

## Cultural analysis in three indigenous productive organizations from an interpretive-symbolic perspective

Análisis cultural en tres organizaciones productivas indígenas desde una perspectiva interpretativa-simbólica

Analyse culturelle dans trois organisations productives indigènes dans une perspective interprétative symbolique

**Oscar Iván Vásquez-Rivera\***

Occasional Professor, Department of Administration and Organizations, School of Administrative Sciences, Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia. e-mail: oscar.vasquez@correounivalle.edu.co

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### Abstract

Most cultural scientific studies in Colombian organizations have been characterized as being deterministic and by establishing cultural typologies, according to the analysis of internal and external organizational variables. Additionally, most of these studies are oriented towards considering Colombian organizations within modern westernized contexts as the unit of analysis, leaving out of the scientific discussion, the traditional Colombian organizations that have been designed and developed from native perspectives and grounded in the ancient cultures of the country. In contrast, this research defined three indigenous productive organizations as units of analysis to describe and characterize their culture from an interpretative-symbolic perspective, analyzing their own cultural features and components based on the theoretical model of cultural dynamics. The methodology is based on organizational ethnography and cultural analysis of emerging categories. The results show that although there are points where three indigenous productive organizations meet regarding material, intangible and social aspects, every organization has its own cultural characteristics that defines as "indigenous-traditional" or "western-modern".

**Keywords:** Culture, Indigenous productive organization, Assumptions, Values, Symbols, Ethnography, Culture interpretation.

### Resumen

La mayoría de estudios científicos sobre la cultura en organizaciones colombianas se han caracterizado por ser deterministas y establecer tipologías culturales de acuerdo al análisis de variables internas y externas a la organización, así mismo, la mayoría de estos estudios están orientados a considerar como unidad de análisis las organizaciones colombianas en contextos modernos occidentalizados, dejando por fuera de la discusión científica a las organizaciones colombianas tradicionales que han sido concebidas y desarrolladas desde perspectivas nativas y fundamentadas en las culturas ancestrales del territorio nacional. En contraste con lo anterior, esta investigación define como unidad de análisis a tres organizaciones productivas indígenas para describir y caracterizar su cultura desde una perspectiva interpretativa-simbólica, analizando rasgos y componentes culturales propios basados en el modelo teórico de

\* Science on Business Administration Major, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Master in Organizational Sciences, Universidad del Valle. Member of the Humanismo y Gestión Research Group, Category A1 of Colciencias.

dinámicas culturales. La metodología está basada en la etnografía organizacional y el análisis de categorías culturales emergentes. Los resultados muestran que aunque existen puntos de encuentro cultural entre las tres organizaciones productivas indígenas en aspectos materiales, inmateriales y sociales, cada organización tiene especificidades culturales que la caracterizan como “indígena-tradicional” o como “occidental-moderna”.

**Palabras clave:** Cultura, Organización productiva indígena, Supuestos básicos, Valores, símbolos, Etnografía, Interpretación de las culturas.

### Résumé

La plupart des études scientifiques sur la culture dans les organisations colombiennes ont été déterministes et établissent des typologies culturelles en fonction de l'analyse de variables internes et externes à l'organisation. Également, la plupart de ces études sont orientées à considérer comme une unité d'analyse des organisations colombiennes dans des contextes modernes occidentalisés, laissant de côté de la discussion scientifique aux organisations traditionnelles colombiennes qui ont été conçues et mises au point à partir de perspectives autochtones basées sur des cultures ancestrales du territoire national. Par contre, cette recherche détermine comme unité d'analyse, trois organisations productives indigènes pour décrire et caractériser sa culture à partir d'une perspective interprétative-symbolique, et analyse des traits et des éléments culturels propres basés sur le modèle théorique de dynamiques culturelles. La méthodologie est fondée sur l'ethnographie organisationnelle et l'analyse de catégories culturelles émergentes. Les résultats montrent que, même si existent des points de rencontre culturels entre les trois organisations productives indigènes en aspects matériels, immatériels et sociaux, chaque organisation possède des spécificités culturelles qui la caractérise comme « indigène-traditionnel » o comme « occidental-moderne ».

**Mots clés:** Culture, Organisation productive indigène, Hypothèses de base, Valeurs, Symboles, Ethnographie, Interprétation des Cultures.

## 1. Introduction

The concept and origin of the indigenous productive organization is different from that of western civilization (Lindsay, 2005). According to Lindsay (2005), self-determination and preservation of their patrimony are an integral part of indigenous productive organizations. Likewise, their values and thoughts are integrated. For this reason, their

success is measured in function of different dimensions and not only in function of the interrelated economic dimensions. Individual autonomy is overshadowed by different indigenous stakeholders that must be taken into consideration: the family, the elders, the leaders, and the community's point of view, as well as other values and cultural practices that play an important role in the modification of individual and organizational attitudes.

From the indigenous Nasa<sup>1</sup> people's perspective, their productive organizations emerge, grow, are structured and develop starting from discussions on life itself in each organization and their purpose in society. For example: these organizations must have a community business administrator formed by the Indigenous Governing Board. Likewise, each organization has a board of directors elected by the workers with the participation of the Indigenous Governing Board. Furthermore, the workers and the members of the board are defined as community employees and must present reports on every productive activity of the organization to the community, who evaluate them according to their economic, social or even family performance (Vitonás, 2011). From the cultural perspective, these organizations are considered to be ethnical. Their individual members have a language in common as well as food preferences, religion, music, dances, traditional arts and crafts (folklore) occupation specialties and many other native cultural characteristics (Zapata and Rodríguez, 2008).

For this reason, proposing any theory from the functionalist perspective in order to perform a study or an analysis of the indigenous productive organizations is restricted because it would be considering these organizations from the reductionist point of view (Castro, 2008), leaving aside the possibility of analyzing their symbolic peculiarities, their social constructions and their own relativity in cultural terms (García, 2001).

In that line of thinking, Schultz and Hatch (1996) propose that these organizations are developed in preset, determined, and li-

<sup>1</sup> The census of the National Administrative Department of Statistics [DANE for its name in Spanish(2005)] reported 186,178 people self-recognized as belonging to the Nasa Indigenous People. 51% of that population is male (94,971) and 49% is female (91,207). The Nasa People is located in the department of Cauca where 88.6% of their population lives (164,973 people). The Nasa represent 13.4% of the indigenous population of Colombia.

**Table 1. Characteristics of the Indigenous Productive Organizations**

	<b>Productive Activity</b>	<b>Number of members</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Products</b>
<b>Kwe'sx Café</b>	Organic coffee processing plant.	3	Between the Toribío reservation and the San Francisco reservation - Rural zone of Vereda Caloto Nuevo.	2002	Roasted and grounded coffee in presentations of 50, 125, 250, and 500g. grounded and dry pergamino coffee.
	History: It started working from the CECIDIC, processing the farm crops for self-consumption as well as selling the surplus. Today the organization has its own production plant and develops coffee transformation processes for internal consumption and for sale to national and international distributors.				
<b>Fxize</b>	Raspberry and galupa natural fruit juices processor and bottled tap water processing plant.	10	Toribío reservation and downtown urban area.	1997	600 ml bottle treated tap water and 350 - 600 ml plastic bag presentation. Fruit juice drink in plastic bag presentation of 70 cm <sup>3</sup> and 250 cm <sup>3</sup> and in bottles of 250 cm <sup>3</sup> , 500 cm <sup>3</sup> , and 1000 cm <sup>3</sup> .
	History: It was established through the initiative of a group of women who got support for the Nasa project aiming to provide a market for the fruit producers and processors. Today the producers have been benefited with the presence of Fxize, as the organization processes 37% of the township production. Likewise, they became responsible for developing activities oriented towards improving the transformation processes based in specialized technical support and the conservation of raw materials and foods.				
<b>Lácteos San Luis</b>	Dairy Products Processing Plant.	10	Reservaton of Tacueyó and downtown urban area.	1995	Fruit flavored yogurt in presentations of 200 ml, 1000 ml and 1750 ml. Double cream cheese. Pasteurized country style cheese. Native Colombian cheese. Yogurt in plastic bag presentation of de 200 ml. Milk drink in packages of 30 units.
	History: It is one of the first indigenous productive organizations of the township and for that reason it has gone through many important historical processes in the territory that have determined its rout and its economy. Presently, 128 farmers own the organization and 18 community farms. The Tacueyó indigenous Governing Board is a majority partner and participate in the decision making.				

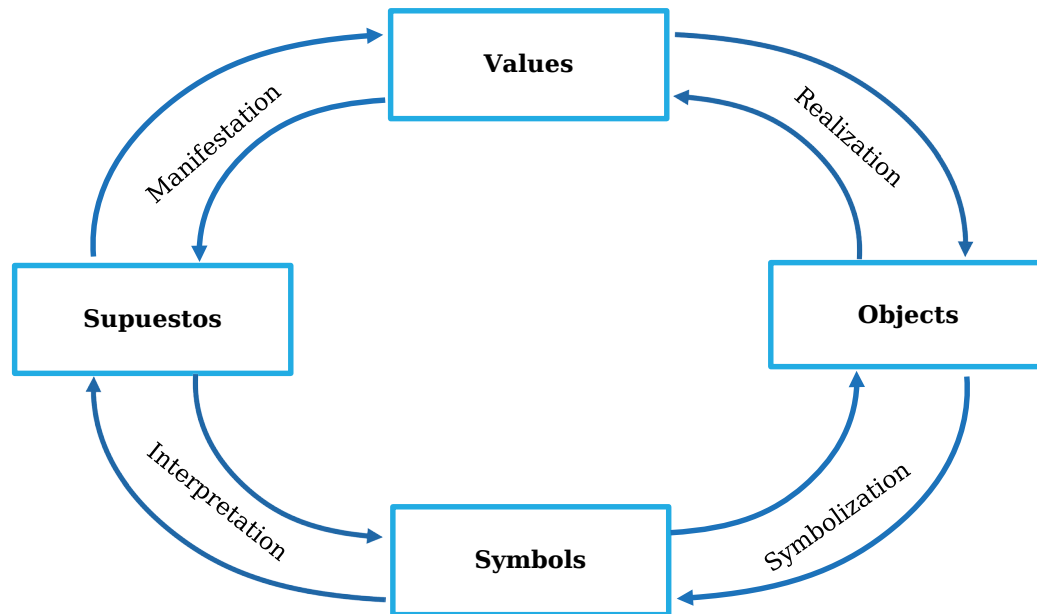
Source: Author own elaboration.

neal development scenarios. Once they are analyzed from a functional perspective, their culture is seen as a pattern of values and basic assumptions. It is possible to decipher through the deepest levels of culture, its visible and exposed levels. (Schultz and Hatch, 1996) Taking into consideration what was previously said, the purpose of this research is to describe the culture of three indigenous productive organizations (Table 1) from the interpretative-symbolic perspective; beginning specifically from the theoretical propositions of the Cultural Dynamics Model (Hatch, 1993) to identify and characterize the elements and components of culture and

the processes that form it, generating in that way a different perspective in order to understand and to re-signify the culture in the contemporary organizations that exist today.

Additionally, another reason that justifies studying this unit of analysis from the organizational perspective, underlies equally from the modern and traditional ideologies of the members of the indigenous peoples. Indigenous productive organizations are forms of native organizations that used to contemplate the world towards the modernization concept tightly linked to the ideas of economic development and of the national construction

Figure 1. Cultural dynamics model



Source: Adapted from Hatch, (1993).

that was once promoted as a universalized social process that in the long run would embrace every traditional belated or pre-modern forms of society (Stavenhagen, 1997). Different schools of “social scientists” used to apply their knowledge to convince the indigenous peoples around the world that their ways of life were morally wrong (the missionary approach). The indigenous peoples that accepted these arguments would find themselves morally deprived, culturally impoverished, and materially devastated. For this reason, the present indigenous ideology questions the paradigm of modernization as irrelevant in the best case and as potentially destructive of the indigenous values (Stavenhagen, 1997). Taken this into account, other elements of particular interest and analysis are generated inside indigenous productive organizations since the paradigm of modernization is still present in the conception of these organizations.

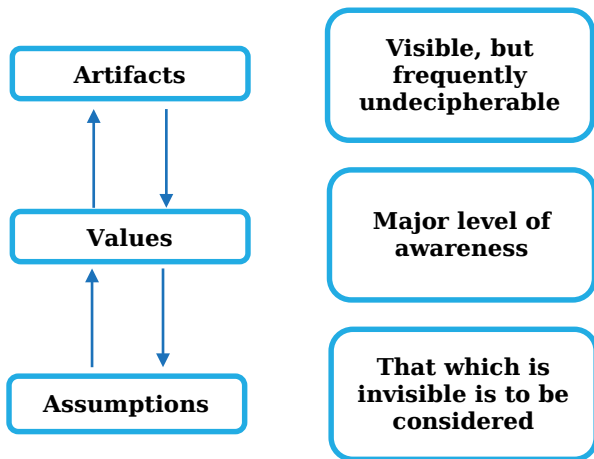
For this reason, it is relevant to take up research work on indigenous productive organizations adding the following questions: What distinguishes the indigenous productive organizations from other entrepreneurial initiatives? Is there a particular paradigm

on which these organizations are constructed and developed? What are the cultural characteristics of indigenous productive organizations and how are these manifested and how do they form a specific culture inside organizations with similar characteristics and components? This last question gears the present article and sets before it the topics to be discussed in order to analyze the three organizations.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In order to make the proposals of the interpretative-symbolic perspective operative, it is proposed to review the model of Cultural Dynamics (Hatch, 1993) (Figure 1) since it gathers multiple elements in the theoretical order as well as in the methodological one, which are in line with the basic perspective conceptions chosen for this research.

Hatch (1993) points out that the term Cultural Dynamics originated in Cultural Anthropology where it refers to issues such as the origin and evolution of cultures, acculturation processes, and the issue of change in the face stability (for example: through the diffusion, innovation, cultural conservatio-

**Figure 2. Schein: The three levels of culture**

Source: Adapted from Hatch & Cunliffe, (2013).

nism, and the resistance to changes). For the development of this term, the arguments of Schein (1993) were re-taken from their origins. The author takes on the onion model of organizational culture analysis as bases to propose the model of Cultural Dynamics, as well as the concepts of evolution and acculturation of the dialectic of change and stability.

The model proposed by Hatch (1993) widens the horizons of research on culture in organizations starting from the proposal of Schein (1985) on assumptions, values, and artifacts (Figure 2). With regard to basic assumptions, Schein (1985) points out that they represent what the members of a culture believe to be their reality; which normally is taken for granted. This way, Schein (1985) declares that basic assumptions influence what the members of a culture perceive, think, and feel.

Likewise, he establishes that assumptions in a culture fit in the next level of cultural values because they are the social principles, goals, and standards that the members of a culture believe to have intrinsic value. As far as the norms are concerned, Schein (1985) considers them as no-written rules and the common body of knowledge that make it possible for the members of a culture to know what to expect in a wide variety of situations, including how to coordinate their behavior with that of other members of the organization.

**Table 2. Categories and examples of artifacts approach**

Category	Example
Objects	Art / design / logotype
	Architecture / decoration / furnishing
	Dressing / appearance / outfit / uniform
	Products / equipment / tools
Verbal expressions	Board exhibitions / photographs / memorabilia / animated cartoons / signalization
	Jargon / names / nick-names
	Explanations / theories
	Stories / myths / legends with their heroes and villains
	Superstitions / rumors
	Humor / jocks
	Metaphors / proverbs / sayings
	Discourse / rhetoric / oral speech
	Ceremonies / rituals / passing rituals
	Meetings / retreat / celebrations
Activities	Patterns of communication
	Traditions / habits / social routines
	Gestures
	Playing / recreation / games
	Awards / punishments

Source: Recovered from Hatch and Cunliffe (2013).

According to Schein's theory (Schein, 1985), the members of a culture have values and those are adjusted to the cultural rules because the underlined assumptions and believes of their culture nourish and support these norms and values.

In terms of what was previously said, norms and values favor activities that produce cultural artifacts. Schein (1985) proposes that artifacts are manifestations or expressions of the same cultural nucleus that produce and maintain values and norms. However, at a greater distance from the cultural nucleus it is easier to interpret its significance. There are different types of artifacts and each one represents a specific form of manifestation (Table 2).

Hatch (1993) adds two additional aspects to these elements: the symbols that allow to

approach organizational culture from an interpretative-symbolic point of view and the connection between the processes of manifestation, realization, symbolization and interpretation with cultural elements (assumptions, values, artifacts, and symbols). The same author proposes that the interaction between the processes presents different forms. Specifically, the author exemplifies that the proactive/retroactive modes represent the role that activity plays on culture while the prospective/retroactive modes show the possibility of reflectability and cultural consistency.

This work refers to Schein (1985) for the process of manifestation. He defines manifestation as any process through which an essence is revealed, generally, through the senses but also through cognition and emotion (Schein, 1985). In terms of the dynamic cultural framework, the manifestation allows for the cultural assumptions to be (essence of culture in the theory of Schein) revealed through the perceptions, cognitions and emotions of the organization's members.

### 2.1. Proactive manifestation

What members of the organization assume as true, forms value for them. This formation is generated through the proactive process of manifestation through which assumptions provide expectations that influence perceptions, thoughts, and feelings they have about the world and the organizations (Hatch, 1993).

### 2.2. Retroactive Manifestation

The retroactive mode of manifestation refers to the contribution that values make to the assumptions (Hatch, 1993).

Manifestation could be illustrated by examining the assumption that human beings are lazy (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2003). According to the perspective of cultural dynamics, this assumption would generate expectations of laziness that lead to perceptions of lazy acts. These perceptions in combination with other assumptions, manifest thoughts and feelings about those acts. For example: in an organization that assumes that success de-

pends on a sustained effort, it is possible for laziness to be considered as being negative. Likewise, the perceptions about laziness will be related to negative thoughts and, finally, the feelings about that could easily become a value to control it (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013).

In the process of realization, Schein (1985) establishes that proactive realization is responsible for the transformation of values into artifacts (for example: rituals, organizational stories, and different objects), while retroactive realization has the potential of transforming values and expectations, making them appear in a different way (Hatch, 1993).

**Proactive Realization:** It refers to the notion of promotion by Weick (1987) and to the concept of materialization of ideas discussed by Czarniawaska-Joerges and Joerges (1990). Concerning promotion, Weick (1987) declares that “the lesson of self-fulfilled prophecies allows for strong beliefs that are highlighted and intensified in constant action, and could bring events to existence” (p. 225).

**Retroactive Realization:** The retroactive realization mode refers to the post hoc (after) contribution of the artifacts with the values and the expectations of how things should be done (Hatch, 1993).

To continue with the laziness example, an assumption that the organization is filled with failed tasks contributes to the creation of values related to control. For example: timing clocks, daily productivity reports, performance reviews, and offices visually accessible are accepted ideas in a culture that values control over laziness (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2003).

For the process of symbolization, Hatch (1993) refers to some symbolic-interpretative researchers in order to define a symbol as something that represents a conscious or an unconscious association with something wider, generally more abstract, concept or meaning. Gioia (1986) offers a representative list of the organization's symbols: the organization logotype, slogan, stories, acts and non-acts, visual images, and metaphors. The aforementioned is contemplated by the Eisenberg and Riley (1988) proposals which add organigrams, corporate architecture, rites, and rituals.

**Prospective Symbolization:** Ricour (1976) recommends comparing the significance of a symbol with its literal meaning and the result obtained from the difference is named “exceeding significance”. The notion of this denomination helps to explain symbolization. Once it is done, an artifact is an objective form of literal meaning. The symbolization combines an artifact with the exceeding significance (Hatch, 1993).

**Retrospective Symbolization:** The retrospective symbolization mode increases the consciousness of symbolized objects’ literal meaning. The important thing from a cultural dynamic perspective is that not all artifacts receive the same treatment in the symbolic field (Hatch, 1993).

To illustrate the aforementioned, the inauguration of a building with the ideal conditions for handicapped people could be used by the administration’s executives to portrait an inclusive and participative image of the organization. On the other hand, in lower levels, timing clocks, daily activity reports, and the official’s behavior tell the employees that they are not to be trusted, making them experience unforgiveness and exclusion. In this case, employees attribute their feelings to the clocks and to the activity reports which produce meanings that are contrary to those projected by administrative executives (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013).

In the process of interpretation, Hatch (1993) refers to Schültz (1970) and Ricoeur (1976) to define that the sense of interpretation involves the literal meaning and the combined surplus from symbolization prospective processes. The significance that is established by the interpretation is derived from the direct association (of the first degree) of the literal and the exceeding meaning of defined significance as a prospective process of symbolization. Finally, Hatch (1993) refers to Gioia (1986) to introduce elements “already known” in the guides and schemes kept in the memory, and in this way referring to the concept of circle of hermeneutics.

**Prospective Interpretation:** Schültz (1970) stated that this process establishes the sense of interpretation. This statement implies that the present symbols have a reciprocated influence on the basic assumption.

**Retrospective Interpretation:** Schültz (1970) stated that the interpretation is retrospective when it implies a movement from what is already known about the basic assumptions of a culture to their real symbols. This reciprocity has being the central topic in the school of hermeneutics on the theory of interpretation which is called the hermeneutic circle (Hatch, 1993).

Going back to the previous example, the appearance of a hard working individual challenges the basic assumptions of laziness, generating the possibility of new meanings within the culture. Off course, it could happen that the symbol of the worker simply be re-interpreted to adjust to the existing assumptions. The change is possible through the mechanisms of confrontation with the symbols that don’t get adjusted to the assumed reality. If this questioning leads people to distinguish lazy and hard working individuals, perhaps it initiates a new process for the selection of employees that eventually changes its own base, organizational behavior, and the set of artifacts that represent symbolic cultural resources for the future (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Context Units of Analysis

The three indigenous productive organizations are located in the town of Toribío where the majority of population is indigenous. It has three reserves that were established during colonial times in 1701: Tacueyó Reserve, Toribío Reserve, and San Francisco Reserve. These reserves form the township in the entire territory which is owned collectively. It has a population of 31,341 people, 96% of that population is from the Nasa ethnia and the rest (4%) is considered to be mestizo.

The three productive organizations originated and are articulated around the NASA project. This project was and still is led by the people themselves, and its main purpose is to strengthen their food autonomy and the respect and good use of their territorial resources. Each organization develops productive activities in a different and independent manner, as it is shown in Table 1.

### 3.2. Strategy of Recollection and Data Analysis:

The following qualitative methods were used in developing this research work: cultural anthropology or ethnographic methods such as “participant observation”, “semi-structured interview”, and “documentation analysis”. These permitted to describe the components, features and characteristics of their culture when analyzing the indigenous productive organizations. Additionally, the aforementioned methodology was complemented by the one designed to do research in indigenous territories, which should be: to see, judge, and act with respect to the dreaming and harmonizing (Vitonás, 2013). During the methodology design some elements of indigenous methodology were included, complying with western requirements to show reliability on the obtained data and also complying with indigenous requirements.

Given the previous elements and taking into account the ethical and emic conception of culture, the following methodological process was carried out in order to meet the objectives of this research proposal:

- The components, features, and cultural characteristics to be defined and analyzed in the three indigenous productive organizations were defined taking into account the processes that form culture and organizations (manifestation, realization, symbolization, and interpretation), and the cultural elements (assumptions, values, artifacts, and symbols) included in the Hatch model.
- A bank of questions was established according to the descriptive question matrix in order to inter-relate observation methods from Bonilla and Rodríguez (2005) that permitted to gear the observations and interviews.
- An exploration log was designed in order to have a general vision of the entire investigation and visualize the different steps it involves.
- The indigenous productive organizations were gradually approached to explain to them the research methodology and to establish activities of “participant observation” and “semi-structured interview” as part of the field work. The observations were geared towards the dynamics presented by all the members of the productive organizations and the interviews were performed in specific cases to go deeper into some variables which were difficult to establish by observation alone. The observations were carried out during a month. The interviews were semi-structured and programmed as the research was being carried out. It is important to mention that many of the meetings occurred amid the productive work and were generated through informal conversations. Having said that, at least five individuals from each organization were interviewed or participated in conversations. Time and space was provided to participate in the proper activities or rituals that would permit to accomplish the activity of “feeling and harmonizing” proposed in the methodology to develop research in indigenous reserves.
- Native texts and books were obtained to carry out the process of documentation analysis. The collected native documents contained information related to the characterization of their ancient culture or to the development of socio-cultural processes. Likewise, documents such as mission and vision statements, international cooperation projects, rules and regulations were analyzed. These documents were found in the productive organizations and in the Historic Nasa Project archives.
- The field work was carried out according the exploration log. The activity for “dreaming and observation” defined in the methodology to develop research work in indigenous reserves was taken into consideration.
- Every day, the “participant observations” and the “profound interviews” were systematized in Word text files. Twenty two exploration logs were written. These logs contained the field work’s primary information, the study’s perceptions, and the experience reports.



- The description and analysis of the diversity components, features, and cultural elements (assumptions, values, artifacts, and symbols) for each indigenous productive organization were developed, describing the processes that make up the culture in organizations (manifestations, realization, symbolization, and interpretation) according to the Cultural Dynamics model. Emerging categories were included as they were appearing in the data processing. For the development of this activity, the Atlas TI software for processing qualitative data was used. Likewise, in order to develop research work in indigenous territories, the activities of “judging” and “action with respect to dreaming” from the indigenous methodology were taken into account.
- Finally, the conclusions were written.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The configuration of the culture varies in each organization mainly because of the diversity of social objectives and the cultural assumptions that are developed and strengthened in every indigenous reserve. Descriptions and analysis of each one of the processes that are part of the culture in the three indigenous productive organizations are presented in the following segments, according to the Cultural Dynamics model. Likewise, table 3 presents the descriptive compiled from each one of the cultural elements defined by Hatch (1993).

### 4.1. Kwe'sx Caf e

The process of proactive manifestation starts from the basic assumptions and the generation of values related to the creation, support, and development of indigenous families. Traditionally, coffee growing indigenous families keep their ancient working practices deeply rooted, and are concerned about the newborn and future generations learning the art and the management of coffee growing. The coffee plant becomes the main crop for the family that has one. Every member of the family that has a coffee plant is in charge of its care and preservation, starting from the

time when it is planted until it is harvested. Roles are assigned according to gender. For example: women are in charge of harvesting and men are in charge of the post-harvest activities and of the food exchange.

The retroactive manifestation process can be identified in the middle of activities in which each individual is instructed in the use of their own language; activities of recuperation of the historical memory and activities geared towards guaranteeing an education based on the traditional principles and values for the future generations. The value of the Nasa Yuwe language as well as the activities geared towards re-educating the individuals to perceive the world from their Nasa cosmic-vision are oriented to re-elaborate the interpretations of the most deeply rooted aspects of their culture and also making the basic assumptions of action collide with the western cultural dispositions.

The proactive realization process revolves around the participation of the organization's members in the meetings (*minga*) or encounters of knowledge with Mother Nature. That is where all the values related to the indigenous families are materialized as well as the role each member of society should fulfill for their own support. The objects mainly developed are: the sac made of color canvas to collect the raw materials provided by Mother Nature; those sacs are the same that are used later on for the transportation of coffee. The colors used depend on whether the coffee is organic or not; the shovel and the pick axe to plow and remove the soil; the kangaroo back bag (*chumbe*) to carry the children while harvesting; the rack to remove the seeds; the home-made remedies to fight and eliminate plagues and diseases in the plants. Furthermore, the proactive realization is also carried out within the organization through the fabrication of objects such as pickers.

The process of retroactive realization is done through the introduction of modern technology that has transformed the values of work. For example: the use of silo to dry coffee by using natural gas in pipes. This makes the process of transformation more automated, reducing aspects related to the natural character of the product. Likewise, it was observed that the use of machinery favors heavy work which due to its physical

**Table 3. Description of cultural elements by each one of the indigenous productive organizations**

	<b>Kwe'sx Café</b>	<b>Fxize</b>	<b>Lácteos San Luis</b>
Basic Assumptions	<p>Work in the organization is done with the family.</p> <p>Learning and preserving the native tongue.</p> <p>Coffee should be processed with the most exquisite scent and flavor.</p> <p>Products contribute to the Nasa living plan.</p> <p>Preserving nature.</p> <p>Studying for progressing.</p> <p>Keeping cultural practices in the farm and adapting cultural practices of modern world transformation.</p> <p>Working is good because it brings happiness.</p> <p>Women are important in the making of the product.</p>	<p>Mama Kiwe should be protected and preserved.</p> <p>Concern for manufacture.</p> <p>Good treatment to providers.</p> <p>Present generations don't find the sense in rituals, but they perform them anyway.</p> <p>Optimizing processes through the acquisition and installment of technology.</p> <p>It is an organization that gets concerned about families.</p> <p>The farm administration is a real art form for the indigenous community.</p> <p>They are not curious nor innovators.</p>	<p>Nothing is wasted.</p> <p>Everything is reused or sold.</p> <p>Innovation is essential.</p> <p>Market expansion and growth are important.</p> <p>One must help with the growth of all the other production organizations in the territory.</p> <p>Western medicine is better than traditional medicine.</p> <p>Rotary work in the farm is essential for the sustainability.</p> <p>Just as for Fxize water is essential, for Lácteos San Luis milk is very important.</p> <p>Injection of financial capital on part of third parties is valued.</p>
Values	<p>Union, fraternity, preservation, trust, security; spontaneity, equality, harmony, responsibility, detail orientation, liberty, fellowship, order, cleanness, courtesy, autonomy, and joy.</p>	<p>Responsibility, care, commitment, disposition, courtesy, support, harmony, respect, management, freedom, interest, concern, community, effort, team work, cooperation.</p>	<p>Courtesy, service, attention to detail, perseverance, innovation, organization, cleanness, trustworthiness, progress, social responsibility, change, planning responsibility, strictness, reutilization, charisma, partnership, competitiveness.</p>
Artifacts	<p><b>Modern</b></p> <p>Laboratory kit, silo or industrial dryer, grinding machine, coffee classifying machine, toasting machine, mill, automatic cooler, scale, coffee extractor, semi-automatic sealer, lap-top computer, advertising pending banners, tents, posters, chairs, motorcycle, pick-up truck, calendars.</p> <p><b>Traditional</b></p> <p>Parabolic dryer, aspersion system, bulk bags, canvas cloth, tents, fence, shovel, tobacco, chirricho, corn fermented drink, pick axe, wooden escalator.</p>	<p><b>Modern</b></p> <p>Semi-automatic sealer, pulp making machine, scale, thermic shrinking machine, packer, cell phone, earphones, industrial gloves, tap water purifying filter, banners, tents, posters, baskets, refrigerator, calculator, label maker, stoves, pans, hydro-washer, computer, gas pipe, screwdriver, Peston keys, hammer, PVC tube, cap sealing machine, dating machine, walky-talky, motorcycle, van, calendars, announcements.</p> <p><b>Traditional</b></p> <p>Tobacco, chirrincho, corn fermented drink (chicha).</p>	<p><b>Modern</b></p> <p>Refrigerator, freezers, automatic heater, marmitas, semi-automatic sealer, automatic sealer, cell phone, office computer, printer, earphones, stereo, speakers, T.V. set, tap water purifying filter, stove, radio, electric fence, motorcycle, pick-up truck, van, calendars, banners, posters, brochures, cards, announcements.</p> <p><b>Traditionals:</b></p> <p>Chaguasgua, chirrincho, corn fermented drink (chicha), traditional creams, pick axe, and rope.</p>
Symbols	<p>Logotype, products slogan, uniform, the indigenous coffee growing mother, the indigenous coffee growing boy, the snow covered mountains of Huila, the coffee plant, the coffee scent, the kangaroo back bag, the traditional garden, the community meetings.</p>	<p>Logotype, product slogan, water, uniform, galupa fruit, raspberry, raspberry juice, Saint Barbara water fall, Paez lake, kangaroo back bag (chumbe); traditional garden (tull), community meetings (mingas).</p>	<p>Logotype, product slogan, Board of Directors, farm rotary work, the uniform, information and emergency signalization, milk drink or brisa, the cow, the milk.</p>

Source: Author own elaboration.

conditions may be done easier, with more flexibility and freedom by a man than by a woman. As a result, the male worker could help more frequently his female counterparts when it comes to carrying heavy objects like sacs and cans.

The process of prospective symbolization is evident in the design of the organization logotype, which shows different symbolic elements characteristic of the Nasa indigenous culture, such as the *tull* or traditional garden, the indigenous typical outfit or the typical landscapes of Toribio with the Huila snowy mountain.

The process of retrospective symbolization occurs through the fabrication of traditional tools that permit to support the use of machines and western technologies used during the productive process. The implemented technologies that come from the western culture have turned into symbols that represent the efficiency and efficacy in the processes; but as modernization advances, traditional tools are included to be able to operate them. That is how wooden escalators to reach the toaster's mouth and also protective gloves have been used against burns when sealers are operated, or for example the use of plastic jars to transport grounded coffee once it passes through the grounding process.

The process of prospective interpretation is carried out through many perspectives, especially those related to coffee. For coffee providers, the coffee plant is a source of development because it brings wealth, and additionally it supports the growth of other crops. For all the interviewed individuals it is clear that the coffee plant encloses an important spiritual component that makes it possible to associate it with other crops for its improvement or growth. As part of a transforming cultural process that is advancing from the organization towards the community, organizational symbols have been used to transform the basic assumptions of the costumers.

The retrospective interpretation process is evident in the way the members of the organization conceive their organizational life regarding nature. The indigenous family's basic assumptions influence deeply the way main organizational symbols are re-interpreted. That is how it is evident for all the members that the landscape surrounding

the production plant is something usual and is part of their life. However, that landscape represents a constant happiness, almost intrinsic, that is transformed into sadness when there is no contact with it or when it is observed to be weakened. In fact, the major concern for all the most traditional actors of the region, including the members of this organization, is the possibility that through time the basic values and assumptions related to the care of nature or to the work carried out in family with the traditional garden would be lost or transformed.

#### 4.2. *Fxize*

Concretely, the proactive manifestation process is oriented towards fixing basic assumptions regarding the care and preservation of Mother Earth or "*mama kiwe*" generating shared values such as friendship, cooperation, solidarity, mutual support, understanding, tolerance, commitment, and respect. All those values are observed in the mist of the relationships established among the members of the organization and also in regard to different actors in multiple contexts.

The retroactive manifestation process can be identified through the way in which the members construct and develop their own language to talk about the market and the organization. Additionally, it can also be identified through the activities the organization's members carry out to learn about western principles and values as well as traditional ones. The valuation of western practices and at the same time contextualizing the traditional indigenous ones generates a process of re-elaboration of the interpretations of the most rooted aspects about culture. Likewise, it generates or modifies basic assumptions of action through a mixture between indigenous and western cultural provisions.

The proactive realization process can be identified in the mist of openness for intercultural dialogue that the organization promotes. There, the materialization of hybrid values in objects that have been developed or have been acquired from the cultural segregation of the Toribio Governing Board may be observed. This way, it can be identified that the Administrative Assistant whose working experience goes back to the modern western

world has been able to transform administrative processes in search of effectiveness, productivity, and reduction of costs and expenses.

The process of retroactive realization is based on the re-education on the forgotten ancient practices especially. This is done through the re-signification and awareness on the use of objects that were traditionally considered as part of the basic elements of subsistence that should be preserved, such as water and natural resources. For this reason, internal activities have been developed to remind the employees about the importance of saving water during productive activities, as well as spending just the necessary and exact amount to prepare juices for the organization. This has helped to transfer the values of the organization towards the generation of values more related to the maintenance and sustainability of the environment.

The prospective symbolization process is determined specifically by the symbolic elements developed in the *tull* or traditional garden that at the same time are inter-related with the principles, values, and objects that participate in the whole productive activity of the farm. From there derives the idea of caring for Mother Earth and about the appropriate use of resources so as to take the necessary nutrients in order to guarantee food security in the territory. This is translated to the productive activities of the organization so that in every level will spring elements that demonstrate a lineament with the symbolic ones developing in the farm.

The retrospective symbolization process is identified in the usage of organizational symbols on the website and on social networks. The logotype, the design of each product, the presentation of fruits, and in general the graphic impact of advertisement increases consciousness on the literal significance of the objects being symbolized and bring to memory emotions and sensations of freshness when they are observed.

The prospective interpretation process is evident in the change of basic assumptions through the interpretation of the use of main raw materials for the organization. Previously, *gulupa* and raspberry were fruits considered to be produced by the *tull* and only to be used for sale or to exchange for other

fruits, vegetables, or legumes. Now they are interpreted as a main source of income with a great capacity for growth in the future.

The retrospective interpretation process is evident in the way the members of the organization conceive their organizational life regarding nature. The basic assumptions founded in the care and preservation of “*mama kiwe*” influence deeply the way they interpret the principal organizational symbols. That is how it is evident that for the members it is important to develop productive activities on the farm in order to keep the *nasa* spirit. This has consequences on how the products are promoted and the use they give to symbols as they try to represent that tradition with a touch of modernity added to the typography.

#### 4.3. Lácteos San Luis

The proactive process of manifestation is oriented in two ways: the first one starts from the organization’s own productive activity which generates basic assumptions about work and values related to individualism, competitiveness, and an empiric trend. On the other hand, rotary work in the farm generates basic assumptions related to cooperative attitude. For that reason, values related to sharing and solidarity in the mist of the productive activity may be observed as a way of generating fellowship and empathy.

The retroactive manifestation process is carried out through the formal education each member of the organization receives. Specifically, it has been accomplished for the workers to attend formal courses to gain technical training and the idea of transferring knowledge from older workers to younger ones has been strengthened in order to increase the labor force’s capabilities and skills. This has allowed to create values such as fellowship and solidarity favoring of the personal growth of their fellow workers, and at the same time it transforms work’s basic assumptions such as the desire for progress and development within a modern organization.

The proactive realization process could be identified in the mist of meetings, tours, and spaces for intercultural dialogue that the organization sponsors and promotes within its territory. There the materialization

of hybrid values may be observed in objects that have been developed or have been acquired starting from the cultural segregation of the Governing Board of Tacueyó. That is how it is verified that the members of the organization visited western organizations that produce dairy products since they are nourished by the knowledge and modern practices that have been implemented there. Later on, that cultural knowledge and practices are introduced into the productive organization through the modification of productive processes and the acquisition of new technology.

The retroactive realization process is directly related to community meetings (*mingas*) developed by indigenous farm owners that provide raw materials to be transformed in the organization. Feelings and ancient cultural values about work are awakened in the mist of these activities, and they are materialized through the use of the pick axe, the shovel, and the gardening shovel (*palendra*) in the soil while drinking fermented *chicha* elaborated by them at the same time. All this productive activity in the farm ends with a great meal called *Mote* which has been prepared by the indigenous worker's wives. The later transforms this activity into a ceremonial act loaded with values and artifacts.

The process of prospective symbolization is carried out through the formalization and bureaucracy of the organization. That is, one of the aspects that make it possible to identify the passing from artifacts to symbols is cooperative architecture and the formality of the functional organization chart. This is the only organization whose decisions related to the production and commercialization are taken through meetings of the board of directors. For all other decisions, the coordinator or even the workers themselves are empowered to make them. On the other hand, the directors of the organization have taken the responsibility of creating organizational symbols such as the logotype and the slogan to make the products known to the market. Particularly, the logotype of the organization represents a cow grazing and on the background is a landscape of Wax Palm Trees (*palma de cera*). The name of the organization appears on the upper part. The slogan is oriented to the consumption of the regional products: *"Consuming our products is supporting what is ours"*.

The retrospective symbolization process is identified with the use of symbolic objects and messages (emergency exit, warehouse, danger, hot, use protective personal elements, bathrooms) within the production plant that enforce certain values such as care and attention to details. On the other hand, it is noticed that the refrigerator in the sales zone responds to some organizational criteria that ultimately calls the costumers' attention. The later has made the product's logic of promotion and ultimately of its fabrication to be oriented towards favoring consumerism.

The process of prospective interpreting has to do with the change on the basic assumptions of work starting from the re-interpretation of the organization's main symbols. Although the organization promotes rotary work in the farm, it does so with the purpose of taking advantage of productive activities in order to obtain a major amount of raw materials and to keep a constant flow of resources transformation. Even the support it gives is economical, there is no participation from the members of the organization. Ultimately, the basic assumptions are beginning to be oriented towards the possibility of generating competitiveness in the market through the permanent accumulation of raw materials and capital.

The retrospective interpretation process is evident in the way the members of the organization conceive their organizational life with respect to progress and economic growth. The basic assumptions founded on individualism and competitiveness deeply influence the way the main organizational symbols are re-interpreted. That is how it is evident that for all the members it is important to grow and develop special skills to become a unique, fundamental, and basic element within the organization. Indeed, the concern that regional leaders including some members of the organization bear is the possibility that with the passing of time, the organization would grow so large that it won't count with enough logistic capacity to fulfill all the demand's requirements.

## 5. Conclusions

The following can be said about the differences and particularities found in each or-

ganization:

- Regarding proactive manifestation Kwe'sx Café manifests the preservation of the indigenous family's basic assumptions, while at Fxize the basic assumptions are related to the care of Mother Earth. Finally, in Lácteos San Luis this process is oriented in two ways: on one hand, the productive activity generates values related to individualism, competitiveness, and empiric practices. On the other hand, the work in the farm generates cooperative attitudes.
  - For the retroactive manifestation in Kwe'sx Café the use of their native language was identified, whereas in Fxize the members construct their own language for the market and the organization. In contrast, at Lácteos San Luis they use formal education for a more western development.
  - With regard to the proactive realization process, in Kwe'sx Café there is participation of the members in meetings and the construction of traditional objects, while in Fxize and Lácteos San Luis it is generated starting from the intercultural dialogue. However, it differs in the use of specialized machinery.
  - As far as retroactive realization goes, the Kwe'sx Café and Fxize venture into modern technology learning, but in Fxize re-education on forgotten ancient practices exists. Meanwhile in Lácteos San Luis there is a direct relation with the community meetings having artifacts that modify work values.
  - In regard to prospective symbolization, the three organizations have developed a logotype with a typology bearing indigenous symbols. Specifically in Fxize, the use of symbolic elements through the *tull* or traditional garden is evident. On the other hand, in Lácteos San Luis is evident the use of symbols from western administration through the architecture and through the design of a complex organizational structure vertically different.
- With respect to retrospective symbolization, each organization counts with its own particularities since in Kwe'sx Café there is fabrication of traditional tools as complement to western ones. In Fxize, organizational symbols are used through information technologies, and in Lácteos San Luis it is done through the use of symbolic objects and preventive signs to guarantee health and security on the job.
  - As far as the prospective interpretation process goes, the members of Kwe'sx Café interpret in different ways the significance of coffee as a product. In Fxize, there is change regarding basic assumptions through the use of raw materials for the elaboration of juices. Likewise in Lácteos San Luis where the principal organizational symbols are re-interpreted.
  - Finally, in regard to retrospective interpretation, for both Kwe'sx Café and Fxize this process is evident through the way the members of the organization conceive their organizational life with respect to nature, while in Lácteos San Luis it is reflected on the way the members conceive their organizational life with respect to progress.
- On the other hand, these organizations cannot be categorized within the types and classifications of organizational culture that the authors have defined in the West. For example: the classification of organizational culture in four dimensions proposed by Denison (1990): Mission, consistency, adaptability, and participation or the typologies proposed by Cameron and Quinn (2005): Clan, Adhocracy; Hierarchy, and Marketing. This is due to the cultural features identified which should lead to considering other forms of classification and typology proper to the indigenous people that enclose other elements such as the spiritual, the natural, and harmony.
- Some terms or concepts used in western productive organizations are also used in the mist of dialogue within indigenous productive organizations, but they refer to different definitions. For example: the concept of mixed organization for the indigenous people

refers to the obligation to meet the interests of the different actors within their territory, those actors being the Governing Board, the community, the individuals, etc. while for the western world, this concept refers to the organizations whose activities are financed by public and private resources.

The culture in indigenous productive organizations goes beyond the four walls that enclose production plants. It is built starting from the local culture, but also from the symbolic aspects that are developed inside each organization. Likewise, it is common for all members of the organizations to know about productive aspects in an integrated manner; that is, all of them know about production, raw materials, requirements, and transformation processes.

The venturing of the indigenous productive organizations, to a greater or lesser extent, into the dynamics of the western market has generated changes in their native cultural features in order to comply with the requirements of demand. It is evident that some organizations adapt native cultural characteristics to productive dynamics. However, the tendency is to segregate their culture in favor of a western one. That is how it is observed that in between territorial purposes and the Governing Boards autonomy is promoted, but inside the organizations the financing from different entities is promoted.

While for some indigenous productive organizations the most traditional cultural activities represent a means of manifestation and realization of their culture, for others it represent only a way of remembering their origin or feeling appreciated for their ancient conditions.

The unexplored conditions of the Colombian indigenous productive organizations makes it possible to identify an opportunity to establish a new unit of analysis for organizational studies at all levels and areas. It is important to start establishing comparisons between the organizations that could be classified as emerging-traditional and modern western ones so that the best of each is taken, and organizations that bear as fundamental principle and core its origins and relationship with nature will begin to be designed; logically, without losing sight of the

importance of participating in the global market game.

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