading into the forest to collect *iwapichuna* (*n~~u~~t* in Cacua), a wild fruit the size and shape of an olive with black skin and light green flesh, that had come into season. I was waiting to join the party with Felicia and Yair, who wanted to make *iwapichuna* juice (*n~~u~~t mac* in Cacua) for their own consumption, as opposed to Felicia's mother who would make large quantities of juice to give those who were going to help fell her swidden field the following day. Felicia's uncle and his wife approached Felicia's parents, while their twenty-one-year-old daughter came to sit next to me on a bench outside Felicia's kitchen. She told me that her parents also needed people to work in their swidden field, so they were going to ask people to work in both swidden fields and both families would provide tapir for lunch. While Felicia's stepfather needed help to fell the swidden field, Felicia's uncle needed help with the previous step, clearing and cutting the smaller plants.

We spent most of the day collecting *iwapichuna*, splitting off from Felicia's parents, sister and two of the sister's children. Before going to bathe in the river on our return, Felicia and Yair took a large bowl of *iwapichuna* to Yair's mother, who had told them that she wanted some. When I saw Yair and Felicia at the river, I noticed that they had a quarter piece of manioc bread in the bowl in which they had initially taken the *iwapichuna* to Yair's mother. She had given them the piece of manioc bread when they gave her the *iwapichuna*.

As we had no more tapir meat, back at the house Felicia made spaghetti and tinned sardines from provisions I had bought in Mitú. She also prepared fried sweet manioc from her garden next to the house and freshly prepared *iwapichuna* juice and a bowl of cooked *iwapichuna*. It was dark by the time we ate, and I soon noticed a shape pressed up against the outside of the kitchen. When I shone my torch, I saw that it was the old lady who had been hunting with Felicia's mother. She had previously told Felicia that she had been made to help carry the tapir home from the hunting trip and her back hurt so much that she had been unable to work in her swidden field since. As such, she had asked someone for manioc bread so that she had something to eat.

The old lady said not a word as she peered through the wooden slats of Felicia and Yair's kitchen wall, and neither did my hosts, though they must have been aware of her presence. The old lady's grandson of around seven years old hovered by his grandmother, who had been taking care of him while his mother was living in the other Cacua community with her new husband. Eventually Felicia took a bowl and scooped it full of *iwapichuna* to give to the old lady with a small piece of manioc bread. I heard the old lady and her grandson in the manioc plants next to the house, eating their meal. She then came back to lean against the kitchen wall, looking at us through the slats from the outside, before returning home.

This is an unusual scenario because when people visited other households, they usually did so for a reason, to report information or share news that concerned the person they were visiting, to borrow something or to return it. On such occasions, hosts would usually invite their guests inside and give them something to drink and if they were eating, something to eat as well. The old lady would have received a portion of tapir meat from the hunt she had joined and especially for having help to carry it home, but the toll of this activity had meant that she had been unable to make manioc bread on her return, an essential accompaniment to meat or fish. What's more, by this point, she and the rest of her household had likely finished the tapir meat. As previously mentioned, the old lady was a member of the same clan as Yair, which meant that she could make demands for food of him and as classificatory kin, he had to respond. Though she did not speak when she approached Yair's home, which was unusual, her non-verbal request for food was clear enough. The old lady had left by the time Yair's youngest brother came to visit, who by contrast to the previous visitor, walked straight into the kitchen on arrival, taking a handful of *iwapichuna* from the bowl on the table.

Giving Tapir and Communal Work

The following morning, members of the community gathered in the *caseta* for breakfast before communal work in the swidden fields of Felicia's stepfather and uncle commenced. Felicia's stepfather provided woolly monkey meat at the breakfast and her mother had made manioc bread for the occasion as well. As agreed, both families would provide tapir from their hunting trip for a communal lunch following communal work in each of their swidden fields. Felicia's uncle explained the work that would be required at each site, suggesting that the men went to his brother-in-law's swidden field to help fell the trees and that the women went to his swidden field to clear it of small plants with their machetes.

While I had intended to join the women at the uncle's swidden field, as I waited to leave with Felicia, I ended up working in her mother's swidden field instead. As Felicia had been helping Yair to fill the one and only chainsaw in the community with petrol, by the time we left, everyone else had already gone ahead. We walked for an hour, passing the uncle's swidden field on the way, which Felicia pointed out to me, 'it's that way,' she said, 'you can hear them all laughing'. Shrieks of laughter floated through the air, but Felicia continued on to her mother's swidden field and I followed. When we arrived, there was a stark contrast in atmosphere to that of the uncle's work party. There were no shouts or laughter, just the clanging of metal against tree trunks. There were only four men present. Felicia's husband had a chainsaw and the others either an axe or machete. Felicia's brother of around twelve years old at this time, had a machete and tirelessly chopped down one small tree after another. His father had an axe and was chopping trees with much wider trunks.

Two young women, including one of the uncle's daughters joined our small group to help and to get some respite from the large group at the other swidden field. They informed us that there were so many people at the other swidden field, that after clearing the small plants, people had begun to help plant manioc. I later found out that there had been many 'young people' (*jovenes* in Spanish) at the other swidden field, potentially attracted by the promise of manioc beer, which the female proprietor had prepared for workers, unlike Felicia's mother, who did not drink and had provided *iwapichuna* juice instead. When the two parties joined for lunch, Felicia jokingly told a Spanish speaking doctoral researcher visiting the community, 'they are scared of felling' (*tienen miedo de tumbar* in Spanish).

This was an example of a work party in which the whole community had been invited to join. Unfortunately for Felicia's parents, even though they had provided a large amount of meat (woolly monkey and tapir), manioc bread and *iwapichuna* juice, with the expectation that the men would help her stepfather to fell their swidden field, this did not transpire. All the same, Felicia's mother took the tapir and *iwapichuna* juice that she had prepared to the *caseta* for the communal lunch, and nothing was publicly said about no one having worked at her swidden field. Felicia told me at a later date that her stepfather had said that he would not throw another work party.

Communal work came in several varying formats, including work for the upkeep of communal areas of the community, which the president of work organised, offering a communal lunch of rice and beans or some equivalent with shop bought goods from community funds. The scale on which Felicia's parents and maternal uncle hosted their joint work party to fell and clear their own swidden fields was large, but they were able to do it as they had brought a lot of meat home back to the community from their recent hunting trip. Most households organised smaller work groups and unlike Felicia and Yair, who abstained from drinking alcohol, such gatherings often included manioc beer, which people drank back at the host's house after working and having been served a hearty meal. When invitations to work-parties were extended to the whole community, those who abstained from drinking did not attend if they knew that the hosts would be serving manioc beer.

Unlike communal work organised by the president of work for general maintenance of the community, communal work organised by individual households was yet another example of households as both independent and interdependent. In order to host a work party at all, households needed to successfully function as an independent unit, enabling the husband to hunt or fish a sufficient amount of food for guests and his wife to prepare a meal with it. Manioc bread was always served as an accompaniment to meat or fish, which meant that the husband and wife must already have a swidden field, which the husband had felled and in which the wife was cultivating and harvesting bitter manioc to make bread. The same was true in cases where women made manioc beer for work parties. At the same time as instating their independence as an individual household through being able to host a work party at all, they were also instating interdependence with other households by requesting 'help' (*teo wáac*), 'coming together to work' (*teo wáac*) with others and 'giving food' (*jeémát wʉh*).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the role of food exchange in strengthening relations between households that regularly gave one another wild food and invited one another to eat together in their homes. Food exchange also enabled members of the same clan to reinstate kin relations through demand sharing or for people to acknowledge their status as non-kin by offering to buy meat or fish from others. As children took part in these food giving networks, they had the opportunity to start forging their own 'social map' (Scott, 1976: 166) to guide them in understanding who was kin and from whom they would be able to ask for help when they matured and lived in their own independent households.

In the first part of this thesis, I focused on the way 'young' (*jáap* in Cacua) people established themselves as adults by finding a spouse, having children, and founding their own independent households, and how children learnt to work by helping others. These two points come together through the complementary work that men and women undertake with the

help of their children, to ensure the self-sufficiency and independence of their household. This second part of the thesis emphasises the moral economy of the community, in which the circulation and distribution of food, both wild and cultivated, formed part. By focusing on the practices of food exchange in the community, I have highlighted some of the ways that Cacua people upheld the ideal of independence and self-sufficiency alongside the ideal of interdependence, which involved giving, receiving and reciprocating.

Chapter 8. [Not] Living Well

You must live well.

With intense concentration, Felicia pushed a needle through Joel's scalp, pulling through the black thread that I normally used for making bracelets with children. Each time she double knotted the thread to close the wound, I leaned forward with a pair of scissors to snip off the end, as she had instructed. We were in Felicia's kitchen, which she had quickly transformed into an emergency room when Joel was brought to her at around seven in the morning on New Year's Day. Joel's wife, Candela, stood in the doorway with their two children, before moving outside to sit on a bench beneath the guava tree, checking her daughter's hair for nits. Their three-year-old son was in the kitchen with Felicia's son of the same age. I had removed the two boys from the bench where Joel was sitting just before Felicia began stitching the wound, as they kept toddling towards him to get a better view, making the bench wobble. Once Felicia had finished stitching Joel's wound, she dabbed away the last of the blood with alcohol-soaked cotton wool and spoke to him sternly. I noted her words verbatim with ellipsis for the parts I did not understand.

'T̶ú̶ini jeh ñi j̶u̶mat… Wã jĭ́gah… teo wáaca.' She then repeated, 't̶ú̶ini jeh ñi j̶u̶mat… Wã jĭ́gah…'

Felicia was bidding Joel and his family (*ñi* – You, plural) to live well (t̶ú̶ini…j̶u̶mat), saying that she felt 'sad' (jĭ́gah). I also caught the word 'help' (teo wáac). When I asked Felicia what she had said to Joel, after he had left and we were alone in the kitchen, she told me in Spanish, 'You have to live well, you have to live well with your in-laws. This saddens me and that is why I am helping.'

Before attending to Joel, Felicia had been up all night, seeing in the New Year at the rudimentary church in Wacará. Balloons and colourful paper chains hung from the wooden church rafters, and those attending the celebration put on a show with acts including dressing up and miming to pop songs, telling jokes, narrating, and acting out fables from the bible in Cacua, as well as singing Christian songs together. Felicia often lamented that nowadays fewer people were participating in such events, preferring to host separate parties, where they drank manioc beer, danced to cumbia and every so often paused the music to play panpipes. This latter style of celebration was how Joel had been spending New Year's Eve before contracting his headwound. The community was divided, so the community leaders publicly bemoaned each time a large drinking party rivalled the activities they had organised in the church, where drinking alcohol played no part in events.

Felicia asked what had happened when a group of people approached her at church with the news that Joel had a gash in his scalp, which they described to her in gory detail. She soon learned that Joel's mother-in-law had hit him in the back of the head with a spade. As Felicia had training in First Aid, curtsey of the missionaries who had raised her for much of her life,

she was often called upon for medical emergencies. By the time she left church, a small crowd had gathered outside her house, including Joel, his wife and their two young children. Felicia was relieved to see that the cut was not as large or deep as people had implied and so it was certainly within her capability to stitch up, though she had little to offer to numb the pain.

A woman in the crowd spoke to Felicia, questioning whether she would stitch up the wound. Before Felicia had the chance to answer, the woman told her not to help as they needed to learn what manioc beer does. I do not believe that Felicia would have truly considered not giving Joel medical attention, but perhaps the comment presented her with a moral dilemma regarding how she should deal with him. Perhaps the woman's comment spurred Felicia's assertion, 'tɨ̨ini jeh ñi jɨ̨mat' (You [pl] must live well). She may have felt relief at verbally justifying (perhaps to herself) her motives for helping Joel and more importantly, to assert the moral implication that Joel was not living well.

The fact that Felicia spoke to me about the woman's comment after stitching up Joel's wound, suggests that the remark had affected her. It points to some of the tensions underlying life in the community of Wacará, along with the common knowledge that Joel's fight with his mother-in-law was the result of a night spent drinking manioc beer. Like Felicia, the woman who challenged her, did not produce or drink manioc beer on account of her and her husband being Evangelical Christians and consequent abstinence from alcohol.

By contrast, unlike Felicia and other adamant Christian families, Joel drank manioc beer, which his wife would prepare for drinking parties. Felicia claimed that this was why their family did not have enough manioc in their swidden field to make manioc bread. She had also previously spoken to me disdainfully about 'those who drink' ('los que toman' in Spanish; 'babhnit' in Cacua), with whom she associated shamanic healing prayers, *maldad* (malevolent spells) and playing panpipes. Indeed, Joel knew how to perform shamanic healing prayers, which he would 'blow,' sometimes into food, drink, or ointment, to serve as protection for new-born babies, revive a woman's fertility or cure illness and Felicia once told me, 'They say he knows how to do *maldad* as well.'

Determined to uncover why Joel's mother-in-law had hit him, Felicia made her way to her house, leaving a bemused looking Joel on the low wooden step at the entrance to her kitchen. She found his mother-in-law curled up in her hammock, whimpering in pain, as her teenage son demanded that she tell him the truth about what had happened. Joel's mother-in-law told her son that Joel had been beating Candela, who she stepped in to protect. At the interference, Joel had turned on his mother-in-law instead, kicking her in the shoulder when she fell to the ground. At some point she hit him in the back of the head to defend herself, inflicting his wound. Felicia wondered if it was true that the mother-in-law had used a spade, given that his cut was not as deep as she had expected. She gave Joel's mother-in-law two paracetamols, which was all she had to offer for the pain. When she returned to stitch Joel's scalp, she asked him several times why his mother-in-law had hit him.

‘Jéihcan,’ Joel responded each time (don’t know), only expanding his answer following Felicia’s rebuke to live well with his in-laws, ‘íij mawachah, jéihcan’ (angry when hit, don’t know).

Pronouns are often omitted in Cacua but seeing as Felicia had been asking Joel why his mother-in-law had hit him, I assume that he was referring to his mother-in-law being angry when she hit him. Once Felicia left the kitchen, Joel looked up at me with crinkled eyes and a sleepy smile. He shook my hand firmly, ‘Chacha’, he said in drunken singsong, addressing me as did most people in the community, unable to master the true pronunciation of my name.

‘Ma túi?’ he asked. Are you well?

I smiled weakly at him in response and asked if he was well.

‘Íijat wihcan,’ he then said with another sleepy drunken smile. (There is no anger).

Joel’s resistance to Felicia’s questions concerning why his mother-in-law had hit him, followed by a portrayal of his mother-in-law as acting in anger when she hit him, was potentially a way to defend himself against Felicia’s reprimand. Anger is not conducive to living well, so he may have told me, ‘There is no anger’ to counteract the implication that he was not living well.

When we quarrel, they don’t live well either.

Fighting was specifically regarded as ‘not living well,’ nor conducive to children living well if they saw their parents fighting. Joel’s wife, Candela, told me this about her own family when I went to their home to interview her and her husband about family life, eight months prior to the events described above (see ch7). The juxtaposition between the harmonious life that Candela and her husband described and demonstrated during our short interview described in the previous chapter and the unfortunate turn of events on New Year’s Day, pointed to the potential discrepancy between ‘living well’ as an ideal versus reality. Perhaps this is why the majority of comments I heard in Wacará about living well, told me more about specific conduct associated with not living well or what living well did *not* entail, such as gossip, anger, stealing and fighting. In fact, in Candela’s interview, she specifically associated ‘quarrelling’ (*jɯ̄ih*) with ‘not living well’ (*túi jɯmcan*) in response to a question about how a good child should behave. She said,

> ‘If us parents, my husband and I, don’t quarrel with each other when they (the children) are there, looking, they will also get on well. They children are also like that with each other. They look at us parents. When we quarrel with each other, they don’t live well either, they also quarrel with each other.’

While I had placed the emphasis of my question on the child, Candela responded by switching the focus to herself and her husband as parents, whose children ‘see’ (*en*) them acting in

certain ways and copy what they see. Candela's specific association of 'quarrelling' (*jʉ̄ih*) with 'not living well' (*tʉ́i jʉmcan*) is also prevalent, hence her comment that if her and her husband quarrel, their children 'will not live well either.' While her response offers another example of what living well does not entail, it also indicates Candela's recognition of parents as informally teaching their children how to live through the way they acted themselves.

Seeing and Copying versus Listening and Understanding

'If the parents do not live well, the children do not live well either,' Felicia once told me.

While this notion was similar to Candela's above response, Felicia's comment was spurred in response to a real event that had just taken place. Felicia recounted the incident to me soon after it had taken place, on my return from the river that afternoon. Her description and reflection of events captured her worries as a mother, regarding her children seeing and copying the undesirable behaviour of others.

To give a little context to Felicia's account, the incident involved a young couple, kin of her husband, who were staying at their house for a couple of weeks. Felicia's house consisted of three separate wooden huts, one where she and her family slept, and opposite, the hut where she made manioc bread and the hut where her family cooked and ate. This setup meant that the visiting couple and their infant could have their own sleeping space in the manioc kitchen, where they could store their things and hang their hammocks. While I had been bathing in the river, Felicia had been in her bedroom, where she overheard the couple fighting.

The wife shouted at her husband, 'You always hit me. I'm tired of it. I'm leaving.'

'Don't take that. Don't go…' he shouted back.

Over the shouting, Felicia had heard the husband hitting his wife and it sounded as if she was hitting him back. At this point, Felicia's eight-year-old son was sat in the adjacent kitchen eating lunch, so she told her six-year-old-daughter to go and fetch him. When Felicia recounted this to me, she explained that she had not wanted her son to see the couple fighting (which he easily could have done through the cracks between the wooden planks), as he may act like that when he is older. When Felicia's children returned to her in the bedroom, she told them, 'This is why you have to behave well now, or you will be like that when you are older.'

After recounting this part of the incident to me, Felicia told me that if the parents do not live well, the children will not live well either. She explained that the young man's parents had always fought while he was growing up, especially after the two of them had been drinking manioc beer, and thus implied why the man did not live well (with his wife) now. It is possible that Felicia was using the phrase 'not living well' as a proxy for what in Western discourse,

would be labelled as domestic violence or at least, as I have already mentioned is common in Wacará, to give a concrete example of improper conduct.

Felicia's response and reflection of the couple's fight, captured her worries as a mother regarding how to bring up her children so that they would live well. In this instance, I use the term live well to refer to the specific conduct in which Felicia did not want them to engage, but also to encompass a whole range of possibilities available to them for living a sociable and happy life. Felicia expressed her concern with her son seeing the couple fighting in terms of the possibility that he would copy the undesirable behaviour he had witnessed of others.

This indicates that adults not only worried that their children would not live well, if they 'saw' (*en* in Cacua) their parents not 'living well,' but also if their children saw other people in the community, who were not their parents, 'not living well.' This also applied to younger children, who might see-and-copy older children, when they were not acting well. In one instance I observed, Felicia's six-year-daughter was venting her frustration with her big brother. He was running up and down the patio holding a brightly coloured paperchain above his head, which streamed behind him as he ran making aeroplane noises. His little sister had worked herself into a rage, as she sat on the ground outside the kitchen, thumping her outstretched legs against the ground, screaming, and crying.

'Playing thing!' she screamed at her brother, 'playing thing!'

Felicia was sat on the kitchen step, right by her.

'What is it? What playing thing?' Felicia asked impatiently.

As her daughter became irater, Felicia gave her a stern look and reminded her in an equally stern tone of voice, 'Isa memedih en yacna' (Isa will see and copy you).

Isa, the three-year old daughter of Felicia's sister, was stood before Felicia's daughter, watching her temper tantrum with wide eyes. When Felicia's daughter calmed down a little, I asked Felicia what she had said to check that I had understood correctly. She explained that seeing her daughter, Isa would potentially copy her when she was older. Felicia added that this was why she had said what she did to her daughter.

Felicia's intervention in this instance was different from her intervention during the couple's fight described above, when she instructed her children to remove themselves so that they would not witness it. In the second instance, Felicia did not tell her daughter to stop providing a bad model but instead indicated that she should, by warning her of the effect her actions could have on her younger cousin. In this way, Felicia was both encouraging her daughter's attention to others and to her own actions in relation to others. The conditions under which

people advised the wrongdoer that others might copy the 'bad' model they were providing and the conditions under which people advised those who might copy to move away and not copy what they had witnessed, depended on whether the wrongdoer was a child or an adult.

While adults did not tell children not to climb trees or hold machetes, they would issue them with other negative imperatives, employing a dramatic ascending pitch of scale, such as 'don't cry' (*jɯ̄í ca bojoó*), 'don't get angry' (*íij ca bojoó*), 'don't hit' (*mao ca bojoó*) or simply, 'don't do that' (nep ca bojoó) if a child was messing around or otherwise getting in the way. Adults also frequently issued their children from around the age of five or six with positive imperatives, instructing them to undertake tasks. This was apparent from the way children answered my question in one of our activity sessions about what they did to help their parents, as many examples they gave included, 'when they say x, I do x' (see ch5). Similarly, older children ordered about their younger siblings, cousins, nephews, and nieces, instructing them to fetch and hold things. Like adults, they also issued younger children with negative commands. By contrast, it was inappropriate to speak to adults in this way. For instance, as noted in chapter six, if an adult lived in the home of another family, they were expected to help (e.g., fell the swidden field) without being asked, as it was inappropriate to issue adults with commands. In the same way, it would have been inappropriate for Felicia to advise the couple staying in her home that her children might see and copy their fighting or for them to stop. As such, Felicia acted in the most appropriate way given her position, by instructing and advising her own children rather than the couple.

Another instance in which I witnessed a child being warned that a younger child was seeing-and-copying them, was when I saw a group of four young children at the river together. The eldest child of the group, Milena was around six years old and seemed to take charge of her younger cousins by calling to them from where she was sat on the large rock at the bottom of the steps. The water level was low, so her three-year-old cousin, Duvan, and two-year-old cousin, Nani, were able to manoeuvre themselves through the shallow water by walking their hands along the sandy bottom of the river as they floated on their bellies and kicked their legs out behind them, giggling and grinning. It was common for children unable to swim, to play like this in shallow water. I went back to washing my clothes, when I suddenly heard the eldest girl calling, 'Duvan, en yacna, en yacna' (Duvan, see and copy, see and copy).

I looked up to see that Duvan was now walking deeper into the river as Nani, who was younger and much smaller than him, followed closely behind. Just as in the example above, in which Felicia did not tell her daughter to stop screaming and crying, Milena did not tell either of the younger children to stop walking into the deeper part of the river. Instead, both Felicia and Milena directed the older child's attention to the fact that another younger child was looking-and-copying (or might in the future). In doing so, they encouraged the child inadvertently providing a model for another, to be aware of their own actions and those of others.

More generally, the notion that children copied what they saw others doing, including conduct referred to as 'not living well,' such as quarrelling and fighting, raises the question whether adults attributed children with agency to think for themselves and act accordingly. That is, agency to judge the best course of action according to the circumstances and in line with social values. I explored the way in which children began to do this when faced with conflicting values in chapter five, when I described Yesenia's dilemma regarding the conflicting values of 'giving food' (jeémát w~~u~~h) and rewarding those who 'helped' (teo wáac).

As noted in chapter five, Faber once told me that only a shaman had the ability to make a child from his thoughts, so normal people had to give their children advice instead. Felicia, for instance, used the fight between the couple staying at her house as an opportunity to warn her children how they might end up if they did not to listen to her advice now that they were young. Several of the Cacua parents I interviewed about family life, told me that giving their children good advice meant that their children would have good thoughts and grow up well. The relationship between thoughts and actions is such that people would infer the 'thoughts' of others through their actions. For instance, if someone acted angrily, people said that they had angry thoughts and if a woman undertook activities associated with men, such as hunting and fishing, people said she had a man's thoughts. This is not to say that there was necessarily a causal relation between thoughts and actions, in that one caused the other, but that people could infer the thoughts of others by paying attention to the way they spoke and acted.

Key to the belief that good parental advice helped children to develop 'good thoughts' and 'live well,' was that children listened to their parents' advice. The Cacua term *joí,* not only means 'listen,' but also 'understand' and 'obey.' This suggests that people do not expect others to obey indiscriminately but because they have listened and understood. In here lies the importance of parental advice, as it encourages children to understand what they are seeing and copying when it serves them well. For instance, when learning technical skills or adopting 'good' (*t~~ú~~i*) dispositions they had seen others adopt when acting and interacting. 'Listening' and 'understanding' (*joí*) could also serve in contrast to seeing and copying others, in instances when children saw people acting in 'bad' and 'ugly' (*yeejép*) ways.

A common complaint regarding young people was that they 'do not listen' (*no escucha* and *no hace caso* in Spanish), which accounted for any behaviour the exhibited against their parents' advice. Felicia often told me that she did not want her children to grow up doing what they saw young people in the community, who did not listen to their parents, do. She often scolded her eight-year-old son for not listening or obeying her and for being angry. I became used to hearing her lecturing him at length, uttering the phrase, 'íij caá bojoó' (do not get angry), punctuating her harangues with the Cacua refrain, 'Ma joinít?' (You listening/ understand?). She worried about how her son would be when he grew up if he was already disobeying her.

To summarise, the belief that children would unselectively see and copy others in the community, caused concern for parents and other adults in cases of those acting in ways that were not conducive to 'living well.' While it was socially unacceptable to tell adults what (not) to do, people (including other children) frequently issued children with commands. This included commands to prevent children from seeing those who were providing 'bad' models and to prevent children from providing bad models for other children themselves. People in the community considered parental advice regarding how to live as paramount to children developing 'good thoughts,' which could be inferred through a person's actions. Giving advice was only one part of the solution, as children had to 'listen,' 'understand,' and 'obey' (*joí* in Cacua) their parents in order to exercise practical wisdom with regards to their actions.

Manioc Beer, Missionaries and Evaluating the Best Course of Action

The first time I asked Felicia and her husband, Yair why they did not drink manioc beer, Yair chuckled before giving me a very straight forward answer, 'because we are believers.'

By this he was referring to them as Evangelical Christians, which prohibited them from drinking alcohol. The moral terrain regarding Yair's abstinence from alcohol, however, was more complex than this. Around a couple of months later, Yair brought up the topic of drinking after we went to a house on the other side of the river to borrow a paddle for his canoe. The man of the house was well known for drinking, and it turned out that Yair's classificatory elder brother, who did not live in Wacará and rarely came to visit, was staying with him. Despite being kin, Yair remarked that this man never came to visit him when he was in Wacará because Yair did not drink. He then commented on the two adolescent boys we had also seen in the house, who should have been at school. He told me that they had been in a fight over a girl a couple of days previously and were not at school because their faces were swollen.

Having broached the topic of drinking and fighting, Yair reflected on his own family feud. He told me that his family and Faber's family used to fight a lot, mainly his father and Faber's father. He also admitted that if he thought about this when he saw Faber, he felt angry and then recalled a particular fight when members of Faber's family (he did not tell me who) held his mother down and kicked her. If he drank, Yair knew that he would get into a fight with Faber if he started to think about the past, wanting to punish him. In fact, Yair told me that his mother sometimes called on him to say, 'someone is fighting with your brother, you must go and fight him to punish him.' I got the impression that these types of summonses stirred something in Yair, which made him consider acting upon them. He noted that his wife would bid him not to go, as if that was the reason he declined. 'That is why I prefer not to go and look,' he explained, suggesting that if he saw someone fighting one of his brothers, he would have to defend them. As such, he also preferred not to drink to avoid fights.

Navigating conflicting values such as these, requires exercising the meta-virtue of *phronesis*. In the above instance, the value of kinship, in terms of Yair's mother calling on him to defend

his brothers and avenge those who mistreated his kin, came into tension with the negative values of fighting and anger, considered inconducive to harmonious communal living. Yair also had to consider his relationship with his wife and what would happen if he went against her wishes by 'punishing' those who were fighting with his brothers. By simply stating that he did not drink manioc beer because he was a 'believer,' Yair had been glossing over a complex web of social relations that held him accountable for acting in certain ways and which influenced the practical wisdom he exercised when faced with moral dilemmas.

I learned more about Felicia's views on drinking and fighting on an afternoon when I could tell that she was in the mood for chatting, as I sat at the kitchen table and she lay back in a hammock, weaving a basket. The topic of conversation arose when she mentioned that various families were preparing manioc beer in anticipation of an event that the teachers were hosting in celebration of Father's Day.

'It wasn't like this before,' Felicia sighed, referring to the way in which members of the community used to celebrate events together after they had all converted to evangelical Christianity. She explained, 'Before everyone was united, putting on shows together in the church. Now everyone is dispersed because *those who drink* go off together. Before, on December 24, we would organise a programme of activities, stay up all night together and the following day, play sport. But now, on December 24, *those who drink*, drink together and the next day, they are hungover or drunk and don't want to play sport.'

She also noted that before, only a few old men drank manioc beer while the rest of the community celebrated special occasions in the church. She mentioned two particular men, previously infamous for drinking and fighting, which led her to digress, telling me about how they had behaved in their youth. At that time, there had been a lot of problems in the community, as people drank a lot and fought. Felicia said that they hit each other with machetes and even fought with guns 'con ganas de matar' (with a desire to kill). One of the men she mentioned used to fight a lot, while the other used to drink a lot and hit anyone who crossed his path. Since that time however, everyone in the community had been baptised. They had all accepted God.

I asked why Felicia thought that more people drank manioc beer now. 'Because they like it,' she told me simply, before adding, 'manioc beer never called my attention. I didn't grow up with manioc beer.' She explained that her grandparents, mother, aunts, and uncles, used to make manioc beer when they lived apart from the people of Wacará, but children were forbidden from drinking parties so as a child, Felicia did not participate. From a young age, she was raised by the missionaries, so was never around manioc beer or any other alcohol. After telling me this, she added decidedly, 'If I had [grown up with manioc beer], I would go and drink and join the others like a shot. That's why those from here, who have grown up with people drinking manioc beer, drink. They like it and want to keep drinking.'

I considered her point, before remarking that Yair, her husband, did not drink, even though he had grown up with it. In response, Felicia recounted a time when Yair had helped the teachers by carrying a heavy load for them to the river, and he got drunk because they gave him beer in thanks. When he came home drunk, Felicia had scolded him, 'I married you because you don't drink. I will not be a wife that makes manioc beer, that's not what I'm for. If you want to keep drinking, go, and live at your mother's place and I will stay here with the children.' This suggests that Felicia justified her husband's behaviour because of his past and upbringing, as he 'grew up around manioc beer,' but she did not excuse it.

In summary, while those in the community who did not drink manioc beer attributed this to being evangelical Christians, such decisions also relied on enacting practical judgement in the face of conflicting values. Christianity was often expressed by 'believers' in terms of bringing the community together, while drink brought about division. In the following section, I shall explore some counterpoints to this view along with the unravelling of joyous drunken celebrations in moments when anger surpassed general good feeling and fights broke out.

Drinking Parties

After watching several hours of shows, songs, and performances at church on Christmas eve, those who had been celebrating in the church went outside to watch some of the men firing their rifles into the sky at midnight. We cheered and the night proceeded. The church was hosting a nightlong event, but so was the household directly opposite, which I dropped in on at around two in the morning. There was a jovial atmosphere of a drinking party in full swing. Unlike those at church, everyone at the house was drunk, but exceedingly warm and friendly, offering me manioc beer and pulling me up to the dance floor soon after I arrived. The room was dark, despite a lightbulb with a piercing beam of white light attached to one of the walls, and cumbia rang out from a little speaker. By this time, most people in the room had a dance partner with whom they were leaping around to the lively music.

The hostess wore a long-sleeved baggy cotton dress, which looked like a nighty, her hair in a thin ponytail, running half-way down her back. She jigged to the music with enthusiasm, holding her dance partner's hand loosely, thrusting her hips out from one side to the other. She soon pulled me onto the dance floor with her and we held hands, dancing quite inexpertly to the music. She pressed her face against my cheek and blurted, 'Lina memedih oina.' *Lina loves you*, referring to her twelve-year-old daughter. I flushed with joy at her and her family's warmth towards me. The second time the hostess dragged me from the edge of the room to dance, she soon got distracted. She led me to a man, who was squaring up to another man on the other side of the room. She tried to calm him down and I suppose as a distraction technique, told him to dance with me. I soon realised that he was very drunk and before the song ended, he dropped my hands and marched over to his wife, sat at the edge of the room with their three-year-old daughter on her lap. He hit her across the face.

His wife clutched her face and for a heartbeat, there was silence. Once her tears became audible, the sound of her incessant crying grew louder. Meanwhile someone pulled her husband to the other side of the room, and he was soon surrounded by a small group of people trying to calm him down. By contrast nobody went to his wife. The woman sat closest to her, listened, and responded to her in an even tone without facing her. I wanted to leave the party but felt the urge to go and comfort the crying woman beforehand. When I went to hug her, she gripped onto me tightly, crying profusely and screaming in anguish. I understood little of what she said, but the woman sat closest to us, translated her cries.

'Sasha, I will hang myself. Tomorrow you will see my body!' the translator then added, 'I told her not to do that.'

The woman continued to cry, screaming some words that I understood, 'yeejep wili (bad woman), nemép wili (devil woman), mujio (dog/ bitch).'

Finally, a woman approached her and asked what had happened. She then asked me what I had understood, filling in the gaps by translating what I had not. She explained that the previous day, the woman's husband had called her the words listed above, told her that she was useless and threatened to cut her with a machete.

The wife cried and cried, repeating 'yeejép wili' and 'mujio' many times.

In response to the woman screaming that she would kill herself and be dead by tomorrow, the woman who had come to speak to her insisted, 'Cheibit t~~ú~~ini jeh.' *Tomorrow, just beautiful/ calm and still.* She then reminded the crying woman that she was drunk, perhaps pointing out the juxtaposition between drunkenness and the ideal disposition of calmness, evoked by the phrase 't~~ú~~ini jeh,' just beautiful.

To unpick this form of advice, it is helpful to draw on anthropologists who have written about manioc beer in relation to living well. Walker, for example, describes 'drunken dancing at a party' for the Urarina, as a moment of joy 'pregnant with possibility' and 'best shared with others' (2015: 188). He explores the idea that such moments are not a contrast to the 'long-term, more objective concept of living well,' but rather a condensed version of its subjective and affective aspects (*ibid:* 180). Descola also writes of the role of manioc beer in the good life among the Achuar as part of ensuring 'marital harmony,' whereby men supply game in abundance to keep their wives happy and women provide 'repeated libations of manioc beer to quench the husband's immense thirst' (1994: 309).

Though Evangelical Christians strongly disapproved of drinking parties in Wacará, such events promoted many important social values held in the community, which were generally considered conducive to living well. This included people getting together (*míic wáacna*) and

being happy together (míic wēina). What's more, those who prepared manioc beer for drinking parties, performed the important action of giving (*wɨ̱hna*) it to guests. From this standpoint, it seems that the evangelical missionaries who moved to Wacará in 1965 missed the point when writing that such parties 'appear to be social events with little ceremonial significance' (Cathcart, 1973: 111). Whether such parties held ceremonial significance was not the point, as the point of them lay in people coming together, experiencing the reciprocity of happiness in one another's presence, and giving, in this case manioc beer, to others.

Nonetheless, when it comes to consuming manioc beer in excess, if the balance reaches tipping point 'the exact opposite of the good life' may well ensue (Descola, 1994: 309). Descola notes of the Achuar that 'men sometimes exert their domination over women with excessive brutality, particularly when they are under the influence of drink. In some households, the wives are regularly beaten by their husband, and sometimes to death' (*ibid*). He also remarks on female suicide as 'the most dramatic means of protesting against chronic ill treatment' (*ibid*). While the fun of drinking parties and sharing moments of joy may be conducive to the affective aspect of 'living well' in the way that Walker suggests, anger, violence and threats or attempts of suicide stand in stark contrast to living well. In the above vignette, a point arrived at which those gathered to drink and dance, were no longer 'happy together,' and it was at this point when I heard the phrase '*tɨ́ini jeh*' (just beautiful).

While I heard the phrase being uttered to the woman who had just been hit when she was screaming and crying, this is not to say that others were not saying similar things to her husband, urging him to calm down as well. I was not in earshot of the group crowding around the husband, so I was unable to hear whether this was the case. Both husband and wife were (unsurprisingly, given what had just passed) acting in opposition to the revered state of 'just beautiful' (*tɨ́ini jeh*) and as such attendees of the party were encouraging them to regain their calm and contentment. The party hostess had been encouraging the husband to forget his anger and rejoin the joy of jovial festivities when she initially pulled him away from the man he had been squaring up to and dragged him to the middle of the dance floor with me. Her attempts had failed and now the phrase '*tɨ́ini jeh'* (as I heard it uttered to the wife) served to soothe and advise calm and stillness in face of its opposition. This is not to say that the wife's reaction and upset was unwarranted, but that anger, upset and threats of suicide deeply worried members of the community, who might utter '*túini jeh'* as a reminder regarding the ideal disposition conducive to living well.

Not Happy Together

In the lead up to New Year's Eve, there was much deliberation regarding how the community should celebrate and even whether they should celebrate at all, given that the Christmas eve celebration at church had been rivalled by a drinking party in the house opposite. The captain (who was also the pastor) of Wacará stood before his congregation on the Sunday morning

preluding New Year's Eve, with a heavy heart. He spoke of those who had passed away that year and of his mother, who had died the year before, exclaiming that this was why they needed to come together as Christians. He deplored that mass had been practically empty on Christmas Eve and December 31 would likely be the same. In contrast to his hope of 'míic wáac como cristianos' (coming together as Christians, which he expressed half in Cacua and half in Spanish), people were 'míic wēican' (not happy with each other).

Once the captain finished berating some of the general behaviour and drunkenness on Christmas Eve, Salome spoke, her voice ringing out loud and fierce, even when she became emotional and started to cry. 'Wēi wã jenah joícan,' (I do not feel happy) she began, before proceeding to speak uninterrupted for around three and a half minutes. Salome was one of the only women I had ever heard speak out in public, especially with such poise and strength. Struck by her outburst in church, I went to speak to her the following day.

I found Salome sat on the low bench running along the outside of her kitchen, pulling apart strips of woody vine, to make them thinner and more flexible for weaving, before laying them along the bench beside her. As she worked, she listened to my questions regarding why the captain had said he was sad in church the day before and what she had said in response. Salome spoke to me at length, relating what had been said in church, along with other conversations that I had not witnessed. The captain had said that he has been preaching for years and people do not pay attention, they drink manioc beer, they get drunk, and they steal. He had also said that he did not want to live in Wacará anymore and had told Salome's husband that he wanted to quit his role as 'pastor' in Wacará to go to live in another Christian community close by, to which her husband had not responded favourably.

When two male missionaries had come to the community to deliver the children's Christmas presents, Salome and her husband had sat in on a meeting with the captain and his son, who was also heavily involved in the church. They had told the missionaries that they did not want to continue living in Wacará because people did not listen and continued to drink manioc beer. The captain's son also admitted that this was the reason he had left the community and only returned for a few days at a time. In response, the missionaries had said that the leaders must be firm and set a good example of how to live.

When Salome had spoken out in church, she had said that she did not like hearing people drinking manioc beer and dancing either but had nowhere else to go. She then challenged the captain, asking how he could leave them, when he was the one who had brought the community together, 'to live together as Cacua.' Salome had said that she was also sad that the community was divided and that the adolescents went wherever the music sounded, referring to the loudspeakers used at parties, where attendees drank manioc beer and danced. Salome then told me, 'I used to do that. I used to make manioc beer and drink and dance.' On such occasions, she described herself and her husband as having 'thoughts of

drunks' (*pensamientos de borracho* in Spanish). Her husband used to hit her, and she would escape from him, hiding in the forest. They used to make manioc beer and every Sunday after going to church, they would drink. One day, on December 31, the Pastor from a close by Cubeo community came to visit and spoke to the community about this. Salome described this as a turning point for her. Since, everyone in the community had accepted the Lord and had been baptised.

The public display of sadness at division in the community through the emotional speeches of the captain and Salome in church indicated the fragility of the community and communal life. As noted in chapter two, the community is not simply a collection of homes with larger buildings for the school, health-post, and church, but requires everyone to work together to ensure that it thrives. It is not enough for the Cacua to simply come together to live, they must actively create and shape their community through work, being happy together and living well.

The captain's complaint and sadness that people in the community did not listen or pay attention to his advice on how to live, mirrored the complaints that I often heard parents express of their children. The missionaries' advice that the leaders stay strong and set a good example of how to live also reflects what parents say of their children, that seeing how others live, they will also live in that way. This is what Candela spoke of in her interview about family life regarding her children's behaviour. The captain's desire to leave the community and live elsewhere, along with Salome's insistence that he must not leave them, illustrates the different ways that people respond to the ever-present anxieties around the fragility of 'living well' while living together.

Conclusion

Historicising the notion of work among the Cacua of Wacará today, has been key to investigating how and why work has emerged as salient in their community. The importance of work for Cacua people has always been about more than the practicalities of the subsistence economy and maintaining the community. Cacua people's self-conscious tendency to value work publicly has also been a response to the negative perceptions that others have had of them, reinforced by a Christian perspective of work as salvation and the state's role in promoting the sedentarisation of indigenous populations. Amidst generations of social and political change, the significance of work for the Cacua of Wacará today has become entangled with the notion of living together in a community.

Community formation among indigenous groups who have not previously lived in this way, is an important theme that has come to the attention of several scholars, who have explored how these new forms of living and working together are configuring into people's ideas about living well (see Killick, 2019; Buitron, 2020; Mahecha & Franky, 2010). My contribution to this conversation has been to outline work and 'coming together to work'[24] as core values that children must learn to live well in a community with others, the kinds of virtues that such actions encourage children to develop and the ethical evaluations they make in this process. At the same time, Cacua people's rejection of their history as 'Makú' and associated ways of living, combined with missionary influences feed into Cacua notions of work and community, which children learn as they learn to work. Cacua responses to the past also shape the moral economy underlying everyday life, in which children participate and learn to navigate.

In this way, this thesis also contributes to the scholarship of children's work (e.g., Lancy, 2018), development (e.g., Rogoff, 2014) and role as economic agents (e.g., Levison, 2000) by investigating the very notion of work and framework within which it transpires. Afterall, it is within the societal context into which children are born, grow up and become mature that they learn to work by 'coming together to work' with others. This thesis highlights the premise of work as a political project, which also shines a light onto Cacua lives more generally, through the transmission of skills and knowledge across generations. This intergenerational aspect, which I have argued requires attention to the learning process of children and is a key contribution of this thesis, has not been prevalent in regional literature on 'living well' or the neo-Aristotelian approach adopted in ordinary ethics.

I began this thesis with a question posed to me by Paula, a woman who I was helping to weed in her swidden field. 'You are learning to work?' she asked me with a smile. What surprised me when Paula then categorised her one-year-old daughter's activities as 'work,' later made sense as I took it upon myself to learn how to work more consciously. Furthermore, the

[24] Directly translated from the Cacua expression, *teo waác.*

detailed observations of developmental psychologists, conducting ethnographic research to explore how young children 'learn by observing and pitching in' (Rogoff, 2014; also see Gaskins & Paradise, 2010), have inspired my attention to the technical skills that Cacua children not only learn, but also learn to value as key to family and community life.

While the anthropological turn to ethics has largely ignored processes of learning in childhood, one exception includes Ochs and Izquierdo's (2009) comparative study of everyday family life. They have taken inspiration from Aristotle's notion that virtue is imbedded in habit and must be actively produced, in arguing that children's participation in household tasks from an early age is key to the development of moral responsibility. This not only promotes independence and self-assurance in children from a young age, but also their social awareness of and responsiveness to others and their needs (*ibid*: 391). Nonetheless, as Ochs and Izquierdo note, it is only through *phronesis* or practical judgement in assessing how to act in any given situation, that it is possible to cultivate virtue (*ibid*: 391-2). This argument, along with scholarship in childhood studies and developmental psychology, has been a helpful starting point in my analysis of Cacua children's participation in their family's daily work.

Drawing on the notion of ethical affordances, I have argued that children can take an active role in their learning by building a repetoire of resources through their experiences, which they can utilise when evaluating the circumstances and actions of themselves and others (see Keane, 2015: 30). I integrate the theoretical concepts of an education of attention, affordances, and ethical affordance, with the Cacua notions about children's development of both skills and moral dispositions. To recap, the idea is that children do what they see others doing, not only when it comes to learning technical skills, but also regarding any action whether good or bad. For example, as parents, people must model 'living well,' by not arguing or fighting, for their children because children will do what they see their parents doing. At the same time, parents must avoid their children seeing others who do not live well because their children could do what they see others doing as well. This is where, for the Cacua, the role of parental advice plays an important part. They believe that children develop good thoughts and the ability to think well not just by listening, but also understanding advice.

Thinking well involves acting in a way that is fitting to circumstances rather than abstract values, and takes place from a disposition of calm, tranquility and general level headedness, rather than anger. The criticism that a person 'does not think' indicates that they are not acting from a calm or beautiful (*tɨ́ini*) disposition. This shows that children not only learn specific values, such as the value of work and independence or helping and interdependence, but also how to evaluate the best course of action according to circumstances when there is a conflict of values. It is from a beautiful disposition that people are able think well and choose the best course of action, which children must learn to live well in the future.

This focus on children has also enabled me to build on approaches to the moral economy in regional literature, which largely centre on men and women's complementary work and roles

in the production and provision of food. My child-centred focus analytically shifts the position of children from being the products of an economy of desire and recipients of adult labour (e.g., Gow, 1989: 579; also see Siskind, 1973) to being active participants in the moral economy. Unlike Gow, Overing (1988) places a more positive emphasis on children's learning in her analysis of 'domestication of the self' among the Piaroa. Nonetheless, Overing's analytical approach for exploring how Piaroa children learn how to live well through mastering the technical skills of gardening, foraging, and hunting while developing responsibility and consciousness (1988: 178-180), centres on adult perspectives of these processes. To overcome this tendancy in the analyses of children's role in the subsistence, and ultimately, moral economy, I have argued for paying close attention to children's everyday actions and interactions.

My approach to studying processes of learning in relation to ethical living in childhood and beyond contributes to value theory and what has been referred to as 'it's expanded notion of production' (Cepek, 2008: 324). By this I refer to Marx and Engles' (1998) 'moments of human production' as drawn on by Turner (2006 [1984], 2008) and Graeber (2001). As Turner explains, while Marx's 'theory of value' appears in *Capital,* its key ideas concerning production as the basis of human social activity, are present in his earlier writing, such as *The German Ideology* written with Engles (Turner, 2008: 44). Here, the authors discuss what they deem as the four basic aspects of social activity, 'production of the means of subsistence, production of new needs, reproduction of men [the family],' and finally 'social intercourse,' all of which lead to consciousness (Marx & Engels, 1998: 47). It is through this emphasis on relations between productive activity, social organisation, and collective forms of consciousness that Turner proposes applying Marx's 'theory of value,' which was developed in relation to capitalist production, to societies without it (Turner, 2006 [1984]: 2). Graeber considers this as a starting point for a 'powerful theory of action' in that it highlights the part people play in producing themselves through their actions and in relation to the actions of others, while also contributing to the production of society (2001: 58-9).

While Marx and Engels' model of 'human moments of production' does not have much to say about children, other than that 'men' are reproduced, their model can still provide insight for understanding children's actions in everyday life as transformative. Graeber, for instance, describes the model in terms of people producing new needs through producing what they need and therefore, as they produce and reproduce, they also reshape and transform society. In this way, Graeber depicts production as a means of 'producing the producer' as they coordinate their actions with those of others (2001: 59). A child-centred reading of this emphasises the part children play in their own socialisation as active producers, producing themselves through their actions and in relation to the actions of others, while contributing to the production and transformation of society.

I have argued that the way children learn the value of work and the other values it encapsulates, is through attention to others, understanding advice and thinking well. As

children (and adults) draw on the ethical affordances of different situations, their actions and evaluations may be challenged and critiqued or subtly rewarded by those around them, including their peers and family. While I seek to contribute to value theory through centring my analysis on children's learning and development, value theory also contribues to child-centred research by highlighting the potentiality of people (including children, in my analysis) to transform their worlds through their actions. As today's children of Wacará are the first generation to be born and grow up in the community at the size and with the resources it now has, their relations, actions and interactions, along with the skill sets they are developing, are not just shaping their own lives, but the future of their community as well. Far from romanticising the community, I have endeavoured to show how it is constantly in crisis of falling apart with talk of division, fights, drinking parties, single mothers, and threats from leaders to leave. Yet by the same stroke, such crises also provoke people to assert their commitment to the community, formed of numerous Cacua families, who moved from their homes, once dispersed throughout the forest, to live together.

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