

# To be or not to be *wounaan-nonam*: a reflection on the identity in cultural semiotic constructivism

---

HERNÁN SÁNCHEZ RIOS<sup>1</sup>  
Universidad del Valle, Colombia

LIVIA MATHIAS SIMÃO<sup>2</sup>  
University of São Paulo, Brazil

Keywords: identity, personal culture, collective culture, indians, dialogism.

## Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to make a reflection on the identity based on the perspective designated Cultural Semiotic Constructivism in Psychology. The psychological identity is approached as a complex construction that gives sense to the discourse of three indigenous leaders *wounaan-nonam* (banks of San Juan River, Colombia). The analysis of the discourse reveals, in each community leader, a subjectivity identified as *wounaan-nonam*, initially by the assimilation of the system of values which organizes the indigenous community, simultaneously to the confrontation of personal experiences which have a nebulous affective impact on the encounter with the *other*: neighbour, outsider or foreigner, in the humid rainforest. From this encounter arises a disquieting experience which makes way for the notion of otherness and highlights a central thesis of CSC: the identity arises from the negotiation between the *personal culture* and the *collective culture* in the complex relationship *I-the other-world*.

The main purpose of this article is to reflect on the notion of identity based on the perspective designated Cultural Semiotic Constructivism (CSC) in psychology. From this perspective, the psychological identity is approached as a complex construction of subjectivation processes that emerge from the narratives of three indigenous leaders *Wounaan-nonam* (banks of San Juan River, Colombia) to give sense to the sentiment of being or belonging. Symbolically, the dialogue with community leaders operates on the level of social representation (Markova, 2003; Valsiner, 2013) of the *Wounaan-nonam* in the cultural field of their symbolic actions (Simão & Sanchez, 2015), thereby ensuring that the identity of the *Wounaan-nonam* as a people remains alive and updated, by articulating aspects of daily life (present) with their origins (past) and

<sup>1</sup> Universidad del Valle, Colombia.

<sup>2</sup> University of São Paulo, Brazil. FAPESP - São Paulo Research Foundation (Proc. 2018/13145-0).

social prescriptions (future). The analysis of the discourse reveals, in each community leader, a subjectivity identified as *Wounaan-nonam*, initially by the assimilation of the system of values which organizes the indigenous community, simultaneously to the confrontation of personal experiences which have a nebulous affective impact on the encounter with the *other*: neighbour, outsider or foreigner, in the humid rainforest. From this encounter arises a disquieting experience which makes way for the notion of otherness and highlights a central thesis of CSC: the identity arises from the negotiation between the *personal culture* and the *collective culture* in the complex relationship *I-the other-world*.

## **THE IDENTITY: THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL SEMIOTIC CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Reviewing the literature on identity it is possible to find approaches centered in self-representation, self-recognition, self-description, self-esteem, self-awareness, self-knowledge and dialogical self to convert the self into a unique entity, differentiated from the others, marking the characteristic of the "personal identity." In this trend, it is interesting to accentuate the position of Wiley (1994), who proposes a changing structure in the signification process, which allows the individual to experience the continuity of a semiotic self, with a collection of distinguishing features in his or her biography that give sense to daily decision-making. To this author, identity is a reflective interpretation of each agent, using signs, with continuity in time and space. Notwithstanding, the person does not develop in the emptiness. All the time, he or she faces collective references, which influence decision-making. In this sense, there are approaches to the identity as an entity marked by social signs which require the appropriation of institutions or collective discourses, like ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual identity, national identity. From this orientation, Hammack (2010) proposes a master narrative in which the personal discourses are part of relations of power with ideological content which contextualize people's lives and their roles as actors in a social matrix which reveals the variety of discourses that integrate in the ruling institutions to resolve any issue of the individuals' private life.

Do we find a contradiction in these trends? Probably not. Only an excessive emphasis on one of the dimensions: individual self or collective self. Andacht & Michel (2005) propose the person is not a passive receptor of the social signs, but actively participates in the construction of meanings. Each person interprets, and is interpreted by the *other*, to transform into a externally knowable self, which interprets itself in its relation with the "other" a specific cultural and social context. This trend starts the discussion about the identity in the Cultural Semiotic Constructivism (CSC)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Semiotic Cultural Constructivism (SCC) is a contemporary approach in psychology which has as its central nucleus the subjective processes of human development in the relation *I-other-world* (Simão, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2015).

In the cultural psychology of development, identity is not a determinate entity, but a process in constant construction. With this approach, the discussion consists in enriching the discussion and obtaining a vision of how the persons, the psychological processes, define each other mutually and are inseparable (Simão, 2015). Salvatore & Valsiner (2008) point out each person is a unique entity with a reference mark, which features hues of variability that make it possible to reveal the uniqueness in a social matrix. Therefore, in the specific cultural context, there exist different positions in the dialogue *I-other*, essential aspect in the development of the identity (Guimarães, 2011).

In **CSC**, psychological identity arises as a complex negotiation between the personal culture and the collective culture that gives sense to the multiple discourses of our quotidian. In this perspective, the positioning of the *I* is considered from its lived experience: I thinking, I wanting, I acting, I being; but always with a simultaneous approach to the point of view of the *other* and of the object to make decisions and rule out alternatives on the plane of the relations *I-other-world*.

In the complexity of the intersubjective dialogue that gives sense to the notion of identity, there arises a relevant discussion about the dynamics that bonds *personal culture* and *collective culture* from the process of internalization of the symbolic action<sup>4</sup> and its *externalization* within the limits that define the relation *I-other-world* (Simão, 2015).

In this perspective, culture is a field of action, which induces and controls the subject's action, but is also continuously transformed by it. In this manner, culture reveals the arising of the symbolic action, with its multiple functions of potential action in the process of human subjectivation, and organises, in structures, the signification complexes (fantasms) which guide the individual's experience in the world.

According to Boesch (1991), the fantasms do not have a social counterpart in the role of the myth, which can be seen as a collectively accepted medium, about the explanation, the justification and the exhortation of a deed, with expression of mythic stories or themes — myth. This way, fantasms and myths belong to the terrain of personal culture. From the Boeschian logic (1991), Valsiner reveals the myths constitute, thus, complex social inputs for the establishment and functioning of the fantasms. However, the latter are not direct images of the former, but their personal

<sup>4</sup> With respect to this, Valsiner (2007) mentions that psychologic life is mediated by signs, a fundamental aspect in the explanation of human development in Cultural Psychology. From the Boeschian optics, the symbolic action plays a central role in the process of psychologic development, in which sign is one of its variations.

transformations. Therefore, in the tie between myths and fantasms there arise the personal values and beliefs as internalised reconstructions of ideas promoted by communicative messages collectively distributed (Valsiner, 2007).

The construction of the *personal culture*, the basis of every human conduct, constitutes a unique process for each subject that actively weaves relations of meanings among aspects of the semiosphere, as a system of myths that contains itself within a dynamic of oppositions and overcomings for the generation of new myths (Valsiner, 2013).

However, the collective culture consists in a semiotic system of regulation which implies the construction and use of signs to transform the context “here and now” of the human being. Although persons can distance themselves from the context in which they are culturally — semiotically — immersed, they remain as integral parts of the same context. Therefore, the proximity and distancing from a concrete situation in which the person is immersed is a characteristic of the subject-culture relation (Valsiner, 2007, Simão, 2015).

In this sense, the reflections about the social origin of thought are particularly relevant by proposing a third level of analysis in the relation personal culture and collective culture: the social representation that allows accessing the construction of the notion of identity. To Valsiner the social representations:

encodes the medium in such a way that it specifies guidelines for the expected conduct and feelings regarding this expected contact, by itself and by the *other*. They also remain at different levels of each person’s internalization system (Valsiner, 2013, p. 223).

This approach to the subjective processes develops as a new tie that intends to dismantle the processes focused on the person, in order to approach them to the semiotic universe in which the relation with the *other* (close or distant) is constructed in the relation with itself in a specific cultural context. I-other-world relations give opportunity for each person to actively transform others’ expressions, trying to integrate them into their personal affective-cognitive basis, which is also transformed in this process (Simão, 2010). This touches to the symbolic play occurring in the preservation and transformation of personal and collective cultures, in which the other is an opportunity for the I to question and be questioned by the traditional culture (Simão, 2015).

5 Serge Moscovici is the most relevant reference in the study of social representations. Notwithstanding, this approach is not exhausted by this author, and we decided to work with the theoretical references of Ivanna Markova and Jaan Valsiner due to their contribution to the discussion in the dialogical aspects of the processes of knowledge construction.

Therefore, identity is understood as a process of a continuous quest effort, by one person in relation to others – or by a group in relation to others – to distinguish oneself from other people, based on unique characteristics or events, seen or selected as relevant for use in representation of the self and, eventually, in belonging to a group. These characteristics and events, which refer to relations with others, may be expressed, communicated and eventually shared with others. The relations between sharing and difference in I-other-world relations are at play here (Simão & Sanchez, 2015).

This article will cover modes of symbolic articulation in I-other-world relations that emerge in dialogues within the identity construction of the *Wounaan-nonam*. Symbolically, the dialogue with community leaders operates on the level of social representation of the *Wounaan-nonam* in the cultural field of their symbolic actions, thereby ensuring that the identity of the *Wounaan-nonam* as a people remains alive and updated, by articulating aspects of daily life (present) with their origins (past) and social prescriptions (future).

This reflection is approached from a double perspective. First, the interviews are reviewed with a narrative which creates a shareable space for the processes of construction of semantic meanings in semistructured interviews about life accounts with disturbing experiences in the encounter with the *other* that arise in the discourse of three *Wounaan-nonam* indigenous leaders. From this point of view, a narration is a sequence of events temporarily rooted in the dialogue, which make sense in the construction of the identity from the point of view of a story told in the complex relation between the interviewer and the person interviewed (Bamberg, 2011).

Similarly, the discourse of the *Wounaan-nonam* community leaders is approached from the dialogic analysis of the implications of being or not being *Wounaan-nonam* from the encounter with the *other* in its otherness as neighbour, outsider and foreigner. This modality of analysis transcends the immediate function of the communication and interchange of information about a specific content, in order to place dialogue as enabler of co-construction of knowledge and signification of reality, as a personal version, gifted and culturally contextualised (Simão, 2007, 2010, 2012).

## **PROCEDURE**

This is a descriptive exploratory study on the psychological identity and the processes of subjectivation that emerges in the social representations which give sense in the narratives of three leaders of the *Wounaan-nonam* indigenous community to the sentiment of being and belonging to this indigenous community of the Colombian Pacific.

In this perspective, named CSC, the investigation is understood as a *Whole* that encompasses both the theoretical propositions and the method. Therefore, in this methodological option, the central question of investigation allows for multiple questions in dialogue with theoretical propositions, and with the participants's discourses. This way, the problem of investigation broadens the horizon of the design, the contact with the participants, the instruments, the information collecting plan, the units of analysis, the argumentative logic that links the data to the theoretical propositions and the criteria for interpreting the results.

Therefore, investigating from this perspective implies formulating questions of investigation that point to pertinent theoretical propositions regarding the psychological phenomenon that is questioned. Also, the investigator has no control of the participants, their actions, the events in which he or she participates, and the cultural contexts he or she interacts with. The investigator has a considerable degree of attention about the subjects of the quotidian life that he or she shares with the participant, and they express in narratives or field observations. Thus, the analysis of quotidian situations is privileged, in opposition to experimental situations (Boesch, 1996; Valsiner; 2007).

## **Participants**

The *Wounaan-nonam* Indian community of the Puerto Pizarro reservation asked the three community leaders<sup>6</sup> to contact the investigators in order to build an educational proposal that allowed signifying cultural practices appropriate to the community and transforming them in educational tools at the service of the community mothers and children (Simao & Sanchez, 2015).

Three *Wounaan-nonam* Indian leaders who, in the nineties left the Colombian Pacific bound for the cities of Cali and Buenaventura to carry on with their education, returned to the community with the responsibility of being, respectively: interviewer of the Wounaan translator (Traductor Wounaan), interviewer of the Governor of del cabildo (Gobernador del Cabildo Indigena) and interviewer of the Indian affairs representative (Representante de Asuntos Indigenas). The leaders used their bilingual skills and their educational background in order to strengthen the socio-political processes of the *Wounaan-nonam* people in Colombia.

<sup>6</sup> The representative legitimacy of the leaders in relation to this community would be theme of another article. Nonetheless, it is important to mention the leaders are not a representative sample of the *Wounaan-nonam* community. Notwithstanding, they are representative because their voices were authorised by the community to dialogue about the sentiment of "Being or Not Being Wounaan-nonam"

## Procedure and plan of analysis

In this contact, the proposal of investigation came up. The cultural practices allowed reflecting about the culture as a field of symbolic action that arises from the negotiation between the implications of the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam*, collectively built, and the trajectories of life of the leaders searching their personal expectations. One question oriented the dialogue with the leaders: What are the implications of the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam*?

Whereas the dialogue takes place, other complementary questions arise that seek to investigate aspects related to the indigenous leaders' life trajectories. The questions accompany the participant's argumentative line and seek to go into detail about subjects that require extension: Some of the non-structured interview's complementary are<sup>7</sup>:

How is the daily life in the Puerto Pizarro Indian Shelter?

Is the language in force in all of the quotidian subjects? Do they learn Spanish?

On which moment of your life is it necessary to learn Spanish?

How are the family relations?

Can you tell us about the cosmovisions<sup>8</sup> of the *Wounaan-nonam* people?

How were the contacts with the people who are not *Wounaan-nonam*, strangers, neighbours and foreigners in your territory?

How was the return to the community, after living in the city?

During one week, the interviews took place in the Reservation of Puerto Pizarro. The dialogues were performed in Spanish, recorded and transcribed as narratives about the sentiment of being or not being *Wounaan-nonan*. The following fragments are part of a set of semi-structured interviews which emerged from the contact with the community of leaders of the Reservation of Puerto Pizarro.

The set of social representations that stood out from the analyses of these interviews showed the identity of being *Wounaan-nonan* from the life in the community and from the disquieting experiences (Simão, 2015) of the encounter with the other neighbour, 'outsider', stranger. In this study of the psychological identity it is approached as a complex construction that brings sense to the discourses of the *Wounaan-nonan* Indian leaders.

<sup>7</sup> The set of questions and answers are in the field notes of the Doctoral Thesis "Inferential Processes and Otherness in Elaborations of the Myth Madre Ñame of the *Wounaan-nonam* culture". We highlight these questions due to their direct relation with the results presented in this article

<sup>8</sup> 'Cosmovision' ('cosmovisión' in Spanish) means the world-view of a community, how they conceive the universe as a whole, usually regarding its origin, structure and changes.

## RESULTS

### To be *Wounaan-nonam*: implications of this sentiment

The *Wounaan-nonam* Indian reservations are situated in three zones in the shore of the Pacific of Colombia and Panama. The first zone is situated in the Colombian Pacific Shore, between the river mouths of San Juan and Usarragá. The second zone is situated in the slopes of the river mouth of San Juan. The third zone is situated in the thick humid jungle of the Colombian Darién and the Panamanian Darién. In the Colombian territory live 9,100 *Wounaan-nonam* Indians, 50.3 % of which are men and 49.7 are women. In the Panamanian territory live 7,219, 52% of which are men and 48% are women (Ministry of Culture, 2010).

Colombia's political constitution grants the Indian communities an autonomous organisation called cabildos. For a group of families to constitute a cabildo, it is necessary they share a system of ancestral traditions and demonstrate, as an ethnical group, their presence in a territory. In Colombia, the Indian cabildos have a system of political and juridical regulation independent from the general legislative system. Thus, each cabildo collectively elects a group of community leaders so within a specific period, from two to four years, they orient the decision-making, the enforcement of the regulation system, and the handling of the resources. Figure 1 represents the *Wounaan-nonam* Indian cabildos of the zone of the slope of San Juan River; among them, the cabildo of Puerto Pizarro.



Figure 1. Location of Puerto Pizarro in the mouth of San Juan River

So, in these *Wounaan-nonam* Reservations, usually there is a group of dwellings organized per family units near the slope of San Juan River, a school, a Community Home of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (HC-ICBF)<sup>9</sup>, which serves children

<sup>9</sup> The HC-ICBF is a programme of the Colombian state for the child population under six years of age inhabiting poor urban sectors or rural zones in conditions of vulnerability. In Puerto Pizarro, this programme has been running for approximately one decade, assisting families with the practices of care and protection of the children from Monday through Friday, starting at 8:00 am and finishing at 4:00 pm.

under five years old, a primary school, a high school, one health care unit, a warehouse, one Casa Dichaardi, which is the community's meeting place, ceremonies and celebrations of the *Wounaan-nonam*. Figure 2 represents the territorial distribution in the *Wounaan-nonam* Indian reservation of Puerto Pizarro. We highlight this Indian reservation because the leaders interviewed belong to this community.

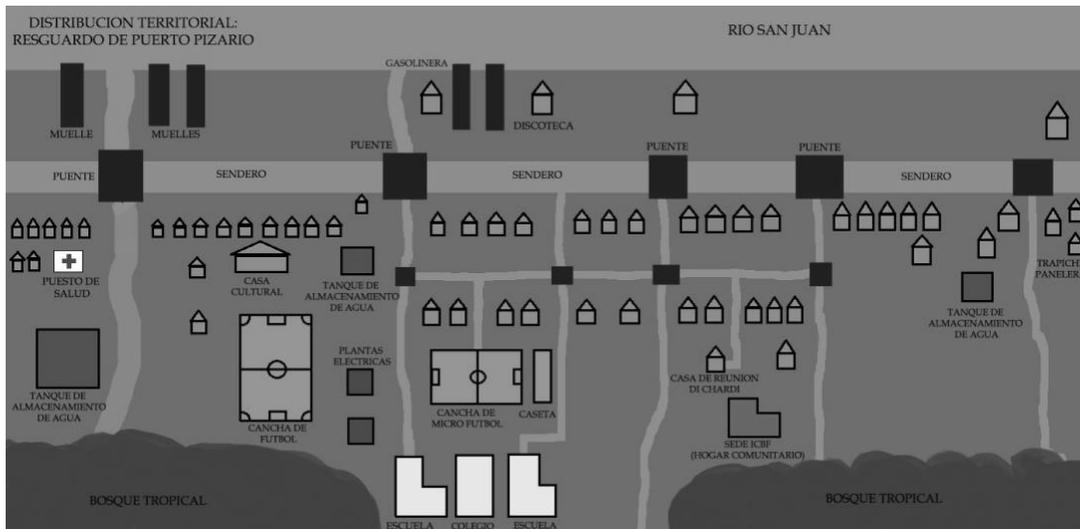


Figure 2. Representation of the territory of the *Wounaan-nonam*

The basis of the economic activities of the *Wounaan-nonam* of the San Juan River Slope are: hunting, fishing, kitchen garden, tree cutting under community regulation, extraction of werregue palm fiber, material necessary for the preparation of handicraft, which are commercially viable. Handicraft is the major income source for the *Wounaan-nonam* to obtain products they do not have, necessary for daily life, like salt, candles, gasoline, and work tools.

The presence of the Colombian State in this territory is very precarious. The communities receive the following aid: delivery of food for children under five years old who attend HC-ICBF; delivery of food for the children who attend school; payments, below the minimum wage, to the community mothers who attend the HC-ICBF; payments of one minimum wage to the teachers of the school. In the communities, all educational agents, community mothers, and masters are *Wounaan-nonam* Indians trained to perform this task.

In the families and in the HC-ICBF, *Wounaan* is spoken on a daily basis. In the elementary school, the teachers and children speak *Wounaan*, but some disciplines are taught in Spanish. In high school, most disciplines are taught in Spanish. Nonetheless, only since two decades ago, the three educational institutions (HC-ICBF, primary school and high school) have been present in the cabildos. For this reason, women over thirty years old who did not attend school only speak *Wounaan*.

Belonging to this same generation, some men, who were in charge of trading the handicraft products are bilingual, men and women who went to the urban centres to resume their process of technical, technological and professional background formation. Many of them, after finishing their studies, returned to the community. Such is the case of the three leaders interviewed. Contemporaneously, the children who attend school and the adults with an educational background are bilingual. Notwithstanding, all of the members of the community speak Wounaan in the daily communications. Therefore, their language is not one of the identity traces that define the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam*.

The following excerpts are part of a set of semi-structured interviews, which arise from the contact with community leaders of Resguardo de Puerto Pizarro. A set of social representations that stand out show the identity of the *Wounaan-nonam* from the community life and the disturbing experience of the encounter with the *other* neighbour, outsider, or foreigner.

The *Wounaan-nonam* Indians inhabit the banks of San Juan River in the humid jungle of the Colombian Pacific. Their presence in this territory was documented prior to the Spanish conquest (Arocha & Friedemann, 1982). In contrast to the indigenous communities settled in the Andean ridges or in the inter-Andean valleys, the *Wounaan-nonam* Indians have been in contact with the *other*, outsider and foreigner, as a visitor who explores the benefits of his presence in the territory. Since undocumented times, the presence of the *other* coloniser has been a threat to their survival:

When we were children, we used to believe that the world was the universe of the *Wounaan-nonam*, that there were no other Indians, that there were no other persons in the world. I thought we were the only ones. Although while we grew up the adults used to tell us about the Cunas, who nowadays are the Tules, because we had to fend for ourselves and be aware of strangers like the Cunas, once we were engaged in a war for the territory. I have never seen a Tule, but I saw the men from the city arrive — mestizos, this is how we call people who are always willing to take advantage. They come from the city to our territory to trade with us and try to take advantage of our customs and territory (Interview of the Nonam translator)

Nonetheless, since the Spanish colony, the adversity of the jungle has been their protection. During this period, they received the presence of Afro-descendant men and women who decided to explore the territory in order to escape from the forced work in the Spanish Andean farms of the inter-Andean valley of Cauca River and of the mining zones of the Choco. The Afro-descendants arrived as an *other* amid adversity. During almost three centuries the *Wounaan-nonam* have had a neighbor in their territory, the Afro-descendant communities; in spite of their proximity, there are

marked cultural differences, which do not allow the consanguineous ties. In Boeschian terms, the adversity of the territory is a frontier that protects the communities from the *other* aggressor, but the customs, the beliefs and the language are a barrier that prevents the direct and fluid contact between the *Wounaan-nonam* Indian and his *other* Afro-descendant neighbor.

The Afro-descendant community, which is near the ravine, is our neighbour. But they will always be strangers to the Nonam community. They do not have our customs; our men and women cannot unite with them in marriage. They have a Christian God, while we have Ewanda; we share this territory with these neighbours because since very long ago the indigenous and the Afro communities have been coexisting with the jungle and the river. It is different in the case of the people from the city; they arrived recently to convert the river into a corridor of unusual trades, they want to take advantage of the communities, they arrive with weapons and take our territory. We know that their presence is a threat to our people. Underlying our forced displacements there are the groups of outlaws who do not obey the Colombian laws and who, by the force of weapons, try to steal our land, but we keep resisting, as we always did. (Interview of the *Wounaan-nonam* translator)

The *Wounaan-nonam* have resisted different colonization processes. Their dexterity to survive under the adverse conditions of the humid jungle of the Colombian Pacific: tropical diseases, the land's poor fertility, isolation from the urban centers, and contamination of the San Juan River have been their strength to face the presence of the *other* stranger and aggressor who aims at depriving them of their territory.

In the community we have difficulties, on occasions we are in the middle of an armed conflict, we find ourselves forced to flee our territory to the urban centres in order to avoid being killed or to keep our kids from being recruited to the war. When we have to move to Buenaventura, to Cali, to Bogotá, to Yumbo, because of the violence, we always have the hope to come back to recover our territory, as it was the case by the occasion of the displacement of 2009; we left due to a forced displacement, but we managed, after various months, to get back to the shelter (Interview of the Governor of the Cabildo).

In these excerpts, there emerges the first social representation, which gives identity to each man and woman: *the Wounaan-nonam coexist with the humid rainforest*, receiving its benefits and obstacles. To the Spanish, and soon to the *mestizos* who tried to colonise the territory until the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the adverse conditions of the jungle have been their protection. Only the men and women who face the adversity of the climate, the attacks of the wild animals, the absence of potable water, the scarcity of food, the tropical diseases, like malaria and yellow fever, the absence of ways of terrestrial communication with the urban centers, are able to

survive in the humid rainforest of the Pacific. This condition of isolation has been the attractive of the recent presence of an *other* colonizer who, with his weapons, intends to control San Juan River in order to transform it in a strategic corridor for the drug traffickers' routes.

Since the year 2010 until the date when this article was written, the *Wounaan-nonam* communitarian leaders have been threatened and killed by illegal armed groups – among which gangs of criminals – that try to take over the river to transform it in a corridor of illicit business. The armed groups arrive at the territory of the *Wounaan-nonam* and Afro-descendant communities to intimidate them and to cause massive displacements to makeshift refugees in the urban centres of Buenaventura, Cali, Yumbo, and Bogotá.

The second social representation is closely related to the previous one: *the Wounaan-nonam live in community*. To the *Wounaan-nonam*, it is not enough having the personal power to face the mysteries and the danger of the humid rainforest. The following excerpt of the interview of the Governor of the Cabildo de Puerto Pizarío gives sense to this communitarian experience:

Being Nonam or Woonam requires being raised in a family that lives in a community, that is to say, in a resguardo, accordingly to our sociopolitical organization. Our communities are settled in the margins of the San Juan River, on the stretch that desembogues in the Pacific Ocean. For this reason, the jungle and the river, too, define us, because the territory requires us to live in community and to know how to coexist with them.

The community is the great fortress of the *Wounaan-nonam*; together they can face any kind of danger, especially the presence of an *other* outsider or foreigner who intends to use their territory for armed confrontations which affect the community in a direct and manifest way; to recruit, under death threat, the boys and youngsters in the armed conflict; dominate their territory due to being in possession of a strategic corridor of drug trafficking, which finances the war of the leftist militias and the Colombian extremist right-wing paramilitary armies (Corte Constitucional, 2009).

During the last two decades, the *Wounaan-nonam* have systematically left their territory in order to protect their lives, but this forced displacement forces them to live the adversity of the urban contexts. In Puerto Pizarío each *nonam* Indian is recognised by his or her community. In the city they are anonymous and condemned to disappear, and due to this, the recovery of the shelter is their great expectation:

In the city we lose many things, because what makes us strong is the communitarian life. In the city we are fragile, the women do not know what to do, they cannot cultivate, we cannot fish. Neither it is any easy to buy the basic

products because they are afraid of talking to the neighbour, the children cannot attend school, everything becomes complicated. Our values, our customs, the ways to satisfy our needs, the way of seeing and acting in relation to the world, proper of the Nonam culture, are affected when we have to abandon the shelter. Nonetheless, in the city, we are still Nonam. (Interview of the Governor of Cabildo)

The *mestizo* colonizer is sent by the demon *Dosat* – a figure of the oral tradition. A decade ago, the armed foreigner arrived, attacking the different shelters placed on the banks of San Juan River. Notwithstanding, in 2009, the *Wounaan-nonam* families displaced by the violence and living for over one year in the overcrowded shelters of downtown Buenaventura decided to return to their land to face the new *other* aggressor present in their territory. Their form of combat is not war, but the declaring of the shelter's humanitarian and biodiverse zones. For this reason, along the trajectory by San Juan River until arriving at Puerto Pizarro, there are public signs in the different communities, demanding from the *other* outsider or foreigner a condition of citizen who promotes coexistence and peace as a symbolic action to make their territory visible and to prohibit the entrance of any armed player. Similarly, they cultivate collectively in sites on the banks of the riverbed, without entering the jungle, in order to avoid coming across the *other* aggressor with his rifles and short-range weapons.

A question arises: are these symbolic actions sufficient to prevent the presence of the *other* foreigner/aggressor in their territory? Although death, threats and adversity have not ceased to prowl the wooden houses of the 30 families – about 230 inhabitants – of the shelter of Puerto Pizarro on the banks of San Juan River, the *Wounaan-nonam* community faces adversity with actions that construct the expectations of future for the children and youngsters in the Bajo San Juan. In the following excerpt, the Representative for Indigenous Affairs comments on the communitarian actions to guarantee the survival:

Things are not easy, but we are working so that the children do not have to live this experience of leaving their houses to an unfamiliar world, with not many possibilities. The children must have the possibility to play all the time, to be free in the community. The boys and girls attend the communitarian homes of Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute for Family Welfare). In the communitarian homes, they receive the care of the communitarian mothers, who protect them from the danger of the jungle, feed them and teach them our traditions, the games, the myths, the dances, speak our language. When they arrive at school, they start learning and speaking Spanish. This is one of our achievements; now the boys go to our communitarian home, go to our school, go to our high school; they learn in our own language, but they also learn in Spanish, which is the language of the rest

of the Colombians. Our teachers are Nonam Indians, they qualified at the normales (teacher training high school) to educate our children. In the future, we hope to have our own university, or have agreements with universities, so that our youngsters may continue studying.

If, to the *Wounaan-nonam*, the community is their fortress, *the family is the daily guarantor of the identity*. This social representation is updated by the actions of the adults, who are in charge of monitoring the apprenticeships that define each *Nonam* man and woman as members of the community:

Our daily practices in the family and in the community define our being, as they are specific to the *Nonam*. The boys and girls observe the adults and learn to work, accordingly to their condition: man or woman. After the age of ten, one starts teaching them feminine home tasks: cooking, sweeping, catching and drying the werreque to weave the utensils, to organize the farufa, i.e., the skirt, to freshen up; these are women's things. With respect to the boys, things are different, they are stronger and compete on the river, to find out who is the best swimmer or rower; since very tender ages they watch their parents fishing, and so, when they become able to swim and row well they go far from the banks and already start bringing the fish from San Juan River; they also go hunting in the woods with the adults, to help obtaining the livelihood for the house. We also do things together, men and women, we learn to cultivate the products the jungle gives us, the yam, the corn, the banana, the banano, the papa china. In the epoch of the shoal, the men go fishing, while we cook the fish in delicious wrappings. The family is contented because it already has a new member of the house who is part of the *Nonam* community. (Interview of the Representative for Indigenous Affairs)

Therefore, being a *Wounaan-nonam* man or woman reveals itself in the daily practices of the family, and the language itself is constructed in the communication with the *other/nonam*: This way, another social representation emerges that defines the identity: *a Wounaan-nonam man or woman speaks Woonam*. The issues of the daily life in the family and in the community are spoken in Woonam, indigenous language of the Choco linguistic branch. In Boeschian terms, the language is a frontier of communication among the *Nonam*, while it constitutes a barrier to the dialogue with the *other*, outsider, neighbour or foreigner.

The language of the *Wounaan-nonam* is spoken in the family, in the House of Chardi, in the trails of the shelter, in the Communitarian Houses of ICBF, on the boat, in all of the places of the shelter of Puerto Pizarro. Only when the children begin attending elementary school do they start a bilingual education, which allows them to get in touch with the surrounding society; in this case, with the rest of Colombians:

We communicate in Woonam; although we learn Spanish in school, we use our language to understand each other and communicate within the family life and in the communitarian life.

In the daily contact with the *other/ Wounaan-nonam* there arise conflicts which must be resolved. The Colombian Indians, as per the *Constitución Política* of 1991, have their own legislation, which allows them to define the nature of the conflict, the judges and the system of punishment the transgressor must receive. In this space, a social representation arises: *the Wounaan-nonam* have their own regulatory system, which is defined by their traditions, their customs, their system of beliefs, their system of values and their cosmogony.

The youngsters are warned that they cannot do things proper of mestizos, for instance, the women cannot dye their hair blonde, use make-up, marry or have children with men other than Nonam. The men cannot court women other than their own companions, nor abandon the children, nor go out without the permission of the community, nor take drugs; all these things that are proper of the mestizo and change our harmony are discussed by the community in the House of Chardi. First, the youngsters are warned, and then, if they insist on the same behavior, they are forced to leave the shelter, becoming a shame to the family. To the Nonam, coming to be in a family of the community is not sufficient. To be a Nonam it is necessary to accept the values that constitute us as a community. For many reasons, some youngsters get in touch with the city, but they know they cannot betray these customs in the shelter. We have rules, and the first one of them is that any change must be discussed and approved by the community as a whole (Interview of the Nonam translator).

There is no confusion, no ambiguity; the children, the youngsters and the adults know the standards of behaviour, which define what is right and what is wrong. The community establishes the penalties and controls the decisions of each one of the *Wounaan-nonam*:

We are in contact. The community resolves all of our issues. We have some rules of coexistence, some rules that do not involve the police or the Colombian justice. We are organized to live in community. All of the members of the shelter participate in the meetings in the House of Chardi to discuss the communitarian issues, the problems in the families, the difficulties of behavior of a man or woman, the difficulties of the youngsters. For instance, among the Nonam, the decision to form a couple and a family involves the community; the families make this decision ever since we were children. The families talk to each other and agree that a boy and a girl will constitute a family in the future; this is different with respect to the rest of the Colombians. You, who are not a Nonam, decide who is your wife, the moment of your life when you will form a

family. In our case, when it comes the moment when two young persons will unite, the community helps them, a workforce is organized; if they want to build a house, we all cooperate (Interview of the Governor of the Cabildo).

The community and the surroundings supply everything necessary to provide a condition of well-being. But in the life of the *Nonam* there exists one relation with the transcendent that gives sense to the existence and opens the mystery that life and death represent. From their own cosmogony they pay tribute to their deities and to mother Earth, anchored in the humid jungle of the Pacific: the world of father God or *Maach Aai Pomaan Jêb*; that of *Ewandam Jêb*, made son and who created the man, who also has his own world, and that of the *Ãharmiã jeb*, who lives beneath the humid soil of the shore. In the community there inhabits the *jaibaná*, who has the power to communicate with the spirits, who does not let go of his walking stick for delivering us from spells that cause diseases and calamities. The *Wounaan-nonam* recognize him as a brave man who faces *Dosat*. In the words of the *Wounaan-nonam*, this is the reference to their cosmovision:

We, the *Wounaan-nonam*, have a cosmovision, which has marked the way to survive, which guides our quotidian and defines our future. All of our actions are observed by our God, Ewanda. He is in the origin of almost everything, is in our whole universe. He created the Nonam, created our world, the river, the jungle, the animals, the plants to be eaten, to heal and to protect us. (Interview of the Representative for Indigenous Affairs).

The *jaibana* prefers to be cautious when it comes to the *other/aggressor* who happens to pass by the river in front of the houses, from where the *Wounaan-nonam* watch in silence. It is precisely this cautious silence that tells the surrounding culture the community is decided to stay in its land, in which entrance there is a sign warning the visitors that *those who are violent cannot enter*.

## **DISCUSSION: REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE IDENTITY IN THE CSC**

In this article, the psychological identity is approached as a complex construction that emerges from multiple discourses, which are assimilated by the system of values of the same community, and, at the same time confronted with life experiences that give sense to the nebulous affective impacts of the encounter with the *other*, not *Wounaan-nonam*. In this web of relations, the CSC establishes a tie between the *personal culture* and the *collective culture* from narratives of life experiences of communitarian leaders of the indigenous Shelter of Puerto Pizarro in the Colombian Pacific. In the dialogue with the leaders, it emerges a set of social representations (Markova, 2003; Boesch, 1991) that allow symbolic articulations of the identity of the *Wounaan-nonam* in a double tie: the assimilation of the system of values which gives the sense of belonging being *Wounaan-nonam*, in contrast with the confrontation of disturbing life

experiences which affectively overshadow the presence of the *other*, as an otherness that imposes his or her lifestyle on the neighbor, outsider or foreigner being.

To the CSC, the intrasubjective processes are individual, but at the same time they are constructed in specific contexts as interpsychological processes. To this perspective, the internalization and the externalization of the symbolic action is constructed in the dialogic relation *I-other-world* (Simão, 2010, 2012). Therefore, the symbolic action that structures the *I* (*Wounaan-nonam*) has differentiated expressions in distinct contexts: in the house with the family; in the Communitarian House with the communitarian mother and the companions; in the games with the friends; in the House of Chardi with the community. Thus, action and culture are indissociable in the construction of the subjectivity of the action that defines the identity.

From this point of view, Boesch's definition of culture is important to comprehend the symbolic action regarding identity. To this author, culture is "a field of action, whose contents range from objects made and used by human beings to institutions, ideas and myths" (Boesch, 1991, p. 29) In this context, the set of social representations emerges to give sense to the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam* in the communitarian life. The three interviews converge to a common nucleus: the *Nonam* culture provides each member of the community with a scenario of action, which translates into a proper language, a pattern of customs which are transferred by the family, a regulatory system that orientates the conduct, a set of traditions that reveals the tie with the transcendent in its own cosmogony. These aspects are guarantors of the stability in the construction of the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam*.

From the Boeschian point of view, culture is a field of action that offers possibilities, but, to the same extent, stipulates conditions for the action. Culture circumscribes goals which can be achieved by certain means, but also establishes limits for correct actions, possible and deviated from the social margin. As a field of action, culture not only induces and controls the action, but is also continuously transformed by it; therefore, culture is both a process and a structure (Boesch, 1991).

In Boesch's definition of culture, the relation *I-other-world* is explicit. Through subjective actions, the individual transforms the physical and objective ambience into an ambience perceived, thought and sensed, i.e., into a personal construction to be shared and negotiated with other individuals, equally constructors. This process of construction of knowledge of reality occurs not only for the material world, but also for the world of the ideas, of the persons, and of oneself; it is precisely in the negotiation of the *personal culture* and of the *collective culture* that the notion of identity emerges to CSC.

In the process of internalization/externalization of the symbolic action, the tie arises between the *personal culture* and the *collective culture* that defines the relation *I-*

other-world. The personal culture, one of the axes of the construction of the identity, is on the basis of every human conduct. By being a unique process, it weaves a system of meanings that updates itself in oppositions and overcomings, which generate new myths and fantasms (Valsiner, 2007). However, the *collective culture* as a semiotic system offers a set of signs which transform the context “here and now” of the human being. Each one of the *Wounaan-nonam* leaders expresses a personal and differentiated experience of the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam*. Notwithstanding, although in their discourse they may distance themselves from the context in which they are culturally immersed, they remain as integral parts of the same context. The third level of analysis proposed by Valsiner in the relation personal culture and collective culture: the social representation is perfectly suitable for the understanding of the identity, once it encodes the medium in such a way that specifies guidelines for the expected conduct and sentiments regarding this expected contact, by itself and by the other. Figure 3 highlights a set of social representations which construct the identity among the *Wounaan-nonam* from symbolic actions that give sense to the communitarian life.

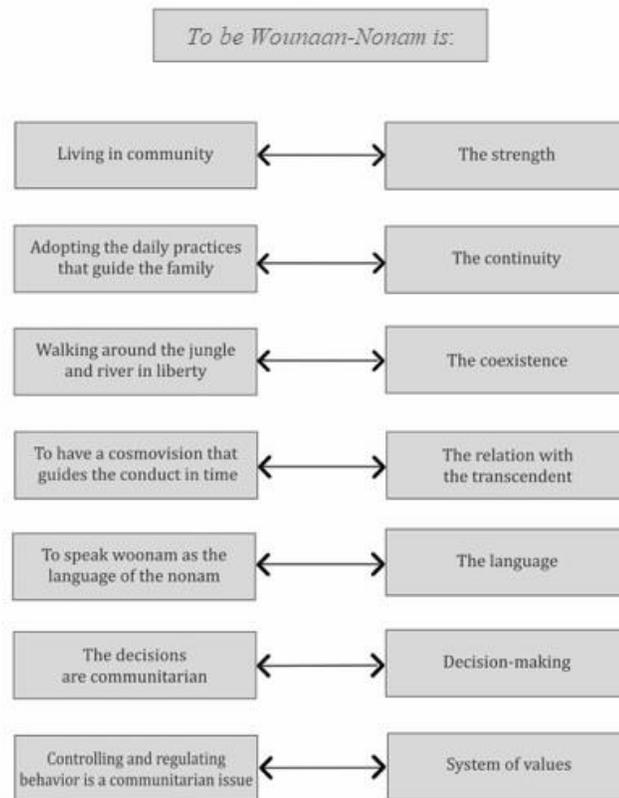


Figure 3. Social representations that give sense to the sentiment of being *Wounaan-Nonam*

In this relation, personal culture/collective culture, mediated by the social representations, it emerges in the CSC a relational developmental conception, in which the individual is to discover the opportunities and limits of the symbolic action

in the contexts that the collective culture offers him (be it shelter, family, school, HC-ICBF), subsequently using these opportunities to act on *personal culture*, managing to reconstruct it, from the creation of new possibilities of action for himself and for the *other*. Therefore, by acting cognitively and emotionally, the individual constructs meanings that, in the dynamics of the meanings constructed by other actors, constitute the culture. The latter, in turn, will act as field of action (Simão, 2010).

The collective culture will indicate limits to the formation of objectives and to the performing of the action, establishing zones of taboo and focusing the formation of frontiers and barriers, central aspects in the relation I-other-world. This way, possibilities are offered of which an individual is not aware, but “the discovery of the unknown possibilities of action belongs to the process of growth” (Boesch, 1991, p. 32) which delimits the quotidian.

Therefore, the relation I-other-world affords the opportunity of a process of signification in which it occurs a multiplicity of reconstructions of shared messages. In this dialogical process, each person actively transforms the expressions of the other, integrating them in their personal affective-cognitive base. This process refers to the dynamics that occur in the cultural preservation and transformation, in which the *other* constitutes an opportunity for the *I* to question and to be questioned by the cultural tradition (Boesch, 1991; Simão, 2010; 2012).

In this perspective, the experience each person has of the *I* is a fundamentally actional experience: *I*-thinking, *I*-wanting, *I*-being, *I*-creating. The experience of the *I* is linked to the potential of action, i.e., to the sentiment of confidence in achieving personal standards in any situation, including the powers of action that the *I* attributes to itself, but always in a dynamic and dialogic relation with the *other* and with the world (Boesch, 1991; Simão, 2012).

Each person is the actor of his or her reality, but, at the same time, the meaning of his or her acting requires the attribution that he or she gives to the relation with the other. In the construction of the identity, the role of the *other* is fundamental, as it emerges as a disturbing figure that nurtures different expectations towards the relation. Simão argues the disturbing experience is one central point for the understanding of the ontological construction of the human subjectivity, once the disturbing experience is “one which creates expectations, which affectively and cognitively instigates, be it the actor who experiences it, or another person who experiences the restlessness of the actor” (Simão, 2004, p. 13).

In synthesis, the relation I-other-world is part of a system which is defined in its complexity; that is to say, the proper relation between the elements is essential for the understanding of the identity. However, the position of the *I* will never be equal to the

position of the *other*, and the immeasurable character of the dialogue opens the notion of otherness (Simão, 2007, 2010).

The principle of the relation I-other is the asymmetry in its organisation. Notwithstanding, a sensibility of the *I* to construct a tentative approach and opening towards the *other* is identified. The encounter between them is not reciprocal because the *I* is never completely with the *other*, in his otherness, but is always in the expectation to access what the other resists revealing (Lévinas, 1993).

This encounter in the relation I–other may be either a barrier or a frontier, as the dialogue occurs in the place of the knowable, which presupposes a person who is constantly reconstructing his or her cognitive-affective relation with the *other*, and the place of the unknowable, which presupposes a person that lives the experience of the impossibility of completeness in his or her affective-cognitive relation with the other (Simão, 2010).

The three communitarian leaders are generationally close. They left Puerto Pizarío, searching for educational alternatives to improve their community's life conditions. Two of them, the Governor of the Cabildo and the master translator, returned to live in the shelter. The Governor of the Cabildo and the master translator; however, the Representative for Indigenous Affairs, however, remained in the city of Cali to take over a leading political role in the Secretariat for Ethnic Affairs of the Government of Valle del Cauca.

In the discourse of the three communitarian leaders there is not a qualitative homogeneity in their reference to the encounter with the *other*. This way, in the dialogue with the representative for the indigenous affairs, the figure of the other emerges as a disturbing experience that implies entering the semiotic universe of the other in order to discover her as a stranger in her customs and traditions. Ever since she was a girl, she was abruptly exiled from her community to seek for new possibilities within the educational offer — the religious boarding school — of the surrounding society. Nonetheless, this new world is asymmetrically different: there is no jungle, no river, the houses have protective walls to avoid the contact with the outside: similarly, she faces a new regulatory system which imposes new standards of survival to play, study and get in touch with the other. It is precisely in this new world that she constructs a relation with the *other* as a stranger in his customs, in his traditions, in his regulatory system, in his relation with the transcendent, but especially in his relation with himself. The most impacting moments occur when she discovers that she is, herself, different and stranger in relation to the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam: My life was very different due to the distance from the jungle and the San Juan River. Those were very hard times for me. The children and the nuns were strange persons to me, and I felt like I were a stranger.*

The other, from the surrounding society, arrives with his system of beliefs and values of the Cristian Jewish tradition. From this reference mark, the actions the religious community performed related to the *Wounaan-nonam* girl are a frontier which guarantees her access to the civilization, because the humid rainforest and the traditions of the *Wounaan-nonam* are barriers to her special talent. Notwithstanding, to Nolberta, the internship became a nebulous affective experience, which allowed her to get in touch with the *other* stranger, and, within her own difference, discover herself as a stranger to the *Wounaan-nonam*. Due to this disturbing, traumatic life experience, she decided to work in the city, so that the *Wounaan-nonam* children do not have to get out of their houses to an unknown world, with not many possibilities. Presently, she has one desire: to return to Bajo San Juan to be a psychologist who works on behalf of the education of the *Nonam* children and youngsters. Figure 4 synthesizes the encounter with the *other* stranger in his otherness.

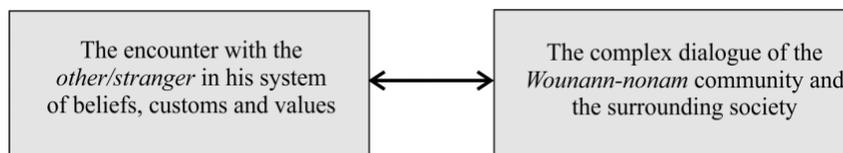


Figure 4. Encounter of the *Wounaan-nonam* with the *other* stranger in his otherness

In the discourse of the *Wounaan-nonam* translator, the *other* emerges as neighbour in the adversity. The Afro-descendant communities share with the *Wounaan-nonam* Indians a web of relations of solidarity which allows them to coexist in the humid rainforest and face the colonizing persecution by the surrounding society. Symbolically, a wooden bridge over a branch of San Juan River unites the communities. Nonetheless, the relation with the *other* neighbor is constructed in the expression “so close, so far”. In this account, the proximity to the *other* is expressed in the adversity. Simultaneously, the language, the system of beliefs, the regulatory systems establish barriers which, to the *Wounaan-nonam*, are impossible to surpass. Between both communities there exist economic transactions; they share the boat that connects them to the urban centers; however, consanguineous unions that allow the configuration of new families and new negotiations are not possible. To the *Wounaan-nonam*, the man or the woman who transgresses this rule will be expelled from the community: *The Afro-descendant community which is near the ravine is a neighbour. But they will always be strangers to the community.* Figure 5 represents the encounter with the *other/neighbor* in his otherness

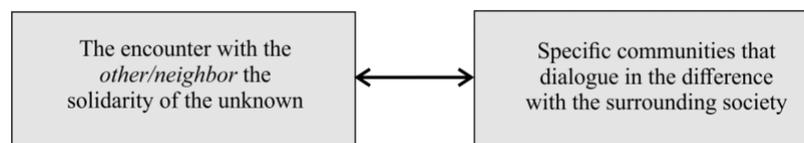


Figure 5. Encounter of the *Wounaan-nonam* with the *other/neighbor* in his otherness

The Governor of the Cabildo updates the presence of the other/ foreigner who tries to colonize the territory of the communities that had ancestrally inhabited the humid rainforest of the Colombian Pacific. The other/ foreigner/colonizer arrives with the barbarity and force of the weapons to annihilate the *Wounaan-nonam* and the Afro-descendant communities settled on San Juan River. The immediate response is the displacement of the families to the urban centres in order to protect the maximum expression of humanity: life. Nonetheless, the violence does not paralise the *Wounaan-nonam*. Since the condition of overcrowding in the shelters of Cali, Buenaventura and Bogotá, symbolic actions are started based on the Constitution of 1991 in order to require the Colombian state to intervene, tutelage actions before the international courts to denounce the aggressions of the outlaw warriors, who need their territory to use as a strategic corridor, and communitarian actions requesting the other/ aggressor to leave their territory. However, amid the conditions of adversity in the urban centres, they keep resisting, preserving their language, their traditions, their customs, and always nurturing the great expectation of returning to their territory. In the dialogue with the surrounding society, the *Wounaan-nonam* Indians teach the rest of the Colombians a condition of citizenship that respects and demands respect from the *other* to construct the reality of a multi-ethnic society that recognizes the differences within the Constitución Política of 1991. Figure 6 represents the encounter of the *Wounaan-nonam* with the *other/colonizer/ aggressor* in his otherness.

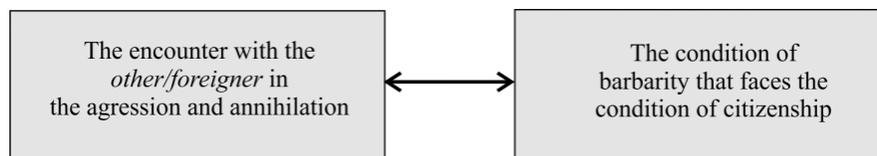


Figure 6. Encounter of the *Wounaan-nonam* with the *other/aggressor* in his otherness

In the three discourses the encounter with the *other* gives sense to the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam*. From the CSC, this affective-cognitive expression does not have a temporal stability. The basis of the three discourses reveals the temporal dimension allows constructing the notion of identity. In the past and present there are records of disturbing experiences in the encounter with the *other* as stranger, neighbor or foreigner aggressor. From the colonial times to now, the *wounaan-nonam* recognise the fact the other arrives at their territory with a complex set of expectations. His force is revealed in the possibility of giving sense to the mysteries of the *other* from his cosmogony, his beliefs, his traditions and his regulatory system. Precisely by trying to understand the presence of the *other* as an otherness, they can be solidary neighbours of the Afro-descendant communities, and at the same time cautious and prudent towards the other-aggressor *and* coloniser. However, the future is constructed by the possibilities offered by the Constitution and by the certainty that the communitarian life is the way to face adversity.

In the subjective relations, the other emerges as a mystery to the *I* with two aspects involved in the relation as otherness. The first aspect involves the recognisement of the *other*, as a subjectivity which is, at the same time, comparable and different from the same *I*. The second aspect is the impossibility, for the *I*, to sharply apprehend the subjectivity of the *other*. From Simão:

It is an insuperable opacity and nebulosity in the relation that imposes a permanent tension between what remains implicit and what can be explained, between what one looms and what no one imagines, in the relation with the *other*. Putting a limit to the human intersubjectivity (Simão, 2010, p. 245).

The Semiotic-Cultural Constructivism in Psychology, in a dialogue of convergence with the philosophical perspectivism, the anthropological perspectivism and the cultural psychology of the development has built theoretical-methodological reflections which approach the identity as a process that emerges from the relation I-other-world from the disquieting experience (Simão, 2004; 2015) of the encounter of the other with his or her otherness.

Nonetheless, we think in future investigations it is relevant to consider the ambivalence of the process: integration – resistance that arises from the progressive negotiation of the Indian communities, an ethnical minority, with the encompassing society of Spanish origin that inhabits the Colombian territory. This way, in our contact of over one decade, we have observed the *Wounaan-nonam* families progressively link up the children to the institutional programs promoted by the Colombian state: HC-ICBF, elementary education school, and high schools. In some cases, they promote young people to go to the urban centres to continue their technical, technological and professional education. Notwithstanding, we highlight the fact that in this process of negotiation it emerges in the narratives of the three leaders a set of social representations that give sense to the sentiment of being *Wounaan-nonam*.

This article contributes to the understanding of the relation I-other-world, a central aspect of the CSC in psychology. In the same way, it can be beneficial to the professionals who work with indigenous communities, noting the process of intervention involves a complex web of relations with a possible focus on the identity, which implies recognizing the *other* in his otherness, i.e., in the absolute certainty of a respectful professional approach that recognises the secrets and mysteries of the *other* without attempting to transgress the limits of this relation.

## References

- Andacht, F. & Michel, M. (2005). A semiotic reflection on self-interpretation and identity. *Theory & Psychology*, 15 (1), 51-75.
- Arocha, J & Friedemann, N. (1982). *Herederos del jaguar y la anaconda*. Bogotá, Colombia: Carlos Valencia Editores.
- Bamberg, M. (2011). Who am I? Narration and its contribution to self and identity. *Theory & Psychology*, 21(1), 3-24.
- Boesch, E. E. (1991). *Symbolic Action Theory and Cultural Psychology*. Berlin-Heidelberg-New York: Springer.
- Boesch, E. E. (1996). The Seven Flaws of Cross – Cultural Psychology: The Story of a Conversion. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 3(1). 2-10
- Corte Constitucional Colombiana. (2009). Auto 004 de 2009, Protección de derechos fundamentales de personas e indígenas desplazados por el conflicto armado en el marco de superación del estado de cosas inconstitucional declarado en sentencia T-025 de 2004. <http://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co>
- Guimarães, D. S. (2011). Amerindian Anthropology and Cultural Psychology: Crossing boundaries and meeting Otherness' worlds. *Culture & Psychology*, 12(2), 139-157.
- Levinas, E. (1993). *El tiempo y el otro*. Barcelona: Paidós – I.C.E. de la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (Trad. José Luis Pardo Tório)
- Hammack, P. (2010). The cultural psychology of Palestinian youth: A narrative approach. *Culture & Psychology*, 16(4), 507–537.
- Markova, I. (2003). *Dialogicality and social representations: the dynamics of mind*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Ministerio de Cultura Colombiano. (2010). *Caracterizaciones de los Pueblos Indígenas en Riesgo*. Recuperado de: <http://mincultura.gov.co>
- Salvatore, S. & Valsiner, J. (2008): Idiographic science on its way: Towards making sense of psychology. In S. Salvatore, J. Valsiner, S. Strout, & J. Clegg (eds.), *Yearbook of idiographic science* (Vol. 1) (pp- 23-38). Rome, Italy: Firera.
- Simão, L. M. (2004). Semiose e diálogo: para onde aponta o construtivismo semiótico-cultural? Em M.T.C.C. de Souza (org.). *Os sentidos de construção: o si mesmo e o mundo* (pp. 13-24). São Paulo: Casa do psicólogo.
- Simão, L. M. (2007). Why Otherness in the research domain of semiotic-cultural constructivism? In L. M. Simão & J. Valsiner (Orgs.) *Otherness in Question: Labyrinths of the Self* (pp. 11-35). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Simão, L. M. (2010) *Ensaio Dialógicos: compartilhamento e diferença nas relações eu-outro*. São Paulo, Brasil: HUCITEC.
- Simão, L. M. (2012) The Other in the Self: A triadic Unit. In J. Valsiner (Org.) *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology* (pp. 403-420). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Simão, L. M. (2015). Culture as a Moving Border. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*. Online First, 07 Aug. 2015. doi: 10.1007/s12124-015-9322-6.
- Simão, L. M. & Sánchez, H. (2015). Madre Ñame and the Nonam: One and another. In Danilo Silva Guimarães (Ed.), *Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*. (pp. 247-263) LOCATION: Information Age Publishing Inc,
- Valsiner, J. (2007). *Culture in mind and societies: Foundations of cultural psychology*. LA – London: SAGE.
- Valsiner, J. (2013): *An Invitation to Cultural Psychology*. London, England: SAGE

Wiley, N. (1994): *The semiotic self*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

#### Author Biographies

Sánchez Rios, Hernán, Ph. D, is a professor at Institute of Psychology of Universidad del Valle, Colombia and a researcher at the Centro de Investigaciones en Psicología, Cognición y Cultura (Cali- Colombia). Post-Doctoral Student in the Graduate Program of Experimental Psychology, IP-USP, Brazil. Participating in the LIVCC of IP-USP. Doctorate Fellow at CNPq His research focuses on the cultural process of children's development from the perspective of Semiotic Cultural Constructivism. Mail: hernan.sanchez@correounivalle.edu.co

Lívia Mathias Simão, Ph.D., is Associate Senior Professor at the Institute of Psychology of the University of São Paulo, Brazil, where she coordinates the Laboratory of Verbal Interaction and Knowledge Construction. Her main research interests concern issues embracing the ontological construction of human subjectivity in I-Culture-Other relationships from the perspective of the Semiotic-Cultural Constructivism in Psychology, with emphasis in the issues regarding the notions of Alterity, Temporality and Disquieting Experiences. Among her more representative works related to the present article are SIMÃO, L. M. (2005). Bildung, Culture and Self; a possible dialogue with Gadamer, Boesch and Valsiner?, *Theory and Psychology*, 15(4): 549–574; SIMÃO, L. M. (2012) The Other in the Self: A triadic unit. In J. Valsiner (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 403-420; SIMÃO, L. M.. (2016a), Culture as a Moving Symbolic Border, *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 50, 14-28. SIMÃO, L. M. (2016b) Ernst Boesch's Ontological Predication in Focus. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 50:568–585. Email: limsimao@usp.br